

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN ANGELL JAMES

ONEWHILE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN
CARRS LANE BIRMINGHAM

EDITED BY HIS SON.

VOL. XII.

THE FAMILY MONITOR.
THE WIDOW DIRECTED TO THE WIDOWS GOD.
AND MINOR PIECES.

LONDON HAMILTON ADAMS & CO
BIRMINGHAM HUDSON & SON.

MDCCCLXI.

**COUNSELS ADDRESSED TO MEMBERS
OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES**

BY

JOHN ANGELL JAMES

ONEWHILE MINISTER OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLING IN
CARRS LANE BIRMINGHAM

EDITED BY HIS SON.

VOL. I.

LONDON HAMILTON ADAMS & CO.
BIRMINGHAM HUDSON & SON.

MDCCCLXI.

“The Family Monitor” (1828), “The Widow Directed to the Widow’s God” (1842), and “The Christian Father’s Present to his Children” (1824), with minor pieces, form the next division of the Author’s works.

The special duties of the various relationships and situations of life, were the constant themes of the Author’s Sermons and Expository Lectures. A practical man, he seemed most at home on such subjects, and he enforced them with great minuteness, but always with delicacy and dignity. Though he held the conversion of souls to God to be the chief end of his ministry, he was little less anxious that the man of God should be thoroughly furnished for every post in which he might be placed. And his congregation never complained how often they were called to consider their responsibilities and duties, but seemed to value their Pastor more for the particularity with which he dwelt upon them. And “The Family Monitor” will give a just notion of his pulpit addresses on such topics. It was, as he states, published at the request of his Congregation, and of all his larger pieces, except those addressed exclusively to the young, it has been the chief favourite with the public, and has had a remarkably steady sale; very likely from its being often chosen as a marriage present.

If the Editor could have made up a volume of pieces addressed to mourners, he would have inserted in it the one addressed to Widows; but as this was not in his power, it seemed most naturally placed where it is. It was written, like most others of the Author’s works, in consequence of his finding in the course of his pastoral duties a want which he could not supply from the writings of other men. For whatever part of his work he was obliged from time to time to forego, he never neglected the widows in his flock. His unceasing attention to them proved that he felt all the sympathy which he professes; and those of them who survived him were among the most constant mourners for him. He had been at all times most kind and tender to them, and the circumstances under which he wrote made their sorrows in great part his own.

CONTENTS.

THE FAMILY MONITOR, OR A HELP TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

	PAGE
Preface	i
The Domestic Constitution	15
The Duties of Husbands and Wives	24
The Respective Duties of Husbands and Wives	47
The Formation of the Marriage Union	85
The Duties of Parents	105
The Duties of Children to their Parents	160
The Duties of Brothers and Sisters	190
The Duties of Masters	212
The Duties of Servants	245
 ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS ON THE RE- LIGIOUS EDUCATION OR THEIR CHILDREN	 275
 PASTORAL LETTER, ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCHES OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION ON FAMILY PRAYER	 293

**THE WIDOW DIRECTED TO THE WIDOW'S
GOD.**

Preface 315

PART I.

Sympathy	321
Submission	327
Instruction	312
Consolation	359
Confidence in God	379
Benefits of Affliction	387

PART II.

Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah	395
The Widow of Zarephath	408
The Widow of one of the Sons of the Prophets	417
The Widow casting her two Mites into the Treasury	427
The Widow of Nain	433
Anna the Prophetess	411
Conclusion	416

PREFACE TO THE WIDOWER'S COUNSELLOR AND COMFORTER	419
--	-----

THE FAMILY MONITOR

OR

A HELP TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

“Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments: As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

VOL. 12

B

PREFACE.

THE substance of the ensuing chapters was delivered by the Author in a course of sermons, which followed a series of expository lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians. The consecutive method of preaching, which he principally uses, is attended, he thinks, with this, among many other advantages, that it brings under the review of a minister many subjects which would otherwise be overlooked; affords an opportunity for the introduction of some topics, which from their peculiarity seem to require such a way of access to the pulpit; and also furnishes an apology for the discussion of others, which the fastidiousness of modern delicacy has almost excluded from the range of pastoral admonition. On entering upon the first branch of relative duties, the Author was so much under the influence, perhaps improperly, of this excess of refinement, and felt so much the difficulty of making a public statement of the duties of husbands and wives, that he had determined at one time, to relieve himself from the embarrassment, by merely reading large extracts from Mr Jay's beautiful sermon on this subject. After he had preached two discourses, and thus discharged, as well as he was able, this rather perplexing task, he received a numerously signed petition from many husbands and wives, belong-

ing to his congregation, requesting that they might be permitted to read in print the statement of their reciprocal obligations, which they had heard from the pulpit. Instead of being limited by this request, the Author has gone beyond it, and included the duties of all the family relations; thus furnishing a manual of advice which all members of the household may find appropriate to their circumstances.

It is an unquestionable truth, that if a man be not happy at home, he cannot be happy any where; and the converse of the proposition is not less true, that he who is happy there, need be miserable nowhere. "It is the place of all the world I love most," said the author of the Task, when speaking of his home. And he may be felicitated who can say the same. Any attempt, however feeble, to render the domestic circle, what it ever should be, a scene of comfort, is at least benevolent. Nor is this a hopeless effort; for he who has the Bible in his hand, and speaks from the oracles of God, can disclose at once, and in few words, the important secret. The principles of greatest consequence to mankind, in all matters of life and morals, do not lie buried deep in gloom and mystery, but are to be found like the manna of the Israelites, upon the surface of things. The secret of happiness lies in the leaves of the Bible, and is to be learned only from religion. The Author knows of no other way to felicity, and therefore does not profess to teach any other. Let the two parties in wedded life be believers in Christ Jesus, and partake of the peace that passes all understanding; let them, when they become a father and a mother, bring up their children in the fear of God; and as a master and a mistress be diligent and successful in instructing their

servants in the principles of religion; and if happiness is to be found upon earth, it will be enjoyed within the hallowed circle of a family thus united by love and sanctified by grace.

The Author does not deny that much of worldly comfort may be, and often is, enjoyed in some families, which neither profess nor possess a serious regard to the claims of religion; while it must be acknowledged on the other hand, that there are to be found professors of religion, whose households are any thing but happy ones. In reference to the former, it may be affirmed that piety, while it would raise their enjoyment to a sublimer kind, and a higher degree of happiness in this world, would also perpetuate it through eternity; and in reference to the latter, it may be remarked, that their disquietude is produced not by religion, but by the want of it. A mere profession of the christian faith is rather a hindrance to felicity than a help; nothing short of real religion can be expected to yield its joys.

In the following pages, there will be found numerous and long extracts from an incomparably excellent work, by the Rev. Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh, entitled, "The Domestic Constitution." Of that volume, the Author feels that his own is not worthy, in any instance, to be the harbinger; but should he find that he has introduced any families to an acquaintance with a treatise so well worthy of their most serious attention, he will be thankful for that measure of benefit, and rejoice that he has not laboured in vain.

CHAPTER I.

**THE DOMESTIC
CONSTITUTION.**

“By Thee
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of Father, Son, and Brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee, sin or blame,
Or think thee unbecoming holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets.”

MILTON.

A FAMILY! What delightful associations we form with the word! How pleasing the images with which it crowds the mind, and how tender the emotions which it awakens in the heart! Who can wonder that domestic happiness should have ever been a theme dear to poetry, and have called forth some of the sweetest strains of fancy and of feeling? Or who can be surprised that of all the objects which present themselves in the vista of futurity to the eye of those who are setting out on the journey of life, this should excite the most ardent desires, and stimulate to the most arduous enterprises? But alas! of those who in the ardour of youth start for the possession of this dear prize, how many fail! And why? Because their imagination alone is engaged on the subject: they have no definite idea of what it means, nor of the way in which it is to

be obtained. It is a mere lovely creation of a romantic mind, and oftentimes with such persons fades away, "and like the baseless fabric of a vision leaves not a rack behind."

It may be of service, therefore, to lay open the sources of domestic happiness, and to show that they are to be found, not in the flowery regions of imagination, but in the sober realities of piety, chaste love, prudence, and well-formed connections. Those precious springs are within the reach of all who will take the right path that leads to them: and that is the way of knowledge. We must make ourselves acquainted with the nature, design, and importance of the family constitution: we must analyse it to ascertain its elements and its laws. Who can be a good member of any state without a sufficient knowledge of the nature of its constitution, and the laws by which it is governed? And it is equally vain to look for domestic happiness, without a clear insight into the ends which God has intended in the formation of the household, and the laws which he has laid down for its government.

In the discussions which have been agitated to settle the question, which form of civil government is best adapted to secure the welfare of the human race, the family constitution has been too much overlooked. Speculation has been indulged, and theories proposed, by their respective authors, in reference to the greater aggregations of society, with all the confidence of oracular authority; while, it is evident they have forgotten how much the well-being of states is dependent on the well-being of the families of which those states are composed. If there be any truth in the figure by which a nation is compared to a building, we should

recollect that while individuals are the materials of which it is formed, it is the good condition of families that constitutes the cement which holds it together, and secures its fine form, solidity and durability. Let this be wanting, and however excellent its materials, however exquisite its proportions, and in despite of all its ornamentation, it contains from the first the causes of its decay and dilapidation.

The domestic constitution is a divine institute. God formed it himself. "He taketh the solitary and setteth him in families;" and like all the rest of his works, it is well and wisely done. It is, as a system of government, quite unique: neither below the heavens, nor above them, is there any thing precisely like it. In some respects it resembles the civil government of a state; in others, the ecclesiastical rule of a church; and in it the church and the state may be said to blend. This blending, however, is only on a very small scale, and under very peculiar circumstances. Every family, when directed as it should be, has a sacred character, inasmuch as the head of it acts the part of both the prophet and the priest of his household, by instructing them in the knowledge, and leading them in the worship, of God; and, at the same time, he discharges the duty of a king, by supporting a system of order subordination and discipline. Conformably with its nature is its design: beyond the benefit of the individuals which compose it, which is its first and immediate object, it is intended to promote the welfare of the national community to which it belongs, and of which it is a part: hence every nation has attached great importance to the family compact, and guarded it by the most powerful sanctions. Well

instructed, well ordered, and well governed families, are the springs which, retired and almost unnoticed, send forth the streams that make up, by their confluence, the majestic flow of national greatness and prosperity: no state can be prosperous where family order and subordination are generally neglected; or otherwise than prosperous, whatever be its political forms, where they are generally maintained. It is certainly under the wise instruction and the impartial sceptre of a father, and within the little family circle, that the son becomes a good citizen; it is by the fireside, and around the family hearth, that loyalty and patriotism, and every public virtue grow; as it is in disordered families that factious demagogues, turbulent rebels, or tyrannical oppressors, are trained up to be their neighbours' torment, or their country's scourge. It is there, to use the elegant simile of the prophet, that the thorn and the brier or the myrtle and the fir tree are reared, which are in future time to be the ornament and defence, or the deformity and misery, of the land.

But has the domestic constitution reference only to the present world and its perishable interests? By no means. All God's arrangements for man view him, and are chiefly intended for him, in his relation to eternity. The eye of Deity is upon that immortality to which he has destined the human race. "Every family has in fact a sacred character belonging to it, which may indeed be forgotten or disdained; but the family is constituted, and ought therefore to be conducted, with the prospect of the rising generation following that which precedes it, not only to the grave, but to eternity."* Every member of every household

* Anderson.

is an immortal creature; every one that leaves the circle by death, goes into an eternity of torment or of bliss. And, since all the ordinances of God look to another world as their chief and ultimate reference, surely, surely, that institute which is the most powerful of all in the formation of character, must be considered as set up with a special intention to prepare the subjects of it for “glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.”

No one judges aright of the household constitution, or can rightly perform its duties, who does not consider the double relation which it bears to the state and to the church, and who does not view it as a preparatory system, for training up a man both as a good citizen and a real Christian. And for these objects, how great is the power which it really possesses: how considerable is the mutual influence of husbands and wives in moulding each other’s tastes, and modifying each other’s dispositions; of parents, in forming the character of their children and servants; and of brothers and sisters, in stimulating and guiding each other’s pursuits! The power of other institutions is remote, occasional, and feeble; and the character is only occasionally affected by them: but this meets us at every turn: we live, and move, and have our being in the centre of it. So powerful is the influence of this association on its members, that it has preserved them, by the blessing of God, in the possession of piety and morality, in times and places of the greatest corruption of manners.

“On what vantage ground does the conscientious Christian parent here stand! The springs of public and social life may be greatly corrupted; the nation in which he dwells may degenerate into licentiousness, into idolatry, or into the most daring infidelity. Retiring then to this sacred enclosure, he may entrench himself; and there lifting up a standard for God, either wait the approach of better days,

or leave a few behind him, on whom the best blessings of those days will certainly descend. Though the heavens be shut up and there be no dew, the little enclosure which he cultivates, like the fleece of Gideon, will discover evident marks of the Divine favour. It actually seems as though in the wide scene, where the vices of the age may and can reign triumphantly, this were some secure and sacred retreat into which they cannot, dare not, enter.”*

It must be evident, however, that the great ends of the domestic economy cannot be kept in view, nor the moral power of it displayed, unless the heads of it rightly understand their duty, and have the disposition properly to perform it. They must be Christians in reality, or they cannot maintain a christian government. Where religion is wanting as the basis of their union, those happy fruits cannot be expected from it. The inferior and secondary object may be accomplished in the absence of parental piety, though neither so certainly nor so effectually; but as to the more sublime and permanent end of the family constitution, which connects its members with the church of God on earth, and with the company of the redeemed in heaven, this cannot be looked for, where the father and the mother are destitute of true religion. Oh! how many interesting households are to be found where all the mere social virtues are cultivated with assiduity, where the domestic charities all flourish, and public excellence is cherished, but which, on account of the want of vital godliness, are still losing the highest end of their union, are carrying on no preparatory course of education for

* Mr Anderson, in support and illustration of this beautiful sentiment, brings forward the families of the Kenites and the Kechabites, whose history he traces, and shows it to be like a pure and vigorous stream, urging its course through a turbid lake, with the waters of which it refuses to blend, and remains bright and clear amidst surrounding impurity.

the skies, and are destined to be swept away with the wreck of the nations that know not God, and with the wicked who shall be turned into hell! Alas, alas! that from such sweet scenes, such lovely retreats of connubial love and domestic peace, to which learning, science, wealth, elegance, have been admitted, religion should be excluded; and that while many wise and interesting guests are continually welcomed to the house, He only should be refused who blessed the little family of Bethany; and who wherever he goes carries salvation in his train, and gives immortality to the joys which would otherwise perish for ever!

Precious, indeed, are the joys of a happy family: but, oh, how fleet! How soon must the circle be broken up: how suddenly may it be! What scenes of delight, resembling gay visions of fairy bliss, have all been unexpectedly wrapt in shadow and in gloom, by misfortune, sickness, or death! The last enemy has entered the paradise, and by expelling one of its tenants, has embittered the scene to the rest; the ravages of death have been in some cases followed by the desolation of poverty; and those who once dwelt together in the happy enclosure, have been separated and scattered to meet no more. But religion, true religion, if it be possessed, will gather them together again, after this destruction of their earthly ties, and conduct them to another paradise, into which no calamity shall enter, and from which no joy shall ever depart. Happy then would it be for all who stand related by these household ties, if the bonds of nature were hallowed and rendered permanent by divine grace. To found our union on any basis independent of religion, is to erect it on a quicksand, and to expose it to the fury of a thousand billows, each of

which may overturn the fabric of our comfort in a moment: but to build it upon religion, is to found it upon a rock where we shall individually still find a refuge, when our nearest or dearest relatives are swept away by the tide of death.

It is a pleasing reflection, that the domestic constitution depends not for its existence, its laws, its right administration, or its rich advantages, either upon family possessions, or the forms of national polity. It may live and flourish in all its tender charities, in all its sweet felicities, and in all its moral power, in the cottage, as well as in the mansion; under the shadow of democracy, and even under the scorching heat of tyranny. Like the church, of which it is in some respects the emblem, (they are the only two institutions the frame work of which has been set up by God,) it accommodates itself to every changing form of surrounding society, to every nation, and to every age: like its kindred institute, it remains amidst the ruins of the fall, the lapse of ages, and the changes of human affairs, the monument of what has been, the standing prediction of what shall be. Tyrants who can crush the liberties of a state, cannot destroy the constitution of the family: and even persecutors that silence the preacher, and scatter the congregation, cannot hush the voice of parental instruction, or extinguish parental influence. Religion, hunted and driven by human power from all places of public concourse, would still find a retreat, as it often has done under such circumstances, in the household of faith; and there would keep alive upon the family altar, the holy fire with which the sacrifices of the temple, under happier auspices, shall be offered. Neither the family constitution, nor the church of the redeemed, shall ever

be entirely lost, whatever changes the world may yet have to pass through; but blessing and being blest, will of themselves alone one day introduce the millennium.*

To all, therefore, who are united in the bonds of this relationship, I offer the consideration of these pages; which prescribe duties and offer advantages belonging alike to all. Domestic happiness in many respects resembles the manna which was granted to the Israelites in the wilderness; like that precious food, it is the gift of God coming down from heaven: it is not to be purchased with money; it is dispensed alike to the rich and to the poor, and accommodates itself to every taste; it is given with an abundance that meets the wants of all who desire it: to be obtained it must be religiously sought in God's own way of bestowing it; and is granted to man as a refreshment during his pilgrimage through this wilderness to the celestial Canaan.

* See Anderson and Dwight.

CHAPTER II.

**THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS
AND WIVES.**

See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

ST. PETER.

MARRIAGE is the foundation of the domestic constitution; this, says the apostle, "is honourable in all;" and he has condemned, "as a doctrine of devils," the opinion of those by whom it is forbidden. It is an institute of God, it was established in Eden, was honoured by the personal attendance of Christ, and furnished an occasion for the first of that splendid series of miracles, by which he proved himself to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. But there is another mark of distinction put upon it by the Holy Ghost, where it is said, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Many commentators, I am aware, consider the term mystery as having no allusion to the nuptial tie; but as applying exclusively to the union of Christ and the Church. If this be the case it seems difficult to account for the mention of the marriage union at all, or to explain what bearing it has upon the subject in hand. Besides, the two-fold reference to the mediatorial undertaking of Christ, which is made by the apostle when he enforces

the duties of husbands and wives, seems to confirm the opinion, that he represents the conjugal union as a type or symbol of the close and endearing relation in which the church stands to its divine Redeemer. Nothing can throw a higher sanctity over this connexion, nor invest it with greater honour than such a view of it. Distinguishing, as it does, man from brutes; providing not only for the continuance, but for the comfort, of our species; containing at once, the source of human happiness, and of all those virtuous emotions and generous sensibilities which refine and adorn the character of man, it can never as a general subject be guarded with too much solicitous vigilance, nor be contracted, in each particular instance, with too much prudence and care.

In proportion to the importance of the connexion itself, must be a right view and due performance of the obligations arising out of it.

I. My first object will be to state those duties which are common to both husband and wife.

1. The first which I mention, and which is the ground of all the rest, is love. Let this be wanting, and marriage is at once degraded into a brutal or a sordid compact. This duty though, for reasons which I shall consider in due place, it is especially enjoined on the husband, belongs equally to the wife. It must be mutual, or there can be no happiness; none for the party loved but not loving; for how dreadful the idea of being chained for life to an individual for whom we have no affection; to be almost always in the company of a person from whom we are driven by revulsion, and yet drawn back upon by a bond which prevents separation and escape! Nor can there be any happiness for that

party loving without being loved; unrequited affection must soon expire, or live only to consume the wretched heart in which it burns. A married couple without mutual regard, is one of the most pitiable spectacles on earth. They cannot, and in ordinary circumstances ought not, to separate, and yet they remain united only to be a torment to each other. They serve the important purpose of a beacon to all who are yet disengaged, warning them against the sin and folly of forming this union upon any other basis than that of a pure and mutual attachment; and admonishing all that are united, to watch with most assiduous vigilance their mutual regard, that nothing be allowed to damp that sacred flame. And as the union should be formed on the basis of love, so should great care be taken by married persons, especially in the early stages of it, that nothing may arise to unsettle or loosen their attachment. Whatever knowledge they may obtain of each other's tastes and habits before marriage, is neither so accurate, so comprehensive, nor so impressive, as that which they acquire by living together; and it is of prodigious consequence, that when little defects are first noticed, and trivial jars and oppositions first occur, they should not be allowed to produce an unfavourable impression upon the mind. The remarks of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, in his inimitably beautiful sermon, entitled "The Marriage Ring," are so much in point that I shall introduce a long extract in reference to this.

"Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation; every little thing can blast an infant blossom; and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when they first begin to curl like the locks of a new weaned boy: but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have by the warm rays of the sun

and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken: so are the early unions of an unfixed marriage; watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word. For infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of a long society; and it is not chance or weakness when it appears at first, but it is want of love or prudence, or it will be so expounded; and that which appears ill at first, usually affrights the inexperienced man or woman, who makes unequal conjectures, and fancies mighty sorrows, by the proportions of the new and early unkindness! It is a very great passion, or a huge folly, or a certain want of love, that cannot preserve the colours and beauties of kindness, so long as public honesty requires a man to wear their sorrows for the death of a friend. Plutarch compares a new marriage to a vessel before the hoops are on; every thing dissolves its tender compaginations; but when the joints are stiffened and are tied by a firm compliance and proportioned bending, scarcely can it be dissolved without fire, or the violence of iron. After the hearts of the man and the wife are endeared and hardened by a mutual confidence and experience, longer than artifice and pretence can last, there are a great many remembrances, and some things present, that dash all little unkindnesses in pieces.”

“Let man and wife be careful to stifle little things, that as fast as they spring, they be cut down and trod upon; for if they be suffered to grow by numbers, they make the spirit peevish, and the society troublesome, and the affections loose and uneasy, by an habitual aversion. Some men are more vexed with a fly than with a wound; and when the gnats disturb our sleep, and the reason is disquieted, hut not perfectly awakened, it is often seen that he is fuller of trouble, than if in the daylight of his reason he were to contest with a potent enemy. In the frequent little accidents of a family, a man’s reason cannot always be awake: and when his discourses are imperfect, and a trifling trouble makes him yet more restless, he is soon betrayed to the violence of passion. It is certain that the man or woman are in a state of weakness and folly then, when they can be troubled with a trifling accident; and therefore it is not good to tempt their affections when they are in that state of danger. In this case the caution is, to subtract fuel from the sudden flame; for stubble, though it be quickly kindled, yet it is as soon extinguished, if it be not blown by a pertinacious breath, or fed with new materials. Add no new provocations to the accident, and do not inflame this, and peace will soon

return, and the discontent will pass away soon, as the sparks from a collision of a flint: ever remembering that discontents proceeding from daily little things, do breed a secret undiscernible disease, which is more dangerous than a fever proceeding from a discerned notorious surfeit."

If a man and wife wish to preserve their love for each other, let them study most accurately each other's tastes and distastes, and most carefully abstain from whatever, even in the minutest things, they know to be contrary to them. The ancients in their conjugal allegories used to represent Mercury standing by Venus, to signify that minds are united by sweet words and sweet endearments.

If they would preserve their mutual love, let them cautiously avoid all curious and frequent distinctions of mine and thine: for they have caused all the laws, suits, and wars in the world: let those who have but one person, have also but one interest. Instances may occur in which there may and must be, a separate investment of property, and an independent right of disposal in a wife; in this case, the most anxious care should be taken by the husband not to attempt to invade that right; and by the wife, neither ostentatiously to speak of it, rigidly to claim it, nor selfishly to exercise it.

In ordinary cases, "they should be heirs to each other, if they die childless; and if there be children, the wife should be with them a partner in the inheritance. But during their life the use and employment is common to both their necessities; and in this there is no other difference of right, but that the man hath the dispensation of all, and may keep it from his wife; just as a governor of a town may keep it from the right owner; he hath the power, but not the right, to do so."

II. Mutual respect is a duty of married life; for though, as I shall afterwards consider, especial rever-

ence is due from the wife, yet is respect due from the husband also. As it is difficult to respect those who are not entitled to it on any other ground than superior rank or common relationship, it is of immense consequence that each should present to the other the conduct which deserves respect and commands it. Moral esteem is one of the firmest supports and strongest guards of love: and a high degree of excellence cannot fail to produce such esteem. We are more accurately known to each other in this connexion than either to the world or even to our own servants and children. The privacies of such a relationship lay open our motives, and all the interior of our characters; so that we are better known to each other than we are to ourselves. If, therefore, we would be respected, we should be respectable. Charity covers a multitude of faults, it is true, but we must not presume too far upon the credulity and blindness of affection; there is a point beyond which even love cannot be blind to the crimson colouring of a guilty action. Every piece of really sinful conduct, the impropriety of which cannot be mistaken, tends to sink us in each other's esteem, and thus to remove the safeguards of affection. Perhaps this has not been sufficiently thought of in wedded life; the parties to which have been sometimes anxious merely to cover their delinquencies from the world, forgetful that it is a dreadful thing for them to lose their mutual respect. But it is striking, and as delightful, to observe how some husbands and wives of eminent moral worth regard each other; what reverence is blended with their love, and how like to angel forms of heavenly excellence they appear to one another. In the conjugal state there should be the most marked and unvarying mutual re-

spect, even in little things: there must be no searching after faults, nor examining with microscopic scrutiny such as cannot be concealed; no reproachful epithets; no rude contempt; no incivility; no cold neglect: there should be courtesy, without ceremony; politeness, without formality; attention, without slavery; there should, in short, be the tenderness of love, supported by esteem, and guided by politeness. And we must each maintain the other's respectability before others; strangers, friends, servants, children, must all be taught to respect us from what they see in our mutual behaviour. It is in the highest degree improper for either party to do an action, say a word, or assume a look, that will have the remotest tendency to lower the other in public esteem.

III. Mutual attachment to each other's society is a common duty of husband and wife. We are united to be companions; to live together, to walk together; to talk together. The husband is commanded "to dwell with the wife according to knowledge."

"This," says Mr Jay, "intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd for those who have no prospect of dwelling together, to enter this state: and those who are already in it, should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional excursions unavoidable; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished, and let him always travel with the words of Solomon in his mind, 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.' Can a man, while from home, discharge the duties he owes to his household? Can he discipline his children? Can he maintain the worship of God in his family? I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband; and she should take it up as a cross, if not for the time as a privilege. Few, however, are thus disposed; and hence one of the sanctuaries of God for weeks and months together is shut up. I am sorry to say there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal

of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated to the wife! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled; she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad. It implies something bad, it predicts something worse."

And to insure as far as possible the society of her husband at his own fire-side, let the wife be "a keeper at home," and do all in her power to render that fire-side as attractive as good temper, neatness, and cheerful affectionate conversation can make it: let her strive to make his own home the soft green on which his heart loves to repose in the sunshine of domestic enjoyment. We can easily imagine that even in Paradise, when man had no apparition of guilt, no visions of crime, no spectral voice from a troubled conscience, to make him dread solitude and flee from it; that even then Adam liked not, on his return from the labour of dressing the garden, to find Eve absent from their bower, but wanted the smile of her countenance to light up his own, and the music of her voice to be the melody of his soul. Think, then, how much more in his fallen estate, with guilt upon his conscience, and care pressing upon his heart, does man now, on coming from the scenes of his anxious toil, need the aid of woman's companionship to drive away the swarm of buzzing cares that light upon the heart to sting it; to smooth the brow ruffled with sadness; to tranquillise the bosom agitated with passion; and at once to reprove and comfort the mind that has in some measure yielded to temptation. O woman! thou knowest the hour when the "good man of the house" will return at mid-day, while the sun is yet bowing down the labourer with the fierceness of his

beams, or at evening, when the heat and burden of the day are past: do not let him, at such a time, when he is weary with exertion, and faint with discouragement, find upon his coming to his habitation, that the foot which should hasten to meet him is wandering at a distance; that the soft hand which should wipe away the sweat from his brow, is knocking at the door of other houses; nor let him find a wilderness, where he should enter a garden; confusion, where he ought to see order; or dirt that disgusts, where he might hope to behold neatness that delights and attracts. If this be the case, who can wonder, that in the anguish of disappointment, and in the bitterness of a neglected and heart-stricken husband, he turns away from his own door for that comfort which he wished to enjoy at home, and for that society which he hoped to find in his wife; and puts up with the substitutes for both, which he finds in the houses of other men, or in the company of other women.

United to be associates, then, let man and wife be as much in each other's society as possible; and there must be something wrong in domestic life, when they need the aid of balls, routs, plays, and parties, to relieve them from tedium produced by their home pursuits. I thank God I am a stranger to that state of mind which leads a man to flee from his own comfortable parlour and the society of his wife, from the instruction and recreation contained in a well-stored library, or from the walk into the country when the business of the day is over, to scenes of public amusement, for enjoyment; to my judgment, the pleasures of home, and of home society, when home and home society are all that can be desired, are such as never cloy, and need no change but from

one kindred scene to another. I am sighing and longing, perhaps in vain, for a period when society will be so elevated and purified; when the love of knowledge will be so intense, and the habits of life will be so simple; when religion and morality will be so generally diffused, that men's homes will be the seat and circle of their pleasures; when in the society of an affectionate and intelligent wife, and of well educated children, each will find his greatest earthly delight; and when it will be felt to be no more necessary for happiness to quit the home fire-side for the ball-room, the concert, or the theatre, than it is to go from a well-spread table to a public feast, in order to satisfy the cravings of a healthy appetite. Then it will be no longer imposed upon me to prove that public amusements are improper, for they will be found to be unnecessary.

But the pleasures of home must not be allowed to interfere with the calls and claims of public duty. Wives must not ask, and husbands must not give, that time which is demanded for the cause of God and man. This is an age of active charity, and the great public institutions which are set up cannot be kept in operation without great sacrifices of time and leisure by very many persons. Those who, for their wisdom talents rank or property, have the confidence of the public, must stand prepared to fill up and conduct the executive departments of our societies; nor should they allow the soft allurements of their own houses to draw them away from what is obviously the post of duty. I have known some who, till they entered into wedded life were the props and pillars of our institutions, yield so far to the solicitations of their wives, as to vacate their seat at the board of management for ever after. It is, I admit, a

costly way of contributing to the cause of religion and humanity, to give up those evening hours which could he spent so pleasantly in a country walk, or in the joint perusal of some interesting volume; but who can do good, or ought to wish to do it, without sacrifices? I know an eminently holy and useful minister, who told the lady to whom he was about to be united, that one of the conditions of their marriage was that she should never ask him for that time, which on any occasion, he felt it to be his duty to give to God. And surely any woman might feel herself more blessed in having sometimes to endure the loss of a husband's society, whose presence and talents are coveted by many public institutions, than in being left to the unmolested enjoyment of the company of one whose assistance was coveted by none.

IV. Mutual forbearance is another duty. Tins we owe to all, not excepting a stranger or enemy; and most certainly it must not be denied to our nearest friend. For the charity that "suffereth long and is kind; that envieth not; vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; that doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that covereth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things:" for this charity, there is both need and room in every relation of life. Wherever sin or imperfection exists, there is scope for the forbearance of love. There is no perfection upon earth. Lovers, it is true, often fancy they have found it; but the more sober judgment of husbands and wives generally corrects the mistake; and first impressions of this kind usually pass away with first love. "We should all enter the married

state, remembering that we are about to be united to a fallen creature; and as in every case, as Mr Bolton remarks, it is not two angels that have met together, but two sinful children of Adam, in whom much weakness and waywardness must be looked for, we must make up our minds to some imperfections; and remembering that we ourselves have no small share of them to call for the forbearance of the other party, we should exercise the patience that we ask. Where both have infirmities, and are so constantly together, innumerable occasions will be furnished, if we are eager or even willing to avail ourselves of the opportunities, for those contentions, which, if they do not produce a permanent suppression of love, lead to its temporary interruption. Many things we should seem not to see, others we should pass by with an unprovoked mind, and in all things carefully avoid what at first may seem to be an innocent dispute. Affection does not forbid, but actually demands, that we should reciprocally point out our faults; but this should be done in all the meekness of wisdom, united with all the tenderness of love, lest we only increase the evil we intend to remove, or substitute a greater one in its place. Justice, as well as wisdom, requires that in every case we set good qualities against bad ones; and in most cases we shall find some redeeming excellences, which, if they do not reconcile us to the failings we deplore, should at least teach us to bear them with patience; and the more we contemplate the better aspects of the character, the brighter will they appear; for it is happily a fact that while faults are diminished, virtues are magnified, in proportion as they are steadily contemplated. As to bitterness of language, or violence of conduct, this is

so utterly disgraceful, and in the circle which I am accustomed to instruct, altogether so unusual, that it scarcely need be mentioned, even by way of cautioning against it. The ancients, we are informed, took the gall from their nuptial sacrifices, and cast it behind the altar, to intimate the removal of all bitterness from the marriage state.

V. Mutual assistance is the duty of husbands and wives. This applies to the cares of life. Women are not usually very conversant with matters of trade, but still their counsel may be sought in a thousand cases with propriety and advantage. The husband should never undertake any thing of importance without communicating the matter to his wife; and she, on her part, instead of shrinking from the responsibility of a counsellor, and leaving him to struggle alone with his difficulties and perplexities, should invite him to communicate freely all his anxieties; for if she cannot counsel, she can comfort; if she cannot relieve his cares, she can help to bear them; if she cannot direct the course of his trade, she may guide the current of his feelings; if she cannot open any source of earthly wisdom, she can spread the matter before the Father and Fountain of Light. Many men under the idea of kindness to their wives, keep all their difficulties to themselves, and this causes them to feel a stroke the heavier when it does come.

And as the wife should be willing to help the husband in matters of business, he should be willing to share with her the burden of domestic anxieties and fatigue. On the one hand, the female heads of some families are utterly degraded by their husbands, and are treated as if their honesty or ability could not

be trusted in the management of domestic business. Their husbands dole out money to them as if they were parting with their life's blood, grudging every shilling they dispense, and requiring an account as rigid as they would from a suspected servant: they take charge of every thing, give out every thing, interfere in every thing. This is to despoil a woman of her authority, to thrust her from her proper place, to insult and degrade her before her children and her servants. Some husbands, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme, and take no share in any thing. My heart has ached to learn the slavery of some devoted, hard-working, and ill-used wives: who after labouring all day amidst the ceaseless toils of a young and numerous family, have had to pass the hours of evening in solitude; while their husbands, instead of coming home to cheer them by their society, or to relieve them for only half an hour from their fatigue, have been either at a party or a sermon; and these hapless women have afterwards had to wake and watch the live-long night over a sick or restless babe, while the men whom they accepted as the partners of their sorrows, were sleeping by their side, unwilling to give a single hour of their slumber, even to allow a little repose to their toil-worn wives. Why even the irrational creatures shame such men; for the male bird takes his turn upon the nest during incubation, to allow the female time to renew her strength by food and rest; and also goes in diligent quest of food with her, and feeds their young ones when they cry. No man should think of marrying, who does not stand prepared to share with his wife, as far as he can do it, the burden of domestic cares.

They should be helpful to each other in the concerns

of personal religion. This is clearly implied in the apostle's language: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" Where only one of them is as yet a partaker of true piety, there should be the most anxious, judicious and affectionate efforts for the salvation of the other. How heathenish a state is it, to enjoy together the comforts of marriage, and then travel in company to eternal perdition; to be mutual comforters on earth, and then mutual tormentors in hell; to be companions in felicity in time, and companions in torment through eternity! And where both parties are real Christians, there should be the exercise of a constant reciprocal solicitude, watchfulness, and care, in reference to their spiritual and eternal welfare. One of the ends which every true believer should propose to himself on entering the marriage state, is to secure one faithful friend at least, who will be a helpmate for him in reference to another world, assist him in the great business of his soul's salvation, and pray for him and with him; one that will affectionately tell him of his sins and his defects as viewed by the eye of a Christian; one that will stimulate and draw him by the power of a holy example, and the sweet force of persuasive words; one that will warn him in temptation, comfort him in dejection, and in every way assist him in his pilgrimage to the skies. The highest end of the conjugal state is lost, if it be not rendered helpful to our piety; and yet this end is too generally neglected, even by professors of religion. Do we converse with each other as we ought on the high themes of redemption by Christ, and eternal salvation? Do we

study each other's dispositions, snares, troubles, and decays in piety, that we may apply suitable remedies? Do we exhort one another daily, lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Do we practise fidelity without censoriousness, and administer praise without flattery? Do we invite one another to the most quickening and edifying means of grace of a public nature, and recommend the perusal of such instructive and improving books as we have found beneficial to ourselves? Do we mutually lay open the state of our minds on the subject of personal religion, and state our perplexities, our joys, our fears, our sorrows? Alas, alas! who must not blush at their neglects in these particulars? And yet such neglect is as criminal as it is common. Fleeing from the wrath to come, and yet not doing all we can to aid each other's escape! Contending side by side for the crown of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, and yet not doing all we can to ensure each other's success! Is this love? Is this the tenderness of connubial affection? This mutual help should extend to the maintenance of all the habits of domestic order, discipline, and piety. The husband is to be the prophet, priest, and king of the family, to instruct their minds, to lead their devotions, and to govern their conduct; but in all that relates to these important objects, the wife is to be of one mind with him. They are in these matters to be workers together, neither of them leaving the other to labour alone, much less opposing or thwarting what is done. "When the sun shines, the moon disappears; when he sets, she appears and shines; so when the husband is at home, he leads domestic worship; when he is absent, the wife must ever take his place." Some men refer

the instruction of young children exclusively to their wives: and some wives, as soon as the children are too old to be taught upon the knee, think that they are exclusively the subject of paternal care. This is a mistake in the management of a family, its members are never too young to be taught and disciplined by the father, nor too old to be admonished and warned by the mother; he may sometimes have a great influence in awing the rude spirits of the younger branches; while her soft persuasive accents may have delightful power to melt or break the hard and stubborn hearts of older ones. Thus they who have a joint interest in a family must attend to them in the exercise of a joint labour.

They must be helpful to each other in works of humanity and religious benevolence. Their mutual influence should be exerted, not in restraining, but in stimulating, zeal compassion and liberality. What a beautiful picture of domestic life is drawn by the pen of the Old Testament historian: "And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber on the wall, and let us set for him there, a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, and it shall be that when he cometh to us he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there." Every part of this scene is lovely. The generous and pious wish of the wife to provide accommodation for a destitute and dependent prophet; her prompt and prudent effort to interest her husband in the

scheme of her benevolence; her discreet and modest keeping her place, in not acting without his permission; her dignified claim of a right to be associated with him in his work of mercy, for she said, "Let us make a little chamber on the wall:" all is delightful, and as it should be, on her part: and no less so on the part of her husband, for there was no surly refusal, no proud rejection of the plan because it did not originate with him, no covetous plea for setting it aside on the ground of expense: delighted, as every husband should be, to gratify the benevolent wishes, and support the liberal schemes of his wife, so far as prudence will allow, he consented: the little chamber was erected, and furnished by this holy pair, and soon occupied by the prophet: and never was a generous action more speedily or more richly rewarded. Elisha had no means of his own, by which to acknowledge the kindness; but He who said in after times, "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward," took upon himself, as he does in every instance, the cause of his necessitous servant, and most munificently repaid the generous deed.

A lovelier scene is not to be found on earth than that of a pious couple employing their mutual influence, and the hours of their retired companionship, in stirring up each other's hearts to deeds of mercy and religious benevolence; not Adam and Eve in Paradise, with the unspotted robes of their innocence about them, engaged in propping the vines, or trailing the roses of that happy garden, presented to the eyes of angels a more interesting spectacle than this. What a contrast does such a couple present with the pairs almost every where to be found, whose calculations are not what they can save

from unnecessary expense, to bestow upon the cause of God and humanity, but what they can abstract or withhold from the claims of benevolence, to lavish upon splendid furniture, or domestic luxuries! Are there no wives who attempt to chill the ardour, to limit the beneficence, to stint the charities, of their husbands; who, by their incessant querulous, and almost quarrelsome, suggestions, that he is doing too much for others, and too little for his own family, drive the good man, notwithstanding he is lord of his own property, to exercise his liberality in secret, and bestow his charities by stealth? And what is oftentimes the object of such women? Nothing more than the pride of ambition, or the folly of vanity. Only that they may have the money to spend upon dress, furniture, and parties.

Perhaps the question will be asked, whether it is proper for a wife to give away the property of her husband in acts of humanity or religious benevolence? Such an inquiry ought to be unnecessary; for no woman should be driven to the alternative of either doing nothing for the cause of God and man, or doing what she can by stealth. A sufficient sum ought to be placed at her disposal, to enable her to enjoy the luxury of doing good. Why should not she appear in her own name upon the honourable list of benefactors? Why should she have no sphere of benevolent effort? Why should we monopolise to ourselves the blessings of those that are ready to perish? It is degrading a married female to allow her no discretion in this matter, no liberty of distribution, no power to give, even in cases that concern her sex; but to compel her to beg first of her husband, that which others come to beg of her. If, however, she be unhappily united to a

Nabal, a churl, whose sordid, grasping, covetous disposition, will yield nothing to the claims of humanity or religion, may she then make up for the deficiency of her husband, and diffuse his property, unknown to him? I am strongly tempted to answer this question in the affirmative; for if in any instance we may deviate from the ordinary rule, and (taking the man at his own word, which he uttered when in the solemn act of matrimony, he said, “with all my worldly goods I thee endow,”) may invest the wife with a joint proprietorship, and a right of appropriation, it is in such a case as this. But still we must not sacrifice general principles to special cases; and therefore I say to every female in such circumstances, obtain, if you can, a separate and fixed allowance for charitable distribution; but if this be not possible, obtain one for general personal expenses, and by most rigid frugality, save all you can from dress and decoration, for the hallowed purpose of relieving the miseries of your fellow-creatures.

VI. Mutual sympathy is required. Sickness may call for this, and females seem both formed and inclined by nature to yield it.

“O woman! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made:
 When pain and anguish rend the brow,
 A ministering angel thou!”

Unwilling, and indeed unable, to subscribe to the former part of this description, I do most readily assent to the truth of the latter. If we could do without her and be happy in health, what are we in sickness without her presence and her tender offices? Can we smooth,

as woman can, the pillow on which the sick man lays his head? No. We cannot administer the medicine or the food, as she can. There is a softness in her touch, a lightness in her step, a skill in her arrangements, a sympathy looking down upon us from her beaming eye, which ours want. Many a female, by her devoted and kind attentions in a season of sickness, has drawn back to herself a cold and alienated heart, which neither her charms could hold, nor her claims recover. I entreat you, therefore, married females, to put forth all your power to sooth and please your husband in the season of sickness. Let him see you willing to make any sacrifices of pleasure, ease, or sleep, to minister to his comfort. Let there be a tenderness in your manner, a wakeful attention and sympathy in your look, a something that seems to say, your only comfort in his affliction is to employ yourself in alleviating it. Harken with patience and kindness to the tale of his lighter, and even of his imaginary woes. A cold, heartless, awkward, unsympathising woman, is an exception from the general rule, and a libel upon her sex.

Nor is this sympathy exclusively the duty of the wife, it belongs equally to the husband. He cannot, it is true, perform the same offices for her which she can discharge for him; but he should do all he can. Her sicknesses are generally more numerous and heavy than his; she is likely, therefore, to make more frequent calk upon his tender interest and attention. Many of her ailments are the consequence of becoming his wife; she was, perhaps, in full vigour, till she became a mother, and from that time never had a moment's perfect ease or strength. That event which gave his heart

the joys of a parent, took from her frame the comforts of health. And shall he look with discontent, indifference, and insensibility, upon that delicate flower, which, before he transplanted it into his garden, glowed with beauty, the admiration of every one who saw it? Shall he now cease to regard it with any pleasure or sympathy, and seem as if he wished it gone, to make room for another, forgetting what has caused its head to droop, and its colours to fade? Husbands, I call upon you for all the skill and tenderness of love on behalf of your wives, if they are weak and sickly. Watch by their couch, talk with them, pray with them, wake with them; in all their afflictions, be you afflicted. Never listen heedlessly to their complaints: and oh, by all that is sacred in conjugal affection, I implore you never by cold neglect or petulant expressions, or a discontented look, call up in their imaginations, unusually sensitive at such a season, the phantom of a fear, that the disease which has destroyed their health, has destroyed your affection also. Oh! save their bosom the agonizing pangs of supposing that they are living to be a burden to your disappointed heart. The cruelty of that man wants a name, who denies his sympathy to a suffering woman, whose only sin is a broken constitution, and whose calamity is the result of her marriage. Such a man does the work of a murderer, without his punishment, and in some instances without his reproach, but not always without his design or his remorse.

But sympathy should be exercised by man and wife, not only in reference to their sicknesses, but in all their afflictions, both personal and relative; they should have all sorrows in common: like two strings in unison, the

chord of grief should never be struck in the heart of one, without causing a corresponding vibration in the heart of the other: or, like the surface of the lake answering to the heavens, it should be impossible for calmness and sunshine to be upon one, while the other is agitated and cloudy; heart should answer to heart, and face to face.

Such are the duties common to both; the obligations peculiarly enjoined upon each, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

**THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF
HUSBANDS AND WIVES.**

“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 husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church: and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ, and the church.”

EPHESIANS v, 22–32.

OBSERVE the sublime and transcendently interesting fact, the love of Christ, which stands amidst the duties of domestic life as stated by the apostle in the language quoted above, like the sun in the centre of the planets, illuminating, impelling, and uniting them all. Every part of this most comprehensive and beautiful passage is inimitably striking. The design of the whole is to magnify Christ's love to the church; in order to this

the moral condition of the church, previous to the transforming work of redeeming grace, is supposed to be that of loathsome impurity; yet, notwithstanding, not repelled by her excessive defilement, he exercises the tenderest compassion for her welfare. To effect her redemption, he did not merely employ the operation of his power and of his wisdom, but surrendered himself into the hands of divine justice, that, as a sacrifice of atonement, he might ransom the object of his regard at the price of his blood; thus manifesting an affection stronger than death, and "which many waters could not quench." The ultimate design of this act of mysterious humiliation, was to render her in some measure worthy of his regard and meet for that indissoluble union with himself, into which, as his bride, she was to be received. For this purpose the efficacious influences of the Holy Ghost were to be poured upon her mind, that in the cordial reception of the truth, she might be purified from iniquity, have the germ of every virtue implanted in her heart, and the robe of righteousness spread over her frame; till at length, under the dispensations of his providence and the means of his grace, the last spot of moral defilement might be effaced, the last wrinkle of spiritual decay removed, and like the "king's daughter, all glorious within, and with her clothing of wrought gold," she might be presented, covered with the beauties of holiness, to the Lord Jesus, in that day, "when he shall come to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe." Behold what manner of love is this! And it is this most amazing, this unparalleled act of mercy, that is employed by the apostle as the motive of all christian conduct. He knew nothing of moral philo-

sophy, if by this expression be meant the abstract principles of ethics. He left as he found them, the grounds of moral obligation, but he did not enforce virtue by a mere reference to our relations to God as creatures, but by a reference to our relation to Christ as redeemed sinners. He fetches his motives to good works from the cross; he makes the power of that to be felt, not only on the conscience, as supplying the means of pardon, but upon the heart, as furnishing the most cogent, and, at the same time, the most insinuating, argument for sanctification: he not only irradiates the gloom of despondency, or melts the stubborn obstinacy of unbelief, or stays the reckless progress of despair, by inspiring a feeling of hope; but by the death of the crucified Saviour, and an exhibition of his unbounded compassion, he attacks the vice of the depraved heart, and inculcates all the virtues of the renewed mind. The doctrine of the cross is the substance of christian truth, and the great support of christian morals: and the apostle's mind and heart were full of it. Does he enforce humility, it is thus, "let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: "an unreserved devotedness to God, it is thus: "ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body and with your spirit, which are his:" brotherly love, it is thus, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins: beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another: "a forgiving temper, it is thus, "be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you:" benevolence to the poor, it is thus, "for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." And who besides an apostle would have thought of enforcing conjugal affection by a reference to the love of Christ to his church? But he has done this; and has thus represented redeeming love as a kind of holy atmosphere, surrounding the Christian on all sides, accompanying him everywhere, sustaining his spiritual existence, the very element in which his religion lives, moves, and has its being. And this, indeed, is religion; not a name, not a creed, not a form, not an abstract feeling, not an observance of times and places, not a mere mental costume, or holy dress, which we put on exclusively for certain seasons and occasions: no; but a moral habit, a mental taste, the spirit of the mind, which will spontaneously appear in our language, feeling, and behaviour, by a reference to Jesus Christ, as the ground of hope, and the model for imitation.

In stating the duties especially enjoined on the two parties in the conjugal union, I shall begin with those of the husband. He is commanded to love his wife.

As I have already shown that this is a duty of both parties, the question very naturally arises, "For what reason is it so especially enjoined upon the husband? Why is he so particularly bound to the exercise of affection? "Perhaps for the following reasons: Because in the very nature of things he is most in danger of failing in this duty. Placed by the Creator as the "head of the wife," and invested with a certain right to govern his household, he is more in peril of merging the tender sensibilities in the predominant consciousness of superiority. Because he is actually more deficient in this duty than the other party. This has ever been the

case in Pagan and Mahomedan countries. In barbarous nations especially, conjugal affection has ever been exceedingly weak, and it is probable that even in the more civilized countries of Greece and Rome, it was not so generally strong and steady as it has since been made by Christianity. But without even going beyond the limits of Christendom, it may be truly said that husbands are usually more deficient in love than wives; the latter excel the former in tenderness, in strength, in constancy of affection. Because a want of love on the part of the man is likely to be attended with more misery to the other party; he can go to greater excesses in violence, in cruelty, in depravity. The want of this tender passion in him is likely to have a still worse effect upon his own character and the peace of the wife, than the want of it in her; in either case a destitution of this kind is a melancholy thing: but in him it is on several accounts the most to be dreaded.

The apostle lays down two models or rules for a husband's affection; the one is, the love which Christ has manifested for his church; and the other, the love which a man bears for himself.

In directing your attention to the first, I shall exhibit the properties of Christ's love, and show in what way our affection should be conformed to his.

Christ's love was sincere. He did not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. In him there was no dissimulation; no epithets of endearment going forth out of feigned lips; no unkind actions varnished over with a mere covering of love. We must be like him, and endeavour to maintain a principle of true regard in our hearts, as well as a show of it in our conduct. It is a miserable thing to have to act the part of love

without feeling it. Hypocrisy is base in every thing; but, next to religion, is most base in affection. Besides, how difficult it is to act the part well, to keep on the mask, and to support the character so as to escape detection! Oh, the misery of that woman's heart, who at length finds out to her cost, that what she had been accustomed to receive and value as the attentions of a lover, were but the tricks of a cunning dissembler!

The love of the Redeemer was ardent. Let us, if we would form a correct idea of what should be the state of our hearts towards the woman of our choice, think of that affection which glowed in the breast of the Saviour, when he lived and died for his people. We can possess, it is true, neither the same kind, nor the same degree, of regard; but surely when we are referred to such an instance, if not altogether as a model, yet as a motive, it does teach us that no weak affection is due, or should be offered to the wife of our bosom. We are told by the Saviour himself, that if he laid down his life for us, it is our duty to lay down ours for the brethren; how much more for the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." And if it be our duty to lay down our life, how much more to employ it while it lasts, in all the offices of an affection, strong, steady, and inventive. She that for our sake has forsaken the comfortable home, and the watchful care, of her parents, has a right to expect in our regard that which shall make her "forget her father's house," and cause her to feel that, with respect to happiness, she is no loser by the exchange. Happy the woman (and such should every husband strive to make his wife,) who can look back without a sigh upon the moment when she quitted for ever the guardians, the companions, and the scenes of her childhood!

The love of Christ to his church was supreme. He gives to the world his benevolence, but to the church his complacency. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee," said the prophet, "is mighty; he will save thee, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." So must the husband regard his wife above all beside; he must "rest in his love." He should regard her not only above all without, but above all within, his house. She must take precedence both in his heart and conduct, not only of all strangers, but of all relatives, and also of all his children; he ought to love his children for her sake, rather than her for theirs. Is this always the case? On the contrary, have we not often seen men, who appeared to be far more interested in their children than in their wives; and who have paid far less attention to the latter than to grown-up daughters? How especially unseemly is it, for a man to be seen fonder of the society of any other woman than that of his wife, even where nothing more may be intended than the pleasure of her company! Nor ought he to forsake his wife, in his leisure hours, for any companions of his own sex, however interesting may be their manners or their conversation.

The love of Christ is uniform. Like himself, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Conjugal affection should have the same character; it should be alike at all times and in all places; the same at home as abroad; in other persons' houses as in our own. Has not many a wife to sigh and exclaim, "Oh! that I were treated in my own house with the same tenderness and attention as I receive in company." With what loathing and disgust must such a woman turn from soft tones

and words, which, under such circumstances, she can consider as nothing but hypocrisy! Home is the chief place for fond and assiduous attention; and she who has not to complain of a want of it there, will seldom feel the need, or the inclination, to complain of a want of it abroad: unless she is one of those silly women, who would degrade their husbands, by exacting not merely what is really kind, but what is ridiculous.

The love of the Redeemer was practical and laborious. He provided by his mediation every thing for the welfare and comfort of the church, and at a cost and by exertions of which we can form no idea. I have already declared that both parties are to assist in the cares of life. A good wife cannot be an idle one. Beautiful is her portraiture as drawn by the wise man: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth amongst the elders of the land. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have doue virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." This exquisite picture, combining, as it does,

industry, prudence, dignity, meekness, wisdom, and piety, cannot be too frequently or too minutely studied by those who would attain to high degrees of female excellence. The business of providing for the family, however, belongs chiefly to the husband. It is yours, my brethren, to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness, and to drink, if necessary, the water of affliction, that you may earn by the sweat of your brow a comfortable support for your families. This is probably what the apostle meant, when he enjoined us to give honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel: the honour of maintenance, which she, in consequence of the weakness of her frame, and the frequent infirmities which the maternal relation brings upon her, is not so well able to procure for herself. In most barbarous countries, and in some half-civilised ones, the burden of manual labour falls upon the female, while her tyrant lord lives in indolence, feeding upon the industry of the hapless being whom he calls a wife, but treats as a slave. And are there no such idle tyrants in our age and country, who so as they can live in indolence, and gratify their appetites, care not how they oppress their wives; wretches, who do little or nothing for the support of their families? How utterly-lost to every noble and generous sentiment must that man be, whose heart cannot be moved by the entreaties or tears of his wife, and who can hear unmoved her pleadings for his child at her breast, or his child by her side, and who cannot be induced by such appeals to give up his daily visit to the tavern, or his habits of sauntering idleness, to attend to his neglected business, and stay the approaching tide of poverty and ruin! Such a creature is worse than a brute, he is a monster;

and it seems a pity that there is no law, and no convict ship, to bear him away to a land where, if he will not work, so neither should he eat. In general, it is for the benefit of a family that a married woman should devote her time and attention almost exclusively to the ways of her household: her place is in the centre of domestic cares. What is gained by her in the shop is oftentimes lost in the house, for want of the judicious superintendence of a mother and a mistress. Comfort and order, as well as money, are domestic wealth; and can these be rationally expected in the absence of female management? The children always want a mother's eye and hand, and should always have them. Let the husband, then, have the care of providing for the necessities of the family, and the wife that of personally superintending it: for this is the rule both of reason and revelation.

And as Christ laboured for his church, not only during his abode upon earth, but made provision for its welfare when he departed from our world, in like manner should the husband take care of his wife. I never could understand the propriety of the custom, which is but too common, of men's providing by their wills so much better for their children than they do for their mother. Does this look like a supreme love? Every man who raises a woman to the rank of his wife, should take care, however inferior she might have been in circumstances before their marriage, to leave her in the situation into which he has brought her; for it is indeed most cruel to leave her to be deprived at once, not only of her dearest earthly friend, but of her former means of comfortable subsistence.

Practical affection to a wife extends to everything;

it should manifest itself in the most delicate attention to her comfort and her feelings; in consulting her tastes; in concealing her failings; in doing nothing to degrade her, but every thing to exalt her, before her children and servants; in acknowledging her excellences, and commending her efforts to please; in meeting, and even in anticipating, all her reasonable requests; in short, in doing all that ingenuity can invent for her substantial happiness and general comfort.

Christ's love to his church was durable and unchangeable. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end," without abatement or alteration: so ought men to love their wives, not only at the beginning, but to the end, of their union; when the charms of beauty have fled before the withering influence of disease; when the vigorous and sprightly frame has lost its elasticity, and the step has become slow and faltering; when the wrinkles of age have succeeded to the bloom of youth, and the whole person seems rather the monument, than the resemblance, of what it once was. Has she not gained in mind what she has lost in exterior fascinations? Have not her mental graces flourished amidst the ruin of personal charms? If the rose and the lily have faded on the cheek, have not the fruits of righteousness grown in the soul? If those blossoms have departed on which the eye of youthful passion gazed with so much ardour, has that not been to give way to the ripe fruit of christian excellence? The woman is not what she was, but the wife, the mother, the Christian, are better than they were. For an example of conjugal love in all its power and excellence, point me not to the bride and bridegroom, displaying, during the first month of their union, all the watchful-

ness and tenderness of affection; but let me look upon the husband and wife of fifty, whose love has been proved by the trials and changes of a quarter of a century, and who through that period, and amidst those vicissitudes, have grown in attachment and esteem; and whose affection, if not glowing with all the fervid heat of a Midsummer's day, is still like the sunshine of an October noon, warm and beautiful, and lighting up the loveliest tints of the year.

But before I end this view of a husband's especial duty, I must just advert to the other measure of his regard which is presented to him by the apostle, "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself." A man's children are parts of himself: his wife is himself; "for they two shall be one flesh." This measure of his duty is so plain, that if he understands how he treats himself, there needs nothing be added concerning his demeanour towards her; for, "what mighty care does he take of his body, and uses it with a delicate tenderness, and cares for it in all its contingencies, and watches to keep it from all evils, and studies to make for it fair provisions, and is very often led by its inclinations and desires, and does never contradict its appetites, but when they are evil, and then also not without some trouble and sorrow." So let a man love his wife as his own body.

Can it be necessary to apply the force of motives, to produce an appropriate attention to such a duty? If so, I appeal to your sense of honour. Husbands, call each to recollection the assiduities and attentions by which you won the affections and the confidence of the woman who forsook her father and her mother, and the home of her childhood, to find a resting-place for her

heart in your attachment; and will ye falsify the vows ye plighted, and disappoint the hopes ye raised? Is it accounted a disgraceful stigma on a man's reputation, to forfeit the pledges of a lover? Oh! how much more dishonourable to forget those of a husband! That man has disgraced himself, who has furnished just occasion to the partner of his days to contrast with a sigh the attentions of her lover and those of her husband.

I urge affection to your wife by the recollection of that solemn moment, when, in the presence of heaven and earth, before God's minister, and in God's house, you bound yourself by the awful formalities of an oath, to throw open and keep open your heart as the fountain of her earthly happiness, and to devote your whole life to the promotion of her welfare. I appeal to your regard to justice. You have given your life to her, and arc no longer your own. You have no right to an individual separate and independent existence, which would lead you to seek your happiness in opposition to, or neglect of, hers. "You twain are one flesh." Humanity puts in its claim on behalf of your wife. It is in your power to do more for her happiness or misery than any other being in the universe, but God himself. There is no such tormentor as an unkind husband. His victim can never elude his grasp, nor go beyond the reach of his cruelty, till she is kindly released by the king of terrors; and he, in this instance, becomes to her an angel of light, and conducts her to the grave as to a shelter from her oppressor. For such a woman there is no rest on earth: the destroyer of her peace has her ever in his power, for she is always in his presence, or in the fear of it j the circumstances of every place, and every day, furnish him with the occasions of cruel

neglect or unkindness, and it may be fairly questioned whether there is to be found on earth a case of greater misery, (except it be that of a wretch tortured by remorse and despair,) than a woman whose heart daily withers under the cold looks, the chilling words, and repulsive actions, of a husband who loves her not. Such a man is a murderer, though he escapes in this world the murderer's doom; and is the worst of murderers, as he employs years in bringing his victim to her end, making her life a lingering death. If nothing else can prevail, interest should; for no man can hate his wife, without hating himself, for she is "his own flesh." Love, like mercy, is a double blessing; and hatred, like cruelty, is a double torment. We cannot love a worthy object without rejoicing in the reflex beams of our own affection. Next to the supreme regard we cherish towards God (in which we hold communion with angels in the joys of heaven), connubial love is the most beatifying passion; and to transvenom this into unkindness, is to open, in the very centre of our soul, a source of poison, which, as it exudes to torture others, torments ourselves.

I cannot here avoid inserting the exquisite and touching appeal which Mr Jay puts into the lips of married women to their husbands:

"Honour us; deal kindly with us. From many of the opportunities and means by which you procure favourable notice, we are excluded. Doomed to the shades, few of the high places of the earth are open to us. Alternately we are adored and oppressed. From our slaves, you become our tyrants. You feel our beauty, and avail yourselves of our weakness. You complain of our inferiority, but none of your behaviour bids us rise. Sensibility has given us a thousand feelings which nature has kindly denied you. Always under restraint, we have little liberty of choice. Providence seems to have been more attentive to enable us to confer happiness, than to enjoy it. Every

condition has for us fresh mortifications; every relation, new sorrows. We enter social bonds; it is a system of perpetual sacrifice. We cannot give life to others without hazarding our own. We have sufferings which you do not share, cannot share. If spared, years and decay invade our charms, and much of the ardour produced by attraction departs with it. We may die. The grave covers us, and we are soon forgotten; soon are the days of your mourning ended; soon is our loss repaired; dismissed from your speech, our name is to be heard no more, a successor may dislike it. Our children, after having a mother by nature, may fall under the control of a mother by affinity, and be mortified by distinctions made between them and her own offspring. Though the duties which we have discharged invariably, be the most important and necessary, they do not shine; they are too common to strike: they procure no celebrity: the wife, the mother, fills no historic page. Our privations, our confinements, our wearisome days, our interrupted, our sleepless nights, the hours we have hung in anxious watchings over your sick and dying offspring——but we forbear.”

I now come to the duties enjoined upon the wife.

The first I mention is subjection. “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 same thing is enjoined also in the epistle to the Colossians. The apostle Peter unites with Paul in the same strain: “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.” Before I state the kind of subjection here commanded, it is necessary to state the nature of the authority to which it is to be yielded. Here I would observe, that with whatsoever kind and degree of authority the husband is invested over the wife, it is such as is in no way incompatible with, nor trenches upon, the strongest and tenderest affection. And it is worthy of remark, “that the apostle does not enjoin

husbands to rule, nor instruct them how, but merely to love; so that it seems to be with them, as with bishops and priests, to whom much honour is due, but yet so that if they stand upon it, and challenge it, they become less honourable." It is such an authority as is compatible with religion or the claims of God; for no man has a right to enjoin, and no woman is bound to obey, any command which is in opposition to the letter or spirit of the Bible. It is such an authority as is consonant with sound reason; its injunctions must all be reasonable, for surely it is too much to expect that a wife is to become the slave of folly any more than of cruelty. It is an authority that accords with the idea of companionship. It is very beautifully observed by an ancient writer, that when Adam endeavoured to shift the blame of his transgression upon his wife, he did not say "the woman thou gavest to me;" no such thing, she is none of his goods, none of his possessions, not to be reckoned amongst his servants; but he said "the woman thou gavest to be with me," that is to be my partner, the companion of my joys and sorrows. Let conjugal authority be founded upon love, be never exercised in opposition to revelation or reason, and be regulated by the idea of companionship, and then no particular rules are needed for its guidance; for within such limits, it can never degenerate into tyranny; nor can it ever oppress its subjects: to such a power any woman may bow without degradation, for its yoke is easy and its burden light. In every society, from that which finds its centre in the father's chair, to the wide circle which marks the sway of a throne, there must somewhere be vested the supreme control and ultimate authority, there must be established some last and

highest tribunal from the decision of which there lies no appeal. In the domestic constitution this superiority vests in the husband; he is the head, the lawgiver, the ruler. In all matters touching the little world in the house, he is to direct, not indeed without taking counsel with his wife, but in case of discordant views, he, unless he choose to waive his right, is to decide; and the wife should yield to his decision with grace and cheerfulness. No man ought to resign his authority as the head of the family, no woman ought to wish him to do so: he may give up his predilections and yield to her wishes, but he must not abdicate his throne, nor resign his sceptre. Usurpation is always hateful, and it is one of the most offensive exhibitions of it, where the husband is degraded into a slave of his queen wife. Such a woman looks contemptible even upon a throne. I admit it is difficult for a sensible woman to submit to imbecility, but she should have considered this before she united herself to it; having committed one error, let her not fall into a second, but give the strongest proof of her good sense which circumstances will allow her to offer, by making that concession to superiority of station, which there is no opportunity in her case for her to make to superiority of mind. She may reason, she may persuade, she may solicit; but if ignorance cannot be convinced, nor obstinacy turned, nor kindness conciliated, she has no resource left but to submit: and one of the finest scenes ever presented to us in domestic life, is that of a sensible woman employing her talents and address, not to subvert, but to support, the authority of a weak husband; a woman who prompts, but does not command; who persuades, but does not dictate; who influences, but does not compel; and who,

after taking pains to conceal her beneficent interference, submits to the authority which she has both supported and guided. An opposite line of conduct is most mischievous, for weakness, when placed in perpetual contrast with superior judgment, is rarely blind to its own defects; and in an inferior is always jealously watchful and resentful of any interference with its prerogative. There must be subjection then, and where it cannot be yielded to superior talents, because there are none, it must be conceded to superiority of station. But let husbands be cautious not to put the submission of their wives to too severe a test. It is hard, very hard, to obey a rash, indiscreet, and silly ruler. "If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the seat of government, but of knowledge. If you will have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides?"

The grounds of submission are many and strong. Waiving all motives founded on the comparative strength of mind with which the two sexes may be gifted, I refer my female friends to less questionable matters. Look at the creation; woman was made after the man, "for Adam was first formed, then Eve." She was made out of man, "for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." She was made for man, "neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Look at the fall. Woman occasioned it. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." She was thus punished for it. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Look at her history. Have not the customs of all nations, ancient and modern, savage and civilised, acknowledged

her subordination? Look at the light in which this subject is placed in the New Testament. How strong is the language of the text, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Let me then, my respected female friends, admonish you as you would submit to the authority of Christ, as you would adorn the station that providence has called you to occupy, as you would promote your own peace, the comfort of your husband, and the welfare of your families, meekly and gracefully to be subject in all things, not only to the wise and good, but to the foolish and ill-deserving. You may reason, as I have said before; you may expostulate, but you must not rebel or disobey. Let it be your glory to feel how much you can endure, rather than despise the institution of heaven, or violate the engagements into which you voluntarily and solemnly entered. Let your submission be characterised by cheerfulness, and not by reluctant sullenness: let it not be preceded by a struggle, but yielded at once and for ever; let there be no holding out to the last extremity, and then a mere compulsory capitulation; but a voluntary, cheerful, undisputing, and unrevoked concession.

2. The next duty enjoined upon the wife is reverence. "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." This duty is somewhat different from the last, though nearly allied to it. By reverence, the apostle means nothing of slavish or obsequious homage, but that respect and deference which are due to one whom we are commanded to obey. Your reverence will be manifest in your Words: for instance, in your manner in

speaking of him you will avoid all that will tend to lessen him in the esteem of others; all "exposure of his faults or minor weaknesses; all depreciation of his understanding or domestic rule. Such gossip is detestable and mischievous; for can any thing tend more to irritate him, than to find that you have been lowering him in the esteem of the public? Reverence will be displayed in your Manner of speaking to him. "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord:" all flip-pant pertness, every thing of contemptuous consciousness of superiority, of dictation and command, of unnecessary contradiction, of pertinacious and obtrusive disputation, of scolding accusation, of angry, reproachful complaint, of noisy and obstreperous expostulation, should be avoided. Almost all domestic quarrels begin in words; and it is usually in a woman's power to prevent them by causing the law of kindness to dwell upon her lips, and calming the gusts of her husband's passion, by those soft answers which turn away wrath. Especially should she be careful how she speaks to him, or even before him, in the company of her family, or of strangers: she must not talk him into silence; nor talk at him; nor say anything that is calculated to wound or degrade him, for a sting inflicted in public is charged with double venom: she must not endeavour to eclipse him, to engross the attention of the company to herself, to reduce him to a cypher which is valueless till she stands before him. This is not reverence: on the contrary, she should do all in her power to sustain his respectability and dignity in public esteem, and her very mode of addressing him, partaking at once of the kindness of affection, and the deference of respect, is eminently calculated to do this. And should he at any

time express himself in the language of reproof, though that reproof be causeless, or even unjustly severe, let her be cautious not to forget her station, so as to be betrayed into a railing recrimination, a contemptuous silence, or a moody sullenness. I am aware it is difficult to show reverence and respect where there are no other grounds than mere station for them to rest upon; but in proportion to the difficulty of a virtuous action, is its excellence; and hers is indeed superior virtue, who yields to the relationship of her husband that reverence which he forbids her to pay him on account of his conduct. Her reverence will extend itself to her Actions, and lead to an incessant desire to please her husband in all things. It is assumed by the apostle generally and indisputably to be the fact, that “the married woman careth how she may please her husband;” and all her conduct should be framed upon the principle of gratifying his wishes, and so increasing his delight in her. Let her appear pleased with her lot, and that will do much to render him contented with his: while, on the other hand, nothing is more likely to generate discontent in his heart, than the appearance of it in her. Let her by cheerful good humour diffuse an air of pleasantness through his dwelling. Let her guard as much as possible against a gloomy and moody disposition, which causes her to move about with the silence and cloudiness of a spectre; for who likes to dwell in a haunted house? She should always welcome him to his home with a smile, and even put forth all her ingenuity in studying to please him, by consulting his wishes, and surprising him occasionally with unlooked for and ingenious devices of affection, which though small in themselves, will be proofs of a mind intent upon giving him pleasure. The

greater acts of reverent and respectful love are often regarded as matters of course, and as 'such produce little impression: but the lesser acts of attention, which come not into the usual routine of conjugal duties, and into the every day offices which may be calculated upon with almost as much certainty as the coming of the hour which they are to occupy, these free-will offerings of an inventive and active affection, these unexpected tokens of respect and expressions of regard, have a mighty power to attach a husband to his wife; they are the cords of love, the bands of a man. In all her personal and domestic habits, her first care then, next to that of pleasing God, must be to please him, and thus perpetuate her hold on that heart, which cannot wander from her without carrying her happiness with it, and which, when once lost, cannot be restored by any power short of Omnipotence itself.

3. Meekness is especially mentioned by the apostle Peter, as a disposition which it is the duty of every wife to cultivate. He has distinguished and honoured this temper by calling it the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. If there be some virtues which seem pre-eminently to suit the female character, meekness bears a high place amongst them. No one stands in greater need of this disposition than the female head of the family; either the petulance and waywardness of children, or the neglects and misconduct of servants, or the sharp words of a husband, are almost sure, if she be easily provoked, to keep her in a state of irritation all the day long. How trying is a peevish woman, how odious a brawling one! "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman." "The graces were females," says Mr Jay, "so were

the furies too.” Astonishing is the influence which meekness has sometimes had in a family: it has quenched the sparks and even coals of anger and strife, which, but for this, would have set the house on fire: it has mastered the tiger and the lion, and led them captive with the silken thread of love. The strength of woman lies not in resisting, but in yielding; her power is in her gentleness: there is more of real defence, aye, and more too of that aggressive operation which disarms a foe, in one mild look, or one soft accent, than in hours of flashing glances and of angry tones. When amidst domestic strife she has been enabled to keep her temper, the storm has been often scattered as it rose; or her meekness has served as a conductor to carry off its dreadful flashes, which otherwise would have destroyed the dwelling. Put on, then, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

Pay less attention to the decoration of the person; more to that of the mind. “Your adorning is not to be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, which is not corruptible.” The language of another apostle on this subject is no less striking: “In like manner, also, I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works.” Two apostles, who both wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, have in such language as this, denounced as improper and as unbecoming a profession of godliness, a taste for immodest, expensive, or highly decorative dress. Surely, then, the subject is worthy the most serious attention

of all christian females. By what sophistry can the letter, much more the spirit, of two passages of holy writ, so very plain and express in their terms as these, be set aside? That they are set aside is evident by the appearance of almost every congregation into which we could enter on the Sabbath-day, whether within or without the Establishment.

“We have run
 Through every change that fancy at the loom
 Exhausted has had genius to supply:
 And, studious of mutation still, discard
 A real elegance a little us’d,
 For monstrous novelty and strange disguise.
 We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
 And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,
 And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires:
 And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,
 Where peace and hospitality might reign.”

It is high time for the christian teacher to call back the women, “professing godliness” from these wanderings in the regions of fashionable folly, to the Holy Scriptures: for the Holy Scriptures, it should be remembered, have laid down a general law for regulating the dress of the body, as well as that of the mind. I hold that those passages of Scripture are parts of God’s revelation, and as such are still binding upon the conscience: if not, show me when they were cancelled. I contend that christian females ought to abstain from expensive, showy, and extravagant fashions, in dress, jewellery, and all kinds of excessive personal decoration. I am not arguing for a sectarian costume, for a religious uniform, for canonical shapes and colours; nothing of the sort; but for simplicity, neatness, economy: for what the apostle calls modest apparel,

shamefacedness, and sobriety; for the spirit of those passages, if not the very letter; for a distinction, marked by comparative inattention to such things, between those who profess godliness and those who make no such profession; for a proof that their minds are not so much engaged on these matters, as the minds of the people of the world are. I am not for extinguishing taste, but for resisting the lawless dominion of folly, under the name of fashion. I am not for calling back the age of barbarism or vulgarity: no; I would leave ample room for the cultivation of both taste and genius in every lawful department; but I am protesting against the desolating reign of vanity; I am resisting the entrance of frivolity into the church of God; I am contending against the glaring inconsistency of our religious assemblies resembling the audience convened in a theatre. The evils of an improper attention to dress are great and numerous. Much precious time is wasted in study, and arrangements, and decisions respecting the matter. The attention is taken off from the improvement of the mind and the heart, to the decoration of the person. The mind is filled with pride and vanity, and the dignity of the soul is lost. The love of display infects the character. Money is wasted which is wanted for relieving the misery, and improving the condition of mankind. Examples are set to the lower classes, in whom a propensity for dress is often mischievous in many ways. I am aware, it may be and is said, that there may be the pride of singularity, as well as of fashion; the pride of being covered with sober autumnal tints, as well as of exhibiting the brilliant hues of the rainbow; the pride of quality and of texture, as well as of colour and of form. I know

it, and I do not justify the one more than I do the other; I condemn all kinds of pride; but, at any rate, there is a little more dignity in one kind than another. I leave room for the distinctions of rank, for the inventions of true taste, and for the modest and unobtrusive displays of natural elegance and simple beauty; but I cannot allow the propriety of christian females yielding themselves to the guidance of fashion, however expensive, extravagant, or gaudy, it may be. As to the employment of our artizans by the various changes of fashion, which is sometimes pleaded in excuse for fashionable follies, I have nothing to do with it, in face of an apostolic injunction. The silversmiths, who made shrines for the worshippers of Diana, might have pleaded the same objection against the preachers of the gospel, who certainly did, so far as they were successful, ruin that trade. I am only speaking to professors of religion, who form so small a portion of society, that their abstinence from folly would do but little in diminishing the employment of the workpeople; and if it did, let them make it up in some other way. What I contend for, then, is not meanness, not ugliness, not unvarying sameness; no: but neatness, opposed to gaudiness; simplicity and becomingness, opposed to extravagance; modesty, opposed to indelicacy; economy, opposed to expensiveness. Whether this is characteristic of the age in which we live, let any spectator determine. I am anxious to see professors of religion displaying seriousness and spirituality, dignity and sobriety of mind, simplicity of habits, and sedateness of manners, becoming their high and holy profession; and an economy in their personal expenses, which will leave them a greater fund at their disposal for relieving the miseries, and pro-

moting the happiness, of their fellow-creatures. But perhaps, after all, many women may plead that the gaiety and expensiveness of their dress is more to please their husbands than themselves. This must have its limits. And I really pity the folly of that man who concerns himself in the arrangement of his wife's wardrobe and toilette; and who would rather see her go forth in the gorgeousness of splendid apparel, to display herself in the drawing-rooms of her friends, than in dignified neatness, to visit the cottages of the poor, as the messenger of mercy; and who rejoices more to contemplate her moving in the circles of fashion, the admiration of one sex, and the envy of the other, than to see her holding on her radiant course in the orbit of benevolence, clad in inexpensive simplicity, and with the savings of her personal expenditure, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and thus bringing upon herself the blessing of him that was ready to perish, and causing the widow's heart to sing for joy. Let it be remembered that not only the ornament, but the person which it adorns, is corruptible. Accidents may distort the finest form, diseases fade the loveliest colouring, time disfigure the smoothest surface, and death, the spoiler of beauty, work a change so awful and appalling, as to turn away the most impassioned admirers in disgust. How soon will every other dress be displaced by the shroud, and every other decoration be stripped off to make way for the flowers strewed upon the corpse, as if to hide the deformity of death! But the graces of the heart, and the beauties of the character, are imperishable; such let a wife be continually seeking to put on; "for she that has a wise husband, must entice him to an eternal dearness, by the

veil of modesty, and the robes of chastity, the ornaments of meekness, and the jewels of faith and charity; she must have no paint, but blessings; her brightness must be her purity, and she must shine round about with sweetness and friendship, and then she shall be pleasant while she lives, and desired when she dies.”

5. Economy and Order in the management of her personal and domestic expenditure, are the obvious duties of a wife. You are to preside over and direct your household; and much of the prosperity and comfort of that little community will depend upon your skilful and prudent arrangements. There is in this age a manifest disposition, in all classes of society, to come as closely as possible to the habits of those above them. The poor are imitating the middling classes, and they are copying the upper ranks. A showy, luxurious, and expensive mode of living, is pursued almost universally, and is displayed in innumerable instances, without means to support it. A large house, a country residence, splendid furniture, a carriage, a retinue of servants, and large parties, are the ambition of many, and their creditors pay for it. Christian families are in the most eminent peril of worldly conformity in the present day; and the line of demarcation between the church and the world is fast wearing out. It is true they have no cards, they do not frequent the theatre or the ball room, and perhaps they have not midnight routs, but this is all; for many are as anxious about the splendour of their furniture, the fashion of their habits, the expensiveness of their entertainments, as the veriest worldling can be. Now a wife has great influence in checking or promoting all this. It has been thought that this increasing disposition for domestic show and gaiety, is to be attributed

chiefly to female vanity. It is the woman that is generally the presiding genius of such a scene: she receives the praise and the compliments for it, and she therefore is under the strongest temptation to promote it. But let her consider how little all this has to do with the happiness of her family, even in its most prosperous state; and how a recollection of it aggravates the misery of adversity, when a reverse takes place. Then, to be found in debt for finery of dress or furniture; then, to have it said that her extravagance helped to ruin her husband; then, to want for bread money formerly wasted on luxury; then, to hear the whispered reproach of having injured others by her thoughtless expenditure! Avoid, my female friends, these miseries: do not go on to prepare wormwood and gall, to embitter still more the sufficiently bitter cup of adversity. Endeavour to acquire skilfulness in domestic management, frugality, prudence, the love of order and neatness; a mid-way course between meanness and luxury, suitable to your station in life, to your Christian profession; an economy which shall leave you more to spare for the cause of God, and the miseries of man. Rather check than stimulate the taste of your husband for expense; tell him that it is not necessary for your happiness, nor for the comfort of the family; draw him away from luxury and display, to the mental improvement, the moral culture, the religious instruction of your children. Let knowledge, piety, good sense, well-formed habits, harmony, mutual love, be the sources of your domestic pleasures: what is splendour of furniture, or dress, or entertainments, to these?

6. A wife should be most attentive to all that concerns the welfare and comfort of the children, if there

be any. For this purpose, she must be a keeper at home. "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home." And how can the duties that devolve upon the female head of a family be well discharged, if she is not a keeper at home? On this I have dwelt already in a former chapter, but its importance will justify my returning to the subject again. How much has a woman with a young family to attend to; how many cares to sustain; how many activities to support! Whoever has leisure for gossiping, she has none; whoever may be found wandering from house to house, "hearing or telling some new thing," she must not. A mother's place is in the midst of her family; a mother's duty is to take care of them. Nothing can excuse the neglect of these; and yet we often see such neglect. Some are literary characters, and the welfare of the household is neglected for books. Not that I would debar a female from the luxury of reading, or degrade her to a mere domestic drudge, whose toils must never know the solace to be derived from a well chosen book; but her love for reading must be kept within due bounds, and not be allowed to interfere with her household duties. No husband can be pleased to see a book in the hands of a wife, while the house is in confusion, and the children's comfort unprovided for. Much less should a taste for company be allowed to draw a wife too much out of the circle of her cares and duties. To be wandering from house to house in the morning, or to stay out till a late hour evening after evening at parties, while children are left at home to themselves or to the care of servants, is certainly disgraceful. Even attention to the public duties of religion

must be regulated by a due regard to domestic claims. I am aware that many make such claims an excuse for neglecting the public means of grace almost entirely: with them the house of God is unfrequented; sermons, sacramental seasons, and all other religious meetings, are given up, in an absorbing attention to household affairs. This is one extreme; and the other is, such a devotedness to religious meetings, that the wants of a sick family, the cries of a hungry infant, or the most extraordinary case of family care, are not allowed to have any force in detaining a mother from a week-day sermon, a prayer meeting, or the anniversary of some public institution. It is no honour to religion for a wife, under such circumstances, to be seen in the house of God: duties cannot be in opposition to each other, and, at such a time, hers lies at home. It must be always distressing, and in some cases disgusting, for a husband, on his returning to a scene of domestic confusion, and seeing a neglected child in the cot, to be told, upon inquiring after the mother, that she is attending a sermon, or public meeting. There is great need for watchfulness in the present age, when female agency is in such requisition, lest attention to public institutions should interfere most injuriously with the duties of a wife and a mother. I know very well that an active woman may, by habits of order, punctuality, and despatch, so arrange her more direct and immediate duties at home, as to allow her sufficient leisure to assist the noble societies which solicit her patronage, without neglecting her husband and children; but where this cannot be done, no society, whether for purposes of humanity or religion, should be allowed to take her away from what is, after all, her first and more appro-

priate sphere. She must be a keeper at home, if any thing there demands her presence.

Such appear to me to be the leading duties of a wife. Motives of a very high and sacred character may be offered for a diligent performance of them. Her own comfort, and that of her husband, are of course most vitally connected with a fulfilment of her obligations: the welfare of her children is involved in it; and her own character depends upon it. To be a good wife is a high attainment in female excellence: it is woman's brightest glory since the fall. But there is one consideration of supreme importance mentioned by the apostle, to which I direct your attention: "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the words, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of their wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." What a powerful and tender consideration! Mark, my female friends, the implied eulogy passed by the apostle on your sex, where he seems to take it for granted, that if one party be destitute of religion, it is the husband. And facts prove the correctness of this assumption. Religion flourishes most among the female part of our species: in our congregations, and in our churches, the greatest number is of them. Can we account for this by natural causes? Partly. Women are more at home, and therefore more within the means of grace; they are more susceptible; they are less exposed to the temptations that harden the heart through the deceitfulness of sin; they are subject to more affliction, which softens the heart, and prepares it for the seed of the kingdom; but all this is not enough, for without grace all these advantages are unavailing;

we must resolve it, therefore, into divine purpose, divine interposition, and the arrangements of divine wisdom. Female influence in all civilised states is great; and God has generally made much use of this wherever the gospel has come, as one of the means of spreading religion. He pours his grace on them that their influence may be employed with others, especially their husbands and children. If, then, in any case a christian woman be united to an unconverted man, she must cherish and display a deep, and tender, and judicious solicitude for his salvation: and “what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband.” I would not encourage such marriages: I would not have the single try the doubtful and dangerous experiment of marrying an irreligious man, in the hope of converting him; in such cases the conversion is often the other way; but where the union is formed, there, I say, nourish the anxiety, and employ every discreet exertion, for his eternal welfare. Many instances have occurred in which the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife. She has drawn him with the cords of a tender and judicious love to a consideration of the subject of personal religion. Think of the value of a soul, and of the ineffable glory of being the instrument of its salvation. But O! to be the means of saving the soul of a husband! Think how it will strengthen that bond, and sanctify and sweeten it, which unites you on earth, and in time; and at the same time add to it a tie, by which you shall “not lose one another in the valley of the shadow of death,” but be united as kindred spirits, though not as man and wife, in heaven, and through eternity. “Think, O wife, of the happiness, the honour that awaits you. What is the triumph you

have acquired over him by your charms, compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion? What pleasure will attend you the remainder of your days, now you are of 'one heart and one mind;' now you 'take sweet counsel together.' The privileged language of prayer now is 'Our Father:' of every motion made to go and seek the Lord of Hosts, there is a ready acceptance, 'I will go also.' And what will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in that day, when before assembled men and angels he will say, 'O blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us in this. The woman thou gavest to be with me, led me not to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'"*

"But how is the solicitude to be employed? The apostle tells us: "that they may be won by the conversation of their wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." Your religion must be seen embodied in your whole character and conduct. It must commend itself to their judgment as sincere, by what they perceive. It must be consistent; for a want of uniformity, however earnest it may in many respects and at many times appear, will produce disgust. You must "let your light so shine before them, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify God." You must ever appear invested with all the beauty of a lovely example, which, though you be silent as it respects your tongue, is living eloquence. Your religion must diffuse its lustre over your whole character, and impress itself most deeply on your relation as a wife, and a mother; it must be a new motive to all that respect,

* Mr Jay.

reverence, devotedness, and meekness, which I have before recommended, and it must lead you to carry every conjugal and maternal virtue to the highest degree of perfection. It must be attended with the most profound humility, for if there be any spiritual pride, any conscious and manifest sense of superiority, any thing approaching to the pharisaic temper which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou," any thing like contempt for your husband, as an unconverted sinner, you will excite an inveterate prejudice, not only against religion, but against yourself; religion will be hated by him for your sake, and you for religion's sake. When you venture to speak to him on the subject of piety, it should be as remotely as possible from all lecturing, dictation, reproach, or conscious superiority; and with all possible tenderness, meekness, humility, and persuasive affection. Never talk to him of his state before others, and never talk at him. Nor are you likely to accomplish the object if you render him weary of it by your continued importunity. Many defeat their own end, by an incessant introduction of the subject; sometimes with an asperity that increases the revulsion, which in its nature it is calculated to produce in such a mind. An occasional hint, and that of the most tender, respectful, and delicate kind, is all you should attempt; you should leave your example to speak. Occasionally you may put an instructive volume in his way, and solicit his perusal of it. Do not have your religious friends too much about you, so as to annoy him: especially keep away as much as possible any that may have less discretion than the rest of them; and confine yourself to the more judicious and best informed.

Never rudely interfere with his pursuits, his reading, or his company, although they may not be what you can cordially approve. Till he is enlightened from above, he will not see the evil of these things, and to attempt to interrupt him in any other way than by the mildest and most respectful expostulation, will only do harm. Should he wish to draw you from your own pursuit of eternal life, you are not of course to yield to his persuasion in this case, or to make any concession, where your conscience is decidedly concerned in the matter. You must be firm, but mild. One attempt on his part, if successful, would only lead to another. But still, even in this extremity, your resistance of his attempts to interfere with your conscience, must be maintained with all meekness, and must be attended with fresh efforts to please, in all things which are lawful. If such a line of conduct should subject you to reproach, anger, and persecution, (a most painful yet by no means an uncommon case,) you must possess your soul in patience, and commit your way to Him that judgeth righteously. Many a persecuting husband has been subdued, if not to religion, yet to kinder conduct, by the meek and uncomplaining temper of his wife.

To sum up all. Let married people seek after more of the spirit of true religion, the spirit of faith, of hope, of prayer: a faith that really believes the word of God, and looks habitually to the cross of Christ, by which we obtain salvation, and to the eternal world, where we shall fully and for ever enjoy it: a hope that lives in the expectation and desire of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life; and a spirit of prayer which leads daily and hourly to the throne of divine grace for all

that aid of the Holy Ghost which we need, not only for the duties that refer to our relation to another world, but for those which devolve upon us in consequence of our relation to this. "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." The same principle of divine grace which unites us to God will bind us closer to each other. Religion contains in it, not only the seeds of immortal virtues, but of such as are mortal: not only the germs of excellences which are to flourish in the temple of heaven, but those which grow up in the house of our pilgrimage upon earth, to enliven with their beauty, and to refresh with their fragrance, the domestic circle. A good Christian cannot be a bad husband or father; and, other things being equal, he who has most piety, will shine most in all the relations of life. The Bible placed before man and wife as the basis of their union, the rule of their conduct, and the model of their spirit, will make up many a difference, comfort them under many a cross, guide them in many a strait wherein flesh and blood will be confounded and at a loss, support them in their last sad parting from each other, and re-unite them in the world where they shall no more go out.

"Those married pairs that live as remembering that they must part again, and give an account how they treat themselves and each other, shall, at the day of their death, be admitted to glorious espousals; and when they shall live again, be married to their Lord, and partake of his glories. All those things that now please us, shall pass from us, or we from them: but those things that concern the other life are permanent

as the numbers of eternity: and although at the resurrection there shall be no relation of husband and wife, and no marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb, yet then shall it be remembered how men and women passed through this state, which is a type of that; and from this sacramental union, all holy pairs shall pass to the spiritual and eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joys shall crown their heads, and they shall lie in the bosom of Jesus, and in the heart of God, to eternal ages." Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

**THE FORMATION OF THE
MARRIAGE UNION.**

“Methinks it is a misfortune that the marriage state, which, in its own nature, is adapted to give us the completest happiness this life is capable of, should be so uncomfortable a one to so many as it daily proves. But the mischief generally proceeds from the unwise choice people make for themselves, and an expectation of happiness from things incapable of giving it. Nothing but the good qualities of the person beloved can be a foundation for a love of judgment and discretion: and whoever expects happiness from any thing but virtue, good humour, and a similitude of manners, will find themselves widely mistaken.” THE SPECTATOR.

THE preceding chapters make it evident that marriage is a step of incalculable importance, and ought never to be taken without the greatest consideration and the utmost caution. If the duties of this state are so numerous and so weighty, and if the right discharge of these obligations, as well as the happiness of our own life, and even our safety for eternity, depend, as they necessarily must do, in no small measure upon the choice we make of a husband or wife, then let reason determine with what deliberation we should advance to such a connection. It is obvious that no decision during our whole earthly existence requires more of the exercise of a calm judgment than this; and yet observation

proves how rarely the judgment is allowed to give counsel, and how generally the imagination and the passions settle the business. A very great portion of the misery and crime with which society is depraved and afflicted, is the result of ill-formed marriages. If mere passion without prudence, or covetousness without love, be allowed to guide the choice, no wonder that it is improperly done, or that it is highly disastrous in its consequences. And how often are passion and covetousness alone consulted! To use the beautiful language quoted by me in another work, where I have treated briefly the subject of this chapter, I would remark, "that they who enter the marriage state cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, which her own folly hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes, but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though the man can run from many hours of sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neighbours, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply." If, however, it were merely the comfort of the married pair themselves that were concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence, a stake of less value; but the well-being of a family, not only for this world, but for the next, and the well-being of their descendants even to a remote period, depend upon this union. In

the ardour of passion, few are disposed to listen to the counsels of prudence; and perhaps there is no advice, generally speaking, more thrown away, than that which is offered on the subject of marriage. Most persons, even although they have not committed themselves by a promise, or even a declaration, will go on in the pursuit, blinded by love to the indiscretion of their choice; or will desperately determine, with the knowledge of that indiscretion, to accomplish, if possible, their purpose. Upon such individuals reasoning is wasted, and they must be left to gain wisdom in the only way by which some will acquire it, painful experience. To others, who may be yet disengaged, and disposed to hearken to the language of advice, the following remarks are offered.

In the affairs of marriage, be guided by the advice of your parents or guardians. Parents have no right to select for you, nor ought you to select for yourself without consulting them. How far they are vested with authority to prohibit you from marrying a person whom they disapprove, is a point of casuistry, very difficult to determine. If you are of age, and able to provide for yourselves, or are likely to be well provided for by those to whom you are about to be united, it is a question whether they can do any thing more than advise and persuade; but till you are of age, they have positive authority to forbid; and it is an undutiful act in you to form connexions without their knowledge, and to carry them on against their prohibitions. Their objections ought always, I admit, to be founded on reason, and not on caprice, pride, or cupidity: for where this is the case, and children are of full age, and are guided in their choice by prudence, by piety, and by affection, they

certainly may, and must, be left to decide for themselves. Where, however, parents rest their objections on sufficient grounds, and show plain and palpable reasons for prohibiting a connexion, there it is the manifest duty of sons, and especially of daughters, to give it up. A union formed in opposition to the reasonable objection of a discreet father or mother, is very rarely a happy one; and the bitter cup is rendered additionally bitter, in such a case, by the wormwood and gall of self-reproach. What miseries of this kind have we all seen! How many beacons are set up, if young people would but look at them, to warn them against the folly of giving themselves up to the impulse of an imprudent attachment, and of following it to a close, against the advice, remonstrance, and prohibition of their parents! Very seldom does that connexion prove otherwise than a source of wretchedness, on which the frown of an affectionate and wise father and mother fell from its commencement; for God seems to rise up in judgment, and to support the parents' authority, by confirming their displeasure with his own.

Marriage should in every case be formed upon the basis of mutual attachment. If there be no love before marriage, it cannot be expected there should be any after it. Lovers, as all are supposed to be who are looking forward to this union, without love, have no right to expect happiness; the coldness of indifference is likely, in their case, to be soon changed into aversion. There ought to be personal attachment. If there be any thing, even in the outward appearance, that excites disgust, the bans are forbidden by the voice of nature. I do not say that beauty of countenance, or elegance of form, is necessary; by no means: a pure and strong

attachment has often existed in the absence of these; and I will not take upon me to determine that it is absolutely impossible to love deformity, but we certainly ought not to unite ourselves with it, unless we can love it; or at least, are so enamoured with the fascination of mental qualities that may be united with it, as to lose sight of the body in the charms of the mind, the heart, and the manners. All I contend for is, that to proceed to marriage against absolute dislike and revulsion, is irrational, base, and sinful. But love should respect the mind, as well as the body; for to be attached to an individual simply on the ground of beauty, is to fall in love with a doll, a statue, or a picture; such an attachment is lust or fancy, certainly not rational affection. If we love the body, but do not love the mind, the heart, and the manners, our regard is placed upon the inferior part of the person, and, therefore, only upon that which by disease may be next year a very different thing to what it is now. Nothing fades so soon as beauty; it is but like the outside of fruit, which, however rich in colour and in bloom, will not, if the inside is disagreeable or even insipid, prevent it from being thrown away in disgust by the hand that plucked it. It is so commonly remarked as to be proverbial, that the charms of mind increase by acquaintance, while those of the person diminish; and that while the former easily reconcile us to a plain countenance, the latter increase, by the power of contrast, our distaste for insipidity, ignorance, and heartlessness, if united with them. Instead of determining to stake their happiness upon placing gaudy weeds in their bosom, men should think how they will look a few years hence, or how far they will adorn and bless their

habitation. Let the lover ask himself, will the understanding united with that countenance, render its possessor fit to be my companion, and the instructor of my children? Will that temper patiently bear with my weaknesses, kindly consult my tastes, affectionately study my comfort? Will those manners please me in solitude, as well as in society? Will those habits render my dwelling pleasant to myself and to my friends? Try these matters, and hold back your passions, that you may take counsel with judgment, and suffer reason to come down and talk with you in the cool of the evening. Such is the love on which marriage should be contracted, love to the whole person; love to the mind, and heart, and manners, as well as to the countenance and form; love tempered with respect; for this only is the attachment that is likely to survive the charms of novelty, the spoliation of disease, and the influence of time; that is likely to support the gentle sympathies and tender sensibilities of the conjugal state; and render man and wife, to the extreme of old age, what it was the intention of Him who instituted the marriage union they should be, the help and the comfort of each other. By what language, then, sufficiently strong and indignant, can we reprobate those compacts, so disgraceful, and yet so common, by which marriage is converted into a money speculation, a trading enterprise, a mere business of pounds, shillings, and pence? How cruel a part do those parents act, who for the sake of an advantageous settlement, urge their daughters into a union from which their hearts revolt; or persuade their sons, merely for the sake of money, to marry women towards whom they feel no affection. Unnatural fathers and mothers! Is it thus ye would lead your children,

decorated as sacrifices, to the shrine of Mammon, and act the part of priests and priestesses yourselves, in the immolation of these hapless victims? What! will you assist in this legal prostitution? Can none others be found but you, the natural guardians of your children's interests, to persuade them to sell their persons, and barter all the happiness of their future lives for gold? Will you make yourselves responsible for all the future miseries of your children and your children's children, by recommending such a sordid compact? Forbear, I entreat you, for your own sake, for your children's sake, and for the sake of society, to urge or even recommend to them, a marriage not founded on pure strong and reciprocal attachment.

Young people themselves should be extremely careful on their own part to let no persuasions of others, no impulse of their own covetousness, no anxiety to be their own masters and mistresses, no ambition for worldly splendour, induce them to enter into a connexion to which they are not drawn by the solicitations of pure and virtuous love. What will a large house, splendid furniture, a gay equipage, and fashionable entertainments, do for their possessor, in the absence of connubial love? "Is it for these baubles, these toys," exclaims the wretched heart, as it awakens, alas! too late, in some sad scene of domestic woe, "is it for this I have bartered away myself, my happiness, my life?"

O, there is a sweetness, a charm, a power to please, in the pure and mutual affection of husband and wife, though in the humblest abode, and amidst the greatest difficulties, compared with which, the elegance and brilliancy of worldly grandeur are but as the splendour

of an eastern palace to one of the bowers of the garden of Eden. Let every man nobly determine to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and find the task sweetened by the thought that it is for the woman he loves, rather than to roll about in his carriage, and live a life of splendid indolence and misery, with a woman he does not love: and let the other sex as nobly and heroically determine to trust for their support to Providence and their own energies, rather than marry without affection, for the sake of a settlement.

Some women commit another error; having been disappointed in the marriage for which they had hoped, they become reckless for the future, and in a temper of mind bordering upon revenge, accept the first individual who may present himself, whether they love him or not. This is the last degree of folly, and is such an act of suicidal violence upon their own peace, as can be neither described nor reprobated in terms sufficiently strong. This is to act like the enraged scorpion, and to turn their sting upon themselves; and in a fit of spleen to sacrifice their happiness to folly. And on whom also does this mad spite fall? Upon a man who has done them no harm; but on the contrary, has attempted to heal the breach made in their happiness, but to whom, in return, they bring a heart given to another. How much more rational, how much more conducive to their own comfort, and how much more honourable is it, in a case like this, to wait till time and piety have healed the wound, and left the heart at liberty for another attachment; or even to remain in perpetual celibacy, rather than marry without that which alone can constitute a virtuous marriage, sincere affection.

Marriage should ever be contracted with the strictest

regard to the rules of prudence. Discretion is a virtue at which none but fools laugh. In reference to no subject is it more frequently set aside and despised than to that which of all that can be mentioned, most needs its sober counsels. For love to be seen standing at the oracle of wisdom is thought, by some romantic and silly young people, to be a thing altogether out of place. If they only were concerned, they might be left to their folly, to be punished by its fruits: but imprudent marriages, as I have already said, spread far and wide their bad consequences, and also send those consequences down to posterity. The understanding is given to us to control the passions and the imagination; and those who in an affair of such consequence as choosing a companion for life, set aside the testimony of the former, and listen only to the voice of the latter, have, in that instance at least, forfeited the character of rational beings, and sunk to the level of those creatures who are wholly governed by appetite unchecked by reason. Prudence, if it were allowed to guide the conduct of mankind, would prevent a very large portion of human misery. In the business before us it would allow none to marry till they have a prospect of support. It is perfectly obvious to me that the present generation of young people are not distinguished by discretion in this respect; many are too much in haste to enter the conjugal state, and place themselves at the heads of families before they have any rational hope of being able to support them. Almost as soon as they arrive at the age of manhood, whether they are in business or not, before they have ascertained whether their business will succeed or not, they look round for a wife, and make a hasty, often an injudicious selection. A family

comes on before they have adequate means of maintaining it; their affairs become embarrassed; bankruptcy ensues; their prospects are clouded for ever; they become burdens upon their friends; and their misery, together with that of the partner of their folly, and of their hapless children, is sealed for the term of their existence upon earth. How many instances of this kind have we all known, which were sad and impressive comments on the sin and folly of improvident marriages. Let young people exercise their reason and their foresight; or if they will not, but are determined to rush into the expenses of housekeeping, before they have opened sources to meet them, let them hear, in spite of the syren song of their imagination the voice of faithful warning, and prepare to eat the bitter herbs of useless regrets, for many a long and weary year after the nuptial feast has passed away.

Prudence forbids all unequal marriages. There should be an equality, as near as may be, in age; "for," says Mr Jay, "how unnatural, how indecent, is it to see an old man surrounded; with infants and babes, when he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious, is it to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity, so as to perplex strangers to determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother! "No one will give the woman, in the one case, or the man in the other, the credit of marrying for love; and the world will be ill-natured enough, and one can hardly help joining in the censoriousness, to say that such a match was a mere pecuniary speculation; for, generally speaking, the old party in the union is a rich one; and as generally, they

carry a scourge for the other in their purse. A fortune has often thus been a misfortune for both.

Equality of rank is desirable. Instances have occurred in which respectable men have married servants, and yet maintained their respectability, and enjoyed a full cup of domestic comfort: but such cases are rare, and generally contain some circumstances of peculiarity. But it is much less perilous for a rich man to descend into the vale of poverty for a wife, than it is for a rich woman to make the descent for a husband. He can much more easily raise his companion to his own level than she can. Society will much more readily accommodate themselves to his error, than to hers. Much of the happiness of the conjugal state depends upon the relatives of the parties, and in the case of a marriage which has offended or degraded them, how, much of bitterness is it in their power to throw into the cup of enjoyment! Many a wife has carried to the grave the sting inflicted upon her peace, by the insults of her husband's friends: and in all such cases, he must receive a part of the venom.

“It has been said that no class of men err so much in this article as ministers. But surely this cannot be admitted. It cannot be supposed that those whose office it is to inculcate prudence, should themselves be proverbial for indiscretion. It cannot be supposed that those whose incomes are limited, and whose circumstances demand economy, would bring into the management of them those who have been trained up in delicacy and extravagance, and are helpless and profuse. It cannot be supposed that men, whose office is respectable, and productive of social intercourse, would select vulgarity and ignorance, unfit to be either seen or heard, merely because it is pious. A minister is to inculcate order and regularity; and would he marry a female that would render his house a scene of confusion and tumult? A minister is to show how the claims

of life and religion harmonise, and to assign to the duties of each, their own place and season; and would he marry a rattle-brain, who instead of being a keeper at home, has been always rambling after some new preacher; who, instead of quietly glorifying God in her own sphere of action, has been endeavouring to excite public attention; who has been zealous in matters of doubtful disputation, but has treated, as beneath her regard, matters of common and relative obligations? Need he be told, that a becoming behaviour in a lower and private station, is the surest pledge of, and the best preparation for, a proper behaviour in a higher and more public situation? A minister is to recommend neatness, and all the decencies of life, and would he marry a slattern? A minister is to show that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, and would he marry a scold? A minister is to stand in the same relation to all his people, who demand his love and service, and would he marry a female who would fondly attach herself to a few cronies, listen to all their secrets, and divulge her own, and form cabals and schisms, which will render his residence unpleasant, or occasion his removal?"

To my brethren in the ministry I do recommend, with an earnestness which I have no language sufficiently emphatic to express, the greatest caution in this most delicate and important affair. In their case the effects of an imprudent marriage are felt in the church of God. If the wives of the deacons are to be "grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things," what less can be required of the wives of the pastors? "A bishop must be blameless, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? But how can he exhibit in his domestic constitution, the beautiful order and harmony which should prevail in every Christian family, and especially in every minister's house, without the intelligent and industrious co-operation of his wife: and how can this be expected of one who has no intelligence or industry? Not only much of the

comfort, but of the character of a minister, and what is of still greater consequence, much of his usefulness, depends upon his wife. How many have been driven away from scenes of successful labour, or rendered uncomfortable in the midst of them, by the mismanagement of their wives, who have plunged their husbands into debt, and thus blasted their respectability: or by pride, petulance, vulgarity, meanness, and busy interference, by which they have involved them in perpetual strife with their congregation, neighbours, or tradesmen. Considering, therefore, how much mischief may be done by their indiscretion, ministers should consider imprudence in marriage in the light of a great sin. And their guilt in the commission of this sin is the greater, as they have less excuse for it than others; for they have only to exercise patience, and restrain themselves from hasty and injudicious entanglements, and avail themselves of the advantages which their situation gives them, to obtain companions that will be to them, both as men and ministers, helpers of their joy. Some widowers, in selecting a second wife, have consulted their children's comfort, more than their own taste; whether this be right or wrong in their case, I shall presently consider: but certainly a minister, while he is allowed the usual privileges of following his own predilections, ought never to gratify his taste at the expense of his official respectability, or at the risk of his usefulness; but should in the choice of a wife be guided by a view to the comfort of his church, as well as by a reference to his own happiness.

Marriage should always be formed with a due regard to the dictates of religion. A pious person should not marry any one who is not pious. It is not desirable to

be united to an individual of a different denomination, who, as a point of conscience, attends her own place of worship. It is not pleasant on a Sabbath morning to separate, and go, one to one place of worship, and the other to another. The most delightful walk that a holy couple can take, is to the house of God in company; when they take sweet counsel together in reference to the high themes of redemption and the invisible realities of eternity. No one would willingly lose this. But oh, to walk separately in a still more important and dreadful sense! To part at the point where the two roads to eternity branch off, the one to heaven, the other to hell; and for the believer "to travel on to glory, with the dreadful consciousness that the other party is journeying to perdition!!" This is indeed dreadful, and is of itself sufficient to occasion no small diminution of conjugal felicity. If, however, the parties' comfort only were concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence: but it is a matter of conscience, and an affair in which they have no option. "She is at liberty to marry whom she will," says the apostle, speaking to the case of a widow, "but only in the Lord." Now though this was said in reference to a female, all the reasons of the law belong with equal force to the other sex. This appears to me to be not only advice, but law, and if so, is as binding upon the conscience as any other law that we find in the Word of God; and the incidental manner in which this injunction occurs, is, as has been very properly remarked, to the intelligent reader of Scripture, the strongest confirmation of the rule in all cases where marriage is in prospect, and where there has been no engagement previous to conversion. As to the other passage, where the apostle commands, us not

to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, it does not apply to marriage, except by inference, but to church fellowship, or rather to association and conduct in general, in reference to which professing Christians are not to symbolise with unbelievers. But if this be improper, in regard to other matters, how much more so in that connexion which has so powerful an influence over our character, as well as our happiness. For a Christian, then, to marry an individual who is not decidedly and evidently a pious person, is a direct opposition to the Word of God.

And as Scripture is against it, so also is reason; for “how can two walk together unless they be agreed?” A difference of taste in minor matters is an impediment in the way of domestic comfort: but to be opposed to each other on the all-important subject of religion is a risk, even as it respects mere comfort, which no prudent person should be induced, on any considerations, to incur. How can the higher ends of the domestic constitution be answered, where one of the parents has not the spiritual qualifications necessary for accomplishing them? How can the work of religious education be conducted, and the children be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? And as it respects individual and personal assistance in religious matters, do we not all want helps instead of hindrances? A Christian should make everything bend to religion, but allow religion to bend to nothing. This is the one thing needful, to which everything should be subordinate; and surely, to place out of consideration the affairs of his eternal salvation in so important a concern as marriage, shows either that the religion of a person who acts thus, is but profession, or likely soon to become so. The neglect

of this plain and reasonable rule, is becoming, I am afraid, more and more prevalent. I do not wonder at all that this subject should have excited the attention of the ministers of religion, and that "The Congregational Association" for Wiltshire, should, at their yearly meeting in eighteen hundred and six, have come to the following resolution: "Deploring the little regard of late years paid by too many professors of religion to the christian rule of marriage; and deeming it desirable that the attention of the public in general, and our own churches in particular, should be called to this subject; we do unanimously request the Rev. W. Jay to publish some strictures upon it."

In the excellent treatise which Mr Jay published in compliance with this request, he makes the following just and important remarks:

"How deplorable is it that this christian rule of marriage is so frequently trampled upon. The violation is, in the degree of it at least, peculiar to our own age. Our pious ancestors, especially among the nonconformists, would have been shocked at the practice, as appears from their invaluable writings. And I am persuaded that it is very much owing to the prevalence of these indiscriminate and unhallowed connexions, that we have fallen so far short of those men of God who are gone before us, in our seclusion from the world, in the simplicity of our manners, in the uniformity of our profession, in the discharge of family worship, and in the training up of our households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

No one should contemplate the prospect of such a connexion as marriage, without the greatest and most serious deliberation; nor without the most earnest prayer to God for direction. Prayer, to be acceptable to the Almighty, should be sincere, and presented with a real desire to know and do his will. Many, I believe, act towards the Deity as they do towards their friends;

they make up their minds, and then ask to be directed. They have some doubts, and very often strong ones, of the propriety of the step they are about to take, which are gradually dissipated by their supplications, till they have prayed themselves into a conviction that they are quite right in the decision, which they had, in fact, already made. To pray for direction in an affair which we know to be in opposition to God's Word, and on which we have already resolved to act, is adding hypocrisy to rebellion. If there be reason to believe that the individual who solicits a Christian to unite herself with him in marriage is not truly pious, what need has she of praying to be directed? This seems like asking the Almighty to be permitted to do that which he has forbidden to be done.*

In the case of widows and widowers, especially where there is a family, peculiar prudence is necessary. I have known instances in which such persons have sacrificed all their own tastes and predilections, and have made their selection with exclusive reference to their children. Such a sacrifice is indeed generous; but it is a question whether it is discreet. It is placing their own comfort, and even character, in some degree of peril, neither of which can be lost without most serious mischief to the very children whose interests they have so heroically consulted. This, however, is an error much more rare and venial than that of the opposite extreme. How unseemly and inconsiderate is it for a sexagenarian to bring home a young wife, and place her over daughters older than herself, and introduce into the family circle, aunts and uncles younger than some of their nephews and nieces. Rare is the case in which such an inexpedient connection is formed, without the parties losing

much of their own reputation, and destroying much of the comfort of their family. Let not such men wonder if their daughters by the first marriage, are driven from their home by the consequences of the second, and are led to form imprudent matches.

In the selection of a second companion for life, where the first has been eminent for talents or virtues, much care should be taken that there be no great and striking inferiority; for in such a case,

“Busy, meddling memory,
In barbarous succession, musters up
The past endearments of their softer hours;”

which form a contrast ever present, and ever painful. The man that never knew by experience the joy of a happy marriage, can never know the ills of an imprudent one, as aggravated by the power of comparison. Let him that has thus known them, beware how he expose himself to such helpless, hopeless misery.

Due care should also be exercised in reference to the children's interests. Has the woman about to be selected, that principle, that prudence, that self-control, that good temper, which, if she becomes herself a mother, will help her to conceal her partialities (for to suppress them is impossible, and would be unnatural,) and to seem to be no less kind to her adopted offspring than to her own? That man acts a most cruel, a most wicked part, towards the memory of his first wife, who does not provide for her children a kind and judicious friend in his second. “What is it but a dread of this that has sometimes made a woman upon her dying bed break through the rules of propriety, and recommend her successor in the house, heart, and arms of her husband? She trembled for her children, and seemed,

at that sad moment, to have become willing to be forgotten, provided her babes could find a second mother in a woman selected by herself to fill her place. Let me, then, become the advocate of fatherless or motherless children, and entreat, for the sake, both of the living and the dead, a due regard for the comfort of these orphans.

Nor should less deliberation be exercised before undertaking the care of another person's children. Have you love enough for the surviving parent, to bear the burden of care for his or her sake? Have you kindness enough, temper enough, discretion enough, for the office? There is no difficulty as to children who are lovely in person, and amiable in temper; but if they have no personal attractions, no charms of mind, no endearments of character, then is the time to realise the truth of Mr Jay's expression, "a wife may be supplied, a mother cannot." The man, or the woman, who can act a parent's part towards a froward and unlovely step-child, must have more than natural principle and kindness; they may suffice for a real parent, but divine grace alone can meet this case. Let those who are invited to take the superintendence of families, in the circumstances to which I am alluding, ask themselves if they possess the requisites for the comfortable and satisfactory discharge of its duties. Let them inquire whether it is likely they can be happy in such a situation themselves; for if not, they had far better never enter upon it, as their unhappiness must inevitably fill the whole family circle with misery.

It cannot be sufficiently deplored that all suitable preparation for the marriage state is usually put aside for the busy activities of vanity, which in fact are but

as dust in the balance of the conjugal destiny. Every thought, anticipation, and anxiety, is too often absorbed in the selection of a house and furniture; and in matters still more insignificant and frivolous. How common is it for a female, day after day, and week after week, to spend, in communion with her milliner, debating and discussing the subject of the colour and form and material in which she is to shine forth in nuptial splendour, the hours which ought to be employed in meditating on the eventful step which is to fix for life her destiny, and that of her intended husband; as if the great object were to appear a gay and fashionable bride, rather than to be a good and happy wife. And most pitiable is it to see some mothers ministering to this folly, and flattering the vanity of their daughters, instead of preparing them by judicious and seasonable counsels, for discharging the duties of the new and important connexion into which they are about to enter.

“Study the duties of marriage before you enter into it. There are crosses to be borne, there are snares to be avoided, and manifold obligations to be discharged, as well as great felicity to be enjoyed. And should no provision be made? For want of this, result the frequent disappointments of that honourable estate. Hence that repentance which is at once too soon and too late. The husband knows not how to rule; and the wife knows not how to obey. Both are ignorant, both conceited, and both miserable.”

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

CHAPTER V.

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS.

“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” EPHES. vi, 4.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” PROV. xxii, 6.

“And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” DEUT. vi, 6, 7.

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” MAL. iv, 6.

It is an interesting and important era in the history of domestic life, when the husband and wife receive the new names of father and mother, and become united by the supplemental tie furnished by the little helpless being which has become part of the household. Who that has felt them can ever forget the emotions awakened by the first gaze upon the face of his child; by the first embrace of his babe? Little, however, do the bulk of mankind consider what a weight of obligation, what a degree of responsibility, that child has brought into the world with him for his parents. In the joyousness with which the mother lavishes her fond embraces

upon her boy, and in the paternal pride with which the father looks on this new object of their affection, how rarely does either of them revolve in deep seriousness, the future destiny of this new idol of their hearts; or consider how nearly that destiny is connected with their own conduct. Parental obligations are neither felt nor known by multitudes. How then can they be discharged? Rushing into the connexion of marriage under the mere impulse of passion, without forethought, and without prudence, multitudes become parents, before they have one right view, or one right feeling, in reference to the duties of the parental relationship; and they come to it with scarcely any other preparedness than the mere animal fondness for their young, which they partake of in common with the irrational creation; but not with the same instinctive ability, "to train them up in the way they should go." Who can wonder at the disordered state of society at large, or be surprised at the abounding of evils and miseries in our world, that looks at the manner in which domestic duties are neglected? When I consider what poor, ignorant, thoughtless, frivolous, wicked creatures are often seen at the head of households, I can only ascribe it to the interference of an all-wise and powerful Providence, that society is not far more chaotic than it is.

My business in this chapter is to endeavour to rectify if possible, some of these evils, and to lay down a rule to guide the parent in discharging his truly important and awfully responsible obligation; persuaded as I am, that many of the evils and miseries of society would vanish before a right performance of parental duties.

1. It is impossible for parents to discharge their duty, without a correct view of the nature of the domes-

tic constitution. They must study this anxiously and deeply, under the conviction which should ever be impressed on their minds, that the great design of the compact is, to form well the character of their children; to train up citizens for the world, and Christians for the church; to assist each child, as a mortal, to go with honour and comfort through this life, and as an immortal, to reach life everlasting. The domestic circle is intended to be the school of character, where, in the highest sense of the term, the most important business of education is to be conducted, where the moral sense is to be implanted and cultivated, and the conscience, temper, and heart, are all to be trained.

2. Parents should be most deeply impressed and affected with a sense of the importance of the station they occupy in the domestic constitution. Their state of mind should be the very opposite of that light and frivolous indifference, that absence of all anxiety, which many of them manifest. There are some who seem to regard their children as pretty little living playthings, that must be well taken care of, and be taught, by somebody or other, whatever will set them off to the best advantage: but as to any idea of the formation of their character, especially of their moral and religious character, and that deep solicitude, which would arise from a clear perception and powerful impression of the probable connexion between the child's destiny and the parent's conduct; to these they are utter strangers. Many horticulturists have far more intense solicitude about raising a new variety, far more wakeful and anxious care about the fragrance and colour of a flower, or the size and flavour of a fruit, than many parents have about the development of mind, and the

formation of character in a child. They have plants of immortality in their house, young trees which are to bear fruits to eternity, growing up around them, the training of which is committed to their care, and yet have very little anxiety, and scarcely any thoughtfulness, whether they yield in this world or the next, poisonous or wholesome produce. On parents it depends in a great measure what their children are to be, whether miserable or happy in themselves; a comfort or a curse to their connexions; the ornament or the deformity of society; fiends or seraphs throughout eternity. It is indeed an awful thing to be a parent, and it is enough to awaken the anxious, trembling inquiry in every heart, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things."

3. Parents should seek after the possession of all possible qualifications for their office. What man in his senses would undertake the office of a pilot upon a dangerous coast, without a knowledge of navigation? Or that of a general of an army, without a knowledge of military tactics? Or that of a physician, without a knowledge of medicine and disease? And who would, having the duties of a parent to discharge, go on another hour, without seeking to possess all suitable qualifications for it? And what are they?

Genuine personal religion: for how can parents bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they do not know the Lord themselves? In order to teach religion, with any probable effect, we must know it ourselves. That parent will have little ability, and less inclination, to inculcate piety upon his children, who has none himself. A graceless parent is a most awful character! Oh! to see the father and mother of a rising family, with a crowd of young im-

mortals growing up around them, teaching irreligion to their offspring, and leading them to perdition, by the power of their own example? A sheep leading her twin lambs into the cover of a hungry tiger, would be a painful sight; but to see parents by their own irreligion, or want of religion, conducting their family to the bottomless pit, is most horrible! No one then can rightly discharge the duties of a parent, in the higher relations of the family compact, without that personal religion which consists in repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a life of habitual holiness. In the absence of this, the highest end of the domestic constitution must be neglected, the sublimest part of education must be abandoned.

Parents should seek the entire government of their temper; a habit of self-control; a meekness not to be disturbed by the greatest provocation; a patience not to be wearied by long-continued opposition. I say to any father or mother, are you irritable, petulant? If so, begin this moment the work of subjugating your temper. You are in imminent peril of ruining your family. A passionate mother or father is like a fury, with a sceptre in one hand, and a firebrand in the other; and when the king is a fury, the subjects are likely to be furies too; for nothing is more contagious than bad temper. O how many parents have had to bewail, with weeping eyes, and almost broken hearts, the effects of their own irritability as they became apparent in the headstrong, passionate dispositions of their children! It is against this evil that the admonition of the apostle is directed, "forbearing threatening." Passion blinds the judgment, leads to undue severity, fosters partialities; in short, is the source of a thousand

evils in the domestic government. An irritable person can never manage discipline with propriety; but is ever prone to correct in a rage, which incapacitates for administering correction. Parents, I beseech you to control your temper, and acquire a calm, imperturbable disposition, for this only can fit you to rule your household in wisdom, justice, and love.

A habit of discrimination is a very important qualification in parents; a penetrating insight into character; an acuteness in judging of motives. Such a talent is of immense consequence in the domestic community; and connected with this, a quickness in discerning dispositions, together with an inventive and ingenious faculty of adapting their treatment to the varieties of character and propensity which are continually exhibiting themselves.

A kindness of manner, an affectionate, persuasive address, is of great importance. It is desirable for parents to render their company pleasant to their children, to engage their confidence, to exert over them the influence of love, which certainly cannot be done by a cold, or churlish, or distant behaviour.

Prudence and good sense are qualities of such inestimable worth, and depend so much upon education, that all who have the care of children should perpetually exhibit them for imitation. A rash, thoughtless father, or a wild, romantic mother, do incalculable mischief in a family.

Firmness is essentially requisite in parents; the disposition, which, though at the remotest distance from all that is rigid stern and cruel, can master its own feelings, and amidst the strongest appeals to the tender emotions of the mind, can inflexibly maintain its

purpose; and which in the way of denying improper requests, or administering correction, can inflict pain on the object of its affection whenever duty requires such an exercise of beneficial severity. For want of this fine and noble quality, how many have ruined their children for ever by indulgence!

Varied information and extensive knowledge are very desirable. Parents should be able to direct the studies, to answer the enquiries, to correct the mistakes, to regulate the pursuits, and in short to superintend the general instruction, of their families.

Unvarying and inflexible consistency should be exhibited by all whom Providence has placed at the head of a household. They should be not only excellent, but consistently excellent. An unbroken uniformity should reign over their whole character. Nothing contradictory, inexplicable, irreconcilable, should ever be seen.

Let all who are likely to become parents, look at this picture, and learn how they are to prepare for the performance of their duty; and let those who already sustain this relationship, correct their errors and supply their defects by this rule.

4. Parents should settle with themselves, what is their chief desire and highest object of pursuit, in reference to their children. Without fixing on some end, we shall never, in any course of action, proceed with much steadiness, comfort, or success: and where many ends are, and may be, with propriety contemplated and sought, the chief one must be definitely selected, and continually kept in view, or we shall ever be in danger of misapplying our energies. Let parents then consider the ends which they should propose to themselves, in reference to their children, and decide among all those

that are lawful, which is supreme, and which are subordinate. There are many lawful ones, but only one of these can be supreme. And what is that? Religion. What Christian can for a moment hesitate here? What genuine believer can question whether his children's eternal salvation ought to be the supreme solicitude of his heart?

If we look to the great bulk of mankind, it is perfectly evident that religion hardly enters into their views; they are very willing that their children should go to church or to chapel, according as they themselves are church people or dissenters; but as to any anxiety about the religious character, the formation of pious habits, they are as destitute of every thing of this kind, as if religion were a fable, or were nothing more than a mere Sabbath-day form. Their chief object is, either elegant and fashionable accomplishments, or learning and science, or perhaps prudence and good sense; and, provided their sons and daughters excel in these, they never make any inquiry, or feel any anxiety, whether they fear God; and would not only be surprised, but would either laugh you to scorn, or scowl upon you with indignation, for proposing such fanatical or methodistical questions, in reference to their children. Yes, this is the way of the greater part of parents, even in this religious country. To train them up to shine and make a figure in society is all they seek. Amazing folly! Dreadful and murderous cruelty! Degrading and grovelling ambition! To lose sight of the soul, and neglect salvation, and forget immortality! To train them in every kind of knowledge, except the knowledge of religion; to instruct them in an acquaintance with every kind of subject, and leave them in ignorance

of God, their Creator, their Preserver, and Benefactor! To fit them to act their part well on earth, and to leave them unprepared for heaven! To qualify them to go with respectability and advantage, through the scenes of time, and then to leave them unmeet for the glorious and enduring realities of eternity! O strange fondness in irreligious parents! O miserable destiny of their hapless offspring.

In direct opposition to this, the chief end of every Christian parent should be the spiritual interests, the religious character, and the eternal salvation of his children. Believing that they are sinful and immortal creatures, yet capable of being redeemed through the mediation of Christ, his highest ambition, his most earnest prayer, his most vigorous pursuit, should be engaged for their eternal welfare. His eye, his heart, and his hope, should be fixed on the same object for them, as they are for himself, and that is, upon eternal life. This should be the nature and exercise of his anxiety: "I am desirous, if it please God, that my children should be blessed with the enjoyment of reason, of health, of such a moderate portion of worldly wealth and respectability, as is compatible with their station in life; and with a view to this, I will give them all the advantages of a suitable education; but above and beyond this, I far more intensely desire, and far more earnestly pray, and far more anxiously seek, that they may have the fear of God in their hearts, may be made partakers of true religion, and be everlastingly saved. And provided God grant me the latter, by bestowing upon them his grace, I shall feel that my chief object is accomplished,, and be quite reconciled to any circumstances which may otherwise befall them; for I would

rather see them in the humble vale of poverty, if, at the same time, they were true Christians, than on the very pinnacle of worldly grandeur, but destitute of true piety." Such should be the views, and feelings, and desires, of all true christian parents: religion should be at the very centre of all their schemes and pursuits for their offspring. This should be the guiding principle, the directing object, the great land-mark by which all their course should be steered.

Having made these preliminary remarks, I go on to enumerate and illustrate the various branches of parental duty.

I. There are some which relate more directly to the present life, and the formation of the character generally.

1. Maintenance is of course a claim which every child justly prefers upon his parents, till he is of a sufficient age to be able to provide for himself.

2. Scholastic instruction is another duty we owe our children. The dark ages are happily past away, and a flood of light is now poured, and is still pouring, over all classes of the people. Instruction is become general, and those who are too poor to buy knowledge for their children, are not ashamed to beg it in our Sunday and charity schools. No man should suffer his family to be in this respect behind the age in which they live. To grudge money spent in this way, is a cruel and detestable niggardliness. A good education is a portion, the only one which some are able to give to their children, and which in many cases has led to every other kind of wealth. In this, however, we are to be guided by our rank in life and circumstances; and for a labouring man, or a small tradesman, to impoverish himself in order to procure the same kind and degrees of accom-

plishment for his children, as a rich man and a nobleman would for theirs, is ambition sanctioned neither by reason nor revelation. Where it can be accomplished, parents should prefer domestic instruction to sending their children away from home: no school can possess the advantages which are to be enjoyed under the eye of a judicious father or mother. But how few are judicious; how few are equal to the task of the general superintendence of their children's instruction; and how few can command advantages for it at home! Let all such be careful in the selection of a school, for it is a matter of infinite consequence. Let them be guided in their choice, not by a mere regard to accomplishments, not by a view to the best drawing, dancing, music, or Latin master. This is an age of gaudy exterior decoration. But let them first regard religion, then the real cultivation of the mind, and the formation of good habits. Wherever real piety is inculcated, a thirst for knowledge excited, and habits of application, reflection, sobriety of judgment, and good sense, are formed, that is the school to be selected by a wise and christian parent. No word is more generally abused than education: in the minds of many it signifies nothing more than the communication of knowledge. But this is only a part, and a small part, of education, which means the formation of character. A youth may have his head stuffed full of Latin, Greek, mathematics, and natural philosophy; a girl may draw, and dance, and play, and speak French, exquisitely, and yet both may be miserably educated after all. Integrity, good sense, generosity, and a capacity for reflection, are worth all the acquirements which even a university can bestow. Not, however, that these are incompatible with each other; by

no means: and the perfection of education is the union of both.

3. A due regard to the health of children should be maintained. Physical education is of no small importance. Knowledge gained at the expense of health, is purchased at a dreadful rate. And there are ways of injuring the health of children, besides a too close application to learning, for this indeed but rarely occurs. Fond and foolish mothers should be warned against pampering their appetites with sweets, corrupting their blood with unwholesome dainties, or impairing the tone of their stomachs with fermented liquors. Infanticide is practised even in this christian land, by many who never dream that they are child-murderers: they do not kill their babes by strangling them or poisoning them; no, but by pampering or stuffing them to death. And where they do not go to this extreme, they raise up a circle of gluttons or drunkards. Nothing can be more disgusting than to see children invited to eat all the delicacies of the dinner, and afterwards to drink the health of the company in wine, all which their young palates ought to be strangers to. And lamentably injudicious it is, to make the gratification of the appetite a reward for good conduct, the mischief goes beyond the corruption of their health, for it brings them up to be governed by appetite, rather than by reason; which is the secret cause of all the intemperance and profligacy of the world. Settle your plans on this subject, and suffer neither a favourite servant, nor a kind aunt, nor a doting grandpapa, to come between you and the welfare of your children.

4. Bring up your children with low notions of the importance of riches and worldly show, and of the

power which these things have, either to give respectability to the character or to procure happiness. Do not let them hear you magnify the value of wealth by your words, nor see you do it by your actions. Avoid obsequious attention to the rich and great; point not to them as the individuals most to be admired and envied. Discover no undue solicitude about grandeur of abode or furniture. From the time that they are capable of receiving an idea or an impression, teach them it is character that constitutes true respectability: that a good man is reputable in any circumstances, a bad man in none. Remind them of the danger of riches, and that they are Satan's baits to tempt men to love the world and lose their souls. Not that you should produce a cynical disposition towards either riches or the rich; much less repress industry and foster indolence: but you should encourage them to consider and seek wealth, rather as a means of usefulness, than a source of personal gratification.

5. Inculcate industrious habits. Caution them against sauntering and slothfulness. From the dawn of reason endeavour to convince them, not merely by argument, but by a reference to their own experience, that employment is pleasure, and idleness misery. Impress them with the value of time; that it is the stuff of which life is made, and that we lose as much of life as we do of time. And connected with this, enforce habits of order and punctuality. The parent that neglects to do this is guilty of much unkindness towards his children; for, if they grow up without these qualities, they find themselves at great disadvantage, and are a source of great discomfort to their friends.

6. Economy is no less necessary. Industry and

economy are virtues of civilized life. Savages never possess them, but spend their time in idleness, and squander what comes in their way in wastefulness. It is reason overcoming the indolence natural to man and producing forethought, that endows him with industry and economy; without these virtues civil society cannot exist, and therefore our greatest efforts should be employed to foster them in the minds of our children. But in inculcating economy, we must be careful not to drive them into covetousness; with all our endeavours to cherish frugality, we should be no less assiduous to encourage generosity; and to impress them with the idea, that the end of saving is not to hoard, but to distribute to the wants of others.

7. Provide for your children suitable employment. Happily the pride and indolence of feudal times are gone by, and it is our felicity to live in a country where trade and industry are accounted honourable, and where rank is marked by degrees which are almost imperceptible; where a poor, proud gentleman, that scorns the vulgarity of trade, begins to be thought a very despicable character; and the diligent, honest, and successful tradesman is regarded as an honourable member of the community. "The good, sound, common sense of mankind will never annex character to a useless life. He who merely hangs as a burden on the shoulders of his fellow-men, who adds nothing to the common stock of comfort, and merely spends his time in devouring it, will be invariably, as well as justly, accounted a public nuisance." Let parents therefore take care to bring up their children to some suitable business; and in the selection of it due regard should be had to their own circumstances; for it is great folly, and unkind-

ness also, to select for a child a business so much above his father's station and property, as to leave no rational hope that he can ever enter upon it with a prospect of success. In the advance of society we see innumerable instances of foolish pride of this kind; and indeed it is a very general thing for parents to be ambitious to obtain for their children a higher grade in society than their own. Many, who have really acquired wealth in a reputable, though inferior trade, (for trades have their aristocratic distinctions,) seem anxious that their sons should be a step higher than themselves: if they are retail tradesmen, they must make their sons wholesale ones; if they are manufacturers, they must start them as merchants; or, instead of sending them to business, they bring them up to a profession, and there is a wondrous rage for professions in the present day. What abject folly it is for a man to turn away the attention of his children from any good and honourable business, which he has followed with success, merely because it is not genteel! I believe that great harm has been done by education having become too exclusively classical. Literature, when kept within due bounds, and properly united with mercantile branches of education, does not in itself unfit a youth for business; but as it is considered the acquirement of those who are intended to be professional men, or gentlemen, when pursued to a late period in boyhood, it turns off the attention from business, and partially unfits for it. Very undue importance has been attached in our schools to polite literature, to the neglect of science and commercial knowledge. Let every christian tradesman, who has a business worth following, keep one at least of his sons at home with

him, and educate him himself for trade. Due attention must of course always be paid in the selection of a business, to the physical strength, the mental capacity, and the prevailing taste of a child.

8. Generosity should be most assiduously inculcated. All children, and consequently all mankind, are more or less selfish by nature. This should be early watched and checked by a judicious parent, and an opposite disposition inculcated. Even infants may be made to feel the pleasure of sharing their possessions with others. Let them be taught that enjoyment arises not from individual gratification, but from communion in pleasure. As children advance in years and reason, they should hear much of the happiness arising from gratifying others; of the luxury of benevolence, and of the meanness of greediness. We should descant on the beauty of generous actions, and of beneficent examples. Anecdotes of remarkable generosity should be read to them, and we should especially dwell upon the wondrous love of God, and the compassion of Jesus Christ. We should send them on errands of mercy to the poor and needy, that being spectators, both of their misery, and of their tears of gratitude for relief, they may acquire a disposition to do good. We should especially encourage them to make sacrifices, and practise self denial to do good. To give them extra money in order that they may relieve the poor, or support religious institutions, is doing them very little service; for this is only being generous at other people's expense: but they should be induced to save their own pocket money, and to give away their regular allowance, and thus "forego the gratification of their palates, for the purpose of relieving the wants of others. But they should never be

compelled to give or have their money stopped for this purpose; and never, when fined for misconduct, have their fines appropriated to charity; for that would disgust them with benevolence.

Great care should be taken at the same time, not to induce a habit of indiscriminate giving, which would render them the dupes of hypocrisy, the subjects of imposition, and the victims of extortion. We should teach them the difference between real benevolence, and that easy good nature which allows itself to be wheedled out of any thing: between the generosity of a correct judgment, and that of a weak and credulous mind; between principle and mere feeling.

9. Prudence is of vast consequence in the affairs of life. This, next to piety, is the most valuable element of character. Nothing can be a substitute for it; and it does more for the comfort of its possessor, and more for the happiness of society, than any other mental quality that can be mentioned. Half the miseries of some people's lives, who are good people notwithstanding, arise from rash, thoughtless, indiscreet minds. They never think before they speak or act: they either have no power of forethought, deliberation, or calculation, or they exercise none. Such persons are fire-brands without intending it, and occasion immense mischief, without perhaps a particle of malice. How important then that children should be early taught the nature and value of discretion! Many parents err most lamentably on this subject: some are anxious only to communicate knowledge, forgetting that ideas are worth nothing but as they are discreetly employed to produce happiness. Knowledge furnishes only raw materials; it is wisdom that must shape them

into form and put them together. Others almost despise prudence; it is not a classical, a scientific, a poetic quality, because they say it cramps genius, extinguishes taste, prevents the lofty, if erratic flights of an ardent mind; it is cold and calculating; it has nothing sublime or romantic about it; it never soars into the clouds, or plunges into the depths, but holds on its dull course at the low level of ordinary concerns. Foolish, foolish creatures! just on this very account, it is the thing to be coveted. And so you would have your children geniuses that disdain the restraints of wisdom, and resemble fireworks burning and blazing out only to please by their short brilliancy and splendour, without doing good to any one! O, be not so cruel to yourselves, to your children, to society. Teach them to cultivate a deliberating, reflecting, calculating judgment; to weigh their words and measure their actions; enforce upon them the habit of looking onward to the tendency and results of actions, and of that calm and regular government of the soul, which leads its possessor to adopt true measures, and to observe decorum in words, thoughts, and actions. Give them all the learning you can procure for them; I quarrel not with that: but in your own estimation, and in all your conduct towards them, exalt wisdom far above learning, genius, taste, accomplishments; and teach them that the price of wisdom even in this sense of the word is above rubies.

I am anxious to impress upon the minds of all parents, that the inculcation of these dispositions forms the very essence of education. This term, as I have already remarked, and I repeat it again and again, not

by accident or oversight, but with the design of more deeply impressing it, has been very generally misapplied, because, in fact, misunderstood. Education in modern parlance means nothing more than instruction, or the communication of knowledge to the mind; and a good education means the opportunity of acquiring all kinds of learning, science, and what are called accomplishments. But properly speaking, education in the true and higher import of the term, means the implanting of right dispositions, the cultivation of the heart, the guidance of the temper, the formation of the character. Or allowing, as we must, that education applies to the whole soul and character, and includes general instruction in knowledge, I should say that its most important part is that which relates to the communication of active principles, and the formation of moral habits. It is training up a child in the way he should go. Not merely the training up a child in the way he should think, or speculate, or translate, or dance, or argue, but in the way in which he should go. Every thing may be taught which can sharpen the faculties, or store the mind with ideas, or cultivate the taste; but we must not stop here, but consider that the highest end of education is the formation, first of the true Christian, and then of the useful, amiable, intelligent, and generous member of society.

If this be true, (and who will venture to deny it?) then it is perfectly manifest that the great work of education cannot be and ought not to be transferred from parents to others. They may purchase that tuition, which their own circumstances may disqualify them from imparting, but the education of the charac-

ter belongs to them, and cannot be transferred. Here I cannot resist the temptation of introducing a long extract from Mr Anderson's incomparable work.

"Placed by the all-wise Providence of heaven in such a peculiar situation, it will be well for you to keep especially in view, what may be denominated the education of circumstances. Let purchased tuition be carried up to the very highest perfection, and let neither money nor wisdom be spared in reaching this height; of such vital importance in the training of children is that department to which I now refer, that it can, and if neglected will, undermine and undo the whole, as well as render many efforts in educating the disposition altogether abortive. Suffer me to explain my meaning.

"In the laudable anxiety of their hearts, two parents, with a family of infants playing around their feet, are heard to say, 'Oh! what will, what can best educate these dear children?' I reply, 'Look to yourselves and your circumstances! Maxims and documents are good in themselves, and especially good for the regulation of your conduct and your behaviour towards them: but with regard to your children, you have yet often to remark, that many maxims are good, precisely till they are tried, or applied, and no longer. In the hands of many parents, they will teach the children to talk, and very often little more. I do not mean to assert that sentiments inculcated have no influence; far from it: they have much; though not the most: but still after all, it is the sentiments you let drop occasionally, it is the conversation they overhear when playing in the corner of the room, which has more effect than many things which are addressed to them directly in the tone of exhortation. Besides, as to maxims, ever remember that between those which you bring forward for their use, and those by which you direct your own conduct, children have almost an intuitive discernment; and it is by the latter they will be mainly governed, both during childhood and their future existence.'

"The question however returns, 'What will educate these children?' And now I answer, 'Your example will educate them, your conversation with your friends, the business they see you transact, the likings and dislikings you express, these will educate them; the society you live in will educate them, your domestics will educate them: and whatever be your rank or situation in life, your house, your table, and your daily behaviour, these, these, will educate them. To withdraw them from the unceasing and potent influence of these things is impossible, except you were to withdraw yourself from them

also. Some parents talk of beginning the education of their children; the moment they were capable of forming an idea their education was already begun, the education of circumstances, insensible education, which, like insensible perspiration, is of more constant and powerful effect, and of far more consequence to the habit, than that which is direct and apparent. This education goes on at every instant of time; it goes on like time, you can neither stop it nor turn its course. Whatever these, then, have a tendency to make your children, that in a great degree you at least should be persuaded they will be.'

"The language, however, occasionally heard from some fathers, may here not unseasonably be glanced at. They are diffuse in praise of maternal influence; and pleased at the idea of its power and extent, they will exclaim, 'O yes, there can be no doubt of it, that every thing depends upon the mother.' This, however, will be found to spring from a selfish principle, and from anxiety to be relieved from mighty obligations, which after all cannot be transferred from the father's shoulders, to those even of a mother: to say nothing of the unkindness involved in laying upon her a burden which nature never intended and never does. Her influence, as an instrument, indeed, a husband cannot too highly prize; but let no father imagine that he can neutralize the influence of his own presence, and his own example at home. He cannot if he would, nor can he, escape from obligation. The patience and constancy of a mother, are no doubt first mainly tried, but then those of the father. The dispositions of each parent are fitted by nature for this order in the trial of patience; but from the destined and appropriate share allotted to each, neither of the two parties, when in health, can relieve the other.

"Addressing myself, therefore, to both parents, I would say, 'Contract to its just and proper dimensions the amount of all that purchased education can do for you, and expect no more from it than it is truly able to perform. It can give instruction. There will always be an essential difference between a human being cultivated and uncultivated. In the department of purchased tuition you will portion out to the best advantage many of those precious hours of youth which never will return; and such employment will lend you powerful aid in forming those personal habits which lie within the province of parental education; but rest assured, and lay it down to yourselves as a cardinal principle, that the business of education, properly so called, is not transferable. You may engage a master, or masters as numerous as you please, to instruct your children in many things, useful and praiseworthy in their own place, but you must by the order of nature educate them yourselves. You not only ought to

do it, but you will perceive that if I am correct in what I have stated, and may still advance, you must do it, whether you intend it or not.' 'The parent,' says Cecil, 'is not to stand reasoning and calculating. God has said that his character shall have influence; and so this appointment of Providence becomes often the punishment of a wicked or a careless man.' As education, in the sense which I have explained, is a thing necessary for all, for the poor and for the rich, for the illiterate as well as the learned, Providence has not made it dependent on systems, uncertain, operose, and difficult of application. Every parent, therefore, save when separated altogether from his family, may be seen daily in the act of educating his children; for from father and mother, and the circumstances in which they move, the children are daily advancing in the knowledge of what is good or evil. The occupations of the poor man at his labour, and of the man of business in his counting-house, cannot interrupt this education. In both instances, the mother is plying at her uninterrupted avocations, and her example is powerfully operating every hour; while at certain intervals daily, as well as every morning and evening, all things come under the potent sway of the father or the master, whether that influence be good or bad. Here, then, is one school from which there are no truants, and in which there are no holidays.

"True, indeed, you send your children to another school, and this is the very best in the whole neighbourhood, and the character of the master there is not only unexceptionable, but praiseworthy. When your children come home too, you put a book of your own selection into their hands, or even many such books, and they read them with pleasure and personal advantage. Still, after all this, never for one day forget, that the first book they read, nay, that which they continue to read, and by far the most influential, is that of their parents' example and daily deportment. If this should be disregarded by you, or even forgotten, then be not at all surprised when you find another day, to your sorrow and vexation, and the interruption of your business, if not the loss of all your domestic peace and harmony, that your children only 'know the right path, but still follow the wrong.'"

II. I now go on to illustrate and enforce those duties which parents owe to their children, in reference to their religious character, and their eternal welfare.

Not that religion is to be taught separately from all other branches of education, as an abstract thing of itself, for it is not an abstract thing of itself, but an integral part of the character, the substratum of all the qualities that have been already stated. "Bring them up in the fear and nurture and admonition of the Lord:" this is all the apostle enjoined on the subject of education, and it is the substance of all we are to teach; whatever is opposed to this must not be taught, and all that is taught or enjoined must be inculcated with a direct or indirect reference to this. In the selection of a school even for obtaining the elements of knowledge in those branches of tuition that he permits his children to be taught, a Christian parent must have his eye upon religion, and this must be the polar star by which he steers. Still, for the sake of making the matter more clear and obvious, as the subject of solemn obligation, I place religious education by itself: and it includes

1. Instruction. As soon as reason dawns, religious instruction should commence. The subject matter of instruction includes all the fundamental points of revealed truth: the character of God, the spirituality of his law, the fall of man, the evil of sin, the person and work of Christ, the need of repentance, the justification of the soul by faith, the nature and necessity of regeneration, obedience to the laws of Christ out of love to Him, the solemnities of judgment, the immortality of the soul, the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous: all these should be familiarly taught, according as the children's capacity is able to receive them. Instruction should not be confined to mere generalities, but should from its

beginning proceed on evangelical principles. The basis of our teaching should be the Bible itself. Not that I would totally discard all catechisms. I do not see why definitions and explanations, (and what else are the answers in catechisms?) may not be as useful in religion, as in any other subject. Catechisms are injurious only when they push out the Bible, not when they lead to it. Still I admit, that the Bible should be the text-book. Every child should learn a portion of Scripture daily, and have it explained to him. In all instruction great prominence should be given to the law of God as binding the conscience, and the consequent exceeding sinfulness of every human being; together with the wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sinner's only Saviour. Much use should be made of the historical parts of Scripture, as illustrating by its facts the character of God, the evil of sin, the consequences of disobedience. Abstract principles alone will not do. Children like narratives going into details, which strike their imagination. Instruction must be conveyed in a pleasing form. In order to this, there must be no wearying them by long lectures; no disgusting them by long tasks. I reprobate as most injurious the practice of setting a reluctant child a long lesson of catechism or Scripture, and then punishing him for not learning it. If we wish to disgust children's minds with the ways of godliness, this is the way to do it. Many an injudicious parent in the very act of teaching piety towards God, calls into existence and activity the tempers which it is the design of religion to suppress. An angry and scolding father, with a catechism in one hand, and a rod in the other, railing at a stubborn child for not learning his lesson, is not

a scene very calculated to invest religion with an air of loveliness and a power of attraction for young minds: in such circumstances a child must be expected to associate religion in his mind with a dark room or a cane; pain of body and insufferable disgust of mind. I would say to many a parent, "Give over the business of teaching religion, till you can command your temper and make the subject agreeable to your children." Never set your children tasks in religious books, as penalties for bad conduct. To be made to learn catechism or Scripture, in solitary confinement, and upon an empty stomach, and thus to connect imprisonment fasting and penance with its holy words, is a sure way to contract lasting aversion for religion. Compelling a child to learn religion, because he is naughty, is reversing the order of things; he ought not to be permitted to touch so holy a thing in an evil temper.

Religious instruction, to be valuable, must always be delivered with great seriousness. The light and trifling way in which it is sometimes imparted, destroys all its effect, and reduces it to the level of a mere science. It ought not to be exclusively confined to the Sabbath, but be the business of every day; yet it should be especially attended to on the day of rest, when the family should be interrogated, as to what they understand and remember of the sermons they have heard in the house of God. Children cannot too early be made to comprehend the purpose for which they go up to public worship, and that they have a personal interest in all the sacred services of our religious assemblies. No parent who has a numerous family, and who resides in a large town, where much time must necessarily be occupied in going to,

and returning from his place of worship, should attend the house of God more than twice on the Sabbath; the other part of the day should be spent with his family. This is far too generally neglected in this day of over-much preaching.

Religious instruction should be adapted to the capacities of the children, and keep pace in depth and variety with the strengthening of their faculties. Provide for them suitable books; and as they advance in age, enter with them more into the depths of theological truth; unfold to them the beauty grandeur and sublimity of revelation; instruct them in the evidences of the Bible; and the proofs of its fundamental doctrines. I am not very fond of boys and girls writing religious themes, or conducting any researches of a religious nature, as a mere exercise of ingenuity, except their minds are already well disposed towards religion as a matter of personal experience.

2. Persuasion, admonition, and warning, are a very important part of religious education. The apostles, "knowing the terrors of the Lord," persuaded men: they besought them to be reconciled to God; and warned them of the consequences of unbelief. Parents must do the same with their children, and not satisfy themselves with merely communicating ideas. They should, in the most earnest, anxious, affectionate manner, represent to them their spiritual condition, warn them of the consequences of neglecting the great salvation, and intreat them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and fear God. They should address them collectively and individually on the subject of their souls' concerns; they should manifest such a deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, as will constrain their children to feel that the most

anxious desire of their parents' hearts in reference to them, is their salvation. This should not, however, be done merely when their children have offended them, nor should they, on every slight occasion of misconduct, have a ready recourse to the terrors of the Lord. Parental authority must not be supported exclusively by the thunders of heaven, or the torments of hell. Those subjects should never be referred to, but in seasons of solemn and affectionate admonition. Admonition, warning, or persuasion, should never be so frequent as to excite nausea and disgust. Many good people completely overdo the matter, and defeat their own purposes; they worry their children on the subject of religion, and thus increase their aversion to it. Nothing in the way of bitter reproach, or railing accusation, for the want of piety, should ever be uttered; nor should anger ever be manifested on the subject. In the case of grown-up sons or daughters, a word or two spoken occasionally, and always in great mildness and tenderness, is all that is desirable. Incessant remonstrance is, in such instances, likely to be heard with indifference, if not with dislike. Such young people should be left pretty much to their own judgments and consciences, and to the force of parental example.

3. Discipline is unspeakably important. We have considered the father as prophet of his family, we have now to view him as king; and his laws are as important as his instructions. By discipline, I mean the maintenance of parental authority, and the exercise of it, in the way of restraining and punishing offences. Parents, you are invested by God himself with an almost absolute authority; you are constituted by him the supreme magistrates of your households, and cannot have a right

idea of your situation, without considering yourselves as appointed to rule. You must be the sovereigns of your houses, allowing no interference from without, no resistance from within. You have no option in the matter, and are not permitted to abdicate the throne or to cast away your sceptre. It was mentioned as a high commendation of Abraham, that he would command his children after him. But although you are to be absolute monarchs, uniting in yourselves the legislative and executive departments, you are not to be tyrants. Your government must be firm, but mild: the love of the parent must not relax the reins of the governor, nor the authority of the governor diminish aught from the love of the parent. You must have a sceptre, and always hold it, but it should not be an iron one. You must never suffer the yoke to be thrown off by your children, but it should be a yoke which they should have no inclination to throw off, because it is easy, and the burden light. Of you, in your measure, it should be said, as it is of God, "Sweet majesty and awful love, sit smiling on his brow." Your authority must be presented to your children as soon as their reason awakes. The first thing a child should be made to understand is, that he is to do, not what he likes, but what he is commanded: that he is not to govern, but to be governed. The sceptre should be seen by him before the rod; and an early, judicious, and steady exhibition of the former, would render the latter almost unnecessary. He must be made to submit, and that while young, and then submission will become a habit; if the reins be felt by him early, he will learn to obey them. All commands should be reasonable: there should be no wanton, capricious use of authority: we must not thwart and cross the wills of our children,

merely to teach submission. They should perceive clearly that love is at the bottom of all we do, and that reason guides all our conduct. We should calculate beforehand whether there is a necessity for the injunction we are about to deliver, and a probability of our being able to ensure compliance with it; otherwise a wise parent will not enjoin it. Commands should be sacred things, not issued in sport for the child to play with. Nothing but what is wise should be enjoined, and every injunction that is issued should be obeyed. In many cases, it is beyond our power to ensure obedience; then nothing remains but punishment.

Correction is an essential part of discipline; for rewards and punishments are as necessary in the government of a family, as in that of a state. What says the wisest of men? "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shalt not die. Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. The rod and the reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Do not many mothers know this by bitter experience? Even in lesser matters, have they not a thousand times blushed at the rudeness, ill manners, and impertinence of children "left to themselves: "and in greater matters have they not lived to vent the heaviest reproaches upon their own abject folly, in spoiling their children, by leaving them to their own obstinate tempers, self-will, and rebellious conduct, without ever correcting them? "Correct thy son, and he will give thee rest; yea, he shall give thee the delight of thy soul." Inimitably beautiful precept: and as true as it is beautiful!

“He that spareth the rod, hateth his son.” How many are there who thus hate their children? A very strong expression I admit; and yet these very persons would be thought the fondest of parents. Would you suffer your children’s bodies to perish, rather than put them in pain by eradicating a disease, which if suffered to remain would be fatal? Would not this be hating them? And what do you call that conduct, which, rather than put them to pain by correcting their faults, suffers all kinds of moral diseases to increase, and fester and corrupt their souls? Fond mother, you that will never correct a child, hear the charge, and let it thrill through your heart, exciting emotions of horror, you are a hater of your child; your foolish love is infanticide; your cruel embraces are hugging your child to death. In not correcting him, you are committing sin of the heaviest kind, and your own wickedness, in not correcting him, will at last punish yourself.

I would not, however, be thought to enjoin a cruel, or even a stern and rigid, severity. I do not think this compatible with the admonition given by the apostle, not to irritate, or “provoke our children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.” We must not govern by punishment; the sceptre must not be converted into a whip. The first object of every parent should be to render punishment unnecessary. It is better to prevent crimes than punish them. This can be done certainly to a very considerable extent, but it requires a very early, very judicious, and very watchful system of training. Many have very little of what may be called the faculty of government: and endeavour, by late coercion and punishment, to supply the place of early guidance. They allow to go by without improving it, the only time in

which it is possible in most cases so to train the disposition, as to do in future without much punishment: for if wise, steady, firm discipline is not commenced as soon as the passions begin to develope, it cannot afterwards be accomplished without some degree of severity. Mr Anderson strikingly illustrates this part of the subject by a very familiar allusion.

“I recollect hearing of two coaches which used to drive into Newmarket from London, by a certain hour, at a time of strong competition. The horses of the coach which generally came in first had scarcely a wet hair. In the other, though last, the horses were jaded and heated to excess, and had the appearance of having made great efforts. The reader, perhaps, understands the cause of the difference. The first man did it all, of course, by the reins; the second, unsteady in himself, or unskilful in the reins, had induced bad habits, and then employed the whip; but he could never cope with the other. So it will ever hold in all government. If obedience to the reins is found to be most pleasant in itself, and even the road to enjoyment, the obedience will grow into a habit, and become, in fact, the choice of the party.”

This, then, is the first thing to be attended to: acquire skill in the management of the reins; govern by guiding, not by forcing. But still there are many, very many cases, in which the reins alone will not be enough; the whip is wanted, and where it is wanted, it ought to be applied. Not that I mean to recommend a system of corporal punishment; no: this, if ever necessary, which is questionable, is called for only as an experiment in difficult cases; and as a system it is bad and unavailing; it is usually the resource of passionate, ignorant, or indolent parents and masters. We should, from the dawn of reason, endeavour to make our children feel that our favour is their richest reward for good conduct, our displeasure the severest rebuke for misbehaviour. Happy the parent who has attained to

such skill in government, as to guide with a look, to reward with a smile, and to punish with a frown! Occasions, I admit, sometimes do occur, and not unfrequently, in which chastisement of some kind becomes necessary; and these are the emergencies which require the full stretch of parental wisdom. Take the following rules for your guidance. Never chastise in a state of wrath. Some parents cannot punish, except when it ought never to be done, when they are angry. This is passion, not principle; and will always appear to the child as if it were intended more to appease and gratify the parent's bad temper, than to promote his welfare. No parent, in such a state of mind, can be in a condition nicely to adjust the kind and degree of punishment to the offence; it is like administering medicine scalding hot, which rather burns than cures. God waited till the cool of the evening before he came down to arraign, try, and punish our first parents after their fall. Patiently examine the offence before you punish it. In every case let there be the solemnity of judicial investigation: for justice always should proceed with a slow and measured step. Accurately discriminate between sins of presumption, and sins of ignorance or inadvertence. Accidents should be reproofed, but not punished, unless they involve wilful disobedience. Wisely and equitably apportion the sentence to the degree of offence and the disposition of the offender. Ingenuous confession, and sincere penitence, should in most cases arrest the process of judgment, and the child be made to punish himself by remorse. Satisfy not yourself till you have produced repentance, for till you have done this, scarcely any thing is done. Hatred of the sin, on the part of the offender, is a much more

effectual preservative from its repetition, than fear of punishment. Be very cautious not to threaten what you either do not intend, or are not able, to inflict; indeed, forbear threatening altogether as much as possible. A parent's denouncement should not be hastily uttered for children to laugh at. In the case of older children, the greatest caution is necessary in expressing displeasure; reasonable expostulation, mild rebuke, tender reproof, appeals to their understanding, and feelings, and conscience, are all that should be resorted to with them. Through the whole course of discipline and government, let parents ever remember that their children are rational creatures, and are to be dealt with as such, by having the grounds of obligation laid open to them, the criminality of disobedience explained, and the evils of insubordination displayed before them. To a parent storming or fretting over the inefficacy of punishment, I would say, "Have you treated that child as a brute, or a rational creature? Have you taken pains with him from infancy, to make him understand his obligations, and to comprehend the criminality of disobedience; or have you governed him by threatening and beating?" I again say, that where necessary punishment is withheld, it is hating the child, but that the great object should be to render punishment unnecessary.

It is of vast consequence that parents should be very careful not to foster, by injudicious treatment, propensities which, when more fully developed, they will find it necessary to repress by discipline. Do not encourage lying and ill nature, by smiling at a false or malignant expression, because it is cleverly said; or pride, by excessive flattery or commendation; or vanity, by loading

them with finery, and admiring them, and teaching them to admire themselves; or revenge, by directing them to vent their impotent anger upon persons or things that have injured them; or cruelty, by permitting them to torture insects or animals; or insolence and oppression, by allowing them to be rude to servants; or envy, by stimulating too powerfully the principle of emulation. Infinite mischief is done by thus thoughtlessly encouraging the growth of many of the germs of vice.

Discipline, to be effectual, should be steady and unvarying, not fitful and capricious: it must be a system, which shall, like the atmosphere, press always and every where upon its subjects. Occasional fits of severity, however violent, followed by long intermissions of relaxing indulgence, can do no good, and may do much harm. Each extreme is mischievous, and each prepares for the mischief of the other. Both parents should join to support domestic authority; for a more truly distressing and injurious spectacle can scarcely be seen in the family circle, than a fond and foolish mother counteracting the effect of paternal chastisement, by stealing to the little prisoner in his captivity to comfort him in his distress, to wipe away his tears, and to hush his sorrows by some gratification of his palate. In this way children have been sometimes hardened in their crimes, set against their father, and led to ultimate and irretrievable ruin.

Wonder not that I have placed discipline under the head of religious education; for is it not the object of domestic government to bend, as far as means can do it, the will of a child into submission to the authority of a wise and holy parent? And what is sin against

God, but the resistance of a weaker will against that which is supreme and divine? Now surely it may be conceived to be in the order of God's appointed means of bringing the child into subjection to himself, to bring him first into subjection to his parents. Can any one be in a state of mind more hardened against religion, more opposed to all its just and salutary restraints, than he who rejects the mild yoke of parental government, and sets at defiance the authority of a father? Obedience to parents is one of the laws of heaven, and the first of all its laws which the mind of an infant can be made to understand; and if parents enforce it as they should do, with a direct reference to the appointment of God, they are certainly taking a preliminary step, so far as means can be employed, for the formation of the religious character.

4. Example is necessary to give power and influence to all other means. One of the tritest of all proverbs, represents the power of example; but its force is greatest upon the youthful mind: "Daring the minority of reason, imitation is the regent of the soul, and they who are least swayed by argument are most governed by example." We all learn of this preceptor, before we can reason, and before we can speak. If then we would have our children live in the fear of God, we must ourselves be seen by them steadily walking in the way of his commandments. In alluring them to religion, we must be enabled to say, "Follow me." Our religion should not only be upon the whole sincere, but it should be visible: our light should shine before our family, that they seeing our good works, may glorify God. But for our religion to produce any effect, it must be eminent: there must be no doubt, no uncer-

tainty about the matter; it must not be a thing of a questionable nature. It should be consistent. I remember once conversing with a man of great eminence for station, talents, and piety, who said to me, "I owe every thing, under God, to the eminent and consistent piety of my father. When I was a young man, though I was not vicious, I was worldly; and in order the more effectually to get rid of all interference with my pursuits from religion, I wished to think it all mere profession and hypocrisy. For this purpose I narrowly watched the conduct of my father; for such was the height on which he stood as a professor of religion, that I very naturally concluded if I could convict him of such inconsistency as amounted to a proof of hypocrisy, and a little thing would at that time have sufficed for that purpose, I should have gained my end, and have concluded that all piety was but a name and a delusion. But so thoroughly consistent was he, that I could find nothing in the smallest degree at variance with his character as a professor of religion. This kept its hold upon me. I said to myself, there must be a reality here, and I must try to understand and feel it; for I have seen such meekness in a temper naturally irritable, such comfort amidst the greatest agonies, and all this supported by such uniform devotion, that I must try to catch his spirit." This beautiful instance of the influence of parental example, is, perhaps, not altogether unique; though in all its circumstances, perhaps, rarely equalled.

Children have their eyes always upon their parents, and are quick to discern any violations of consistency. If notwithstanding our professions of religion, they see us as worldly minded, as grasping and anxious after

riches, as solicitous for splendid furniture, luxurious gratifications, and fashionable habits, as the people of the world; if they see the righteous rarely at our table, except when they are great people, or popular characters, but on the contrary observe there the gay, the fashionable, the ungodly; if they witness us artful, implacable, or malicious; if they know us to be cruel or neglectful to our wives, unkind and oppressive to our servants, cold and tyrannical to themselves; if they witness us inconstant in our attendance upon private, family, or public worship, what can they conclude but that our religion is mere profession? In such a case, of how little service is our attempt to impress upon their minds those claims which we ourselves practically deny! It were far better for some parents to say nothing to their children about religion; for, till they alter their own conduct, their admonitions can produce no other effect than insufferable disgust. It is enough to make every parent tremble, to think what a parent should be.

And there should be consistency also, between our professions and our conduct, in reference to our families. We avow it to be our supreme and ultimate desire that they should be truly pious; and we tell them so. Do we in all things act agreeably to this principle? Do we select their schools and situations, books and companions, pursuits and occupations, in reference to this desire? Do we in our general conversation with them, and before them, support this declaration? Do not our children sometimes reason thus? "My parents tell me that their chief anxiety is for my salvation, and the formation of my religious character; but how does this comport with their selecting for me a school where religion is the last thing attended to; and with their

instructing me in some things, which, as religious people, I hear them condemn? How is it that all their anxiety, whatever their words may say, appears to be to make me a fine lady. I am told that religion is the first thing, but I am educated for the world." Ah, if we act thus, we are not training up our children in the way they should go. Without example, every thing else that we do, is most lamentably deficient: as has been often said, it is only pointing them the way to heaven, but leading them in the way to hell.

5. Diligent, constant, and careful inspection, is a most important parental duty. There should be in every family, a system of domestic supervision. Parents should be watchful in all things. This is the way to preserve the good seed of instruction when it is sown, and to prevent the enemy from sowing tares, which he is ever wakeful to do when the parent is asleep. This is a very difficult, but a very necessary, duty. We must never allow any engagements whatever to keep our eyes long from our children. As soon as their characters begin to unfold, we should most carefully watch their acts and words, that we may know what regimen to place them under. We should study their propensities, capacities, and tendencies. We should watch them in play, in their intercourse with each other, with servants, with their companions, and when they are not dreaming that our attention is directed towards them; for character is decided by incidents which a superficial mind would deem too minute to be noticed. We should see how they behave after punishment and reward; in short, their whole characters should be studied and inspected by us, with the most minute and anxious care; just as the different plants in a nursery

are observed by a gardener, that he may know the peculiar nature which each possesses, and the appropriate treatment which each requires.

We should also inspect our family, so as to know what good or evil is going on among them; whether the good seed is growing, and what tares are springing up. Like the farmer going out to examine his fields, or the gardener his trees, to ascertain what prospect there is of a crop, and what weeds are to be eradicated, what vermin to be destroyed, what gaps to be stopped to keep out trespassers, what work is to be done, so must the parent be and act among his children. One is growing up with a propensity to pride, he must be taught with great care the beauty and excellence of humility; a second is vain of personal decorations and acquirements, she must have such folly exposed, and be saved from its injurious influence upon her character; a third is artful, equivocating, and deceitful; he must have the enormity of lying unfolded to him, and be encouraged to practise more frankness, ingenuousness, and regard to truth; one is remarkably curious, and needs to have his inquisitiveness checked; another dull, and needs to have it stimulated; one is sceptical, and is in danger of infidelity; another credulous, and is in peril of imposition; and there must be a constant scrutiny carried on by parents to ascertain these peculiarities, and to manage them accordingly.

Inspection must extend to every thing. To the servants that are admitted into the house; for how much injury may be done to the youthful mind by an unprincipled and artful servant! The companions of our children should be most narrowly watched; one bad associate may ruin them for ever. The very first work-

ings of the social impulse, even in a boy or girl of five or six years of age, should be noticed, for even thus early may evil impressions be produced by companionship. At the risk of offending the nearest relative, or most endeared friend he has upon earth, a christian parent ought not to suffer his children to associate with those who are likely to do them harm. On this account, where domestic education can be carried on, it is decidedly to be preferred to schools, where there is a large number of young people. A system of extensive and dreadful mutual corruption oftentimes goes on among them a long time before it is perceived.

Parents should most carefully inspect the reading of their children, and keep out of their way all corrupting books and indecent pictures. And how deeply is it to be deplored that our newspapers are oftentimes so polluted with filthy details of disgusting occurrences and trials, as to be channels through which contamination flows into many a family, otherwise well guarded. It becomes a serious question, whether it is the duty of a Christian, who has sons and daughters growing up, to allow a newspaper to come into his house.*

The recreations of children should be watched, and no games be allowed that are immodest, nor such as are likely to foster a spirit of gambling.

For want of this diligent, careful, and universal inspection, the best instructions, the most earnest warnings, the most fervent prayers, and the most consistent examples, have been, in some cases, unavailing: and the children through being in some respects left to them-

* Since this was written we are happily supplied with some religious newspapers, to which these objections do not apply.

selves, and to the corrupting influence of others, have grown up their parents' misery and their own disgrace.

6. Prayer must crown all. This duty commences with the birth of a child, nay, before that event; for in the very prospect of its birth there should be earnest prayer offered to God by the parent for divine grace to discharge all those obligations which the expected babe will bring upon the conscience of the father and mother. And from that time forward till the death of either parent or child, earnest, secret, believing prayer should never cease to be daily presented for our offspring. Our prayers should principally respect the spiritual welfare of our children. We should wrestle daily with God for their eternal salvation. How little can we do at most for their welfare, and how ineffectual without God's blessing is all we do, or can do! That parent has neglected a very important branch of his duty, who has suffered one single day to pass by, without bearing his children upon his heart before God in private prayer. Who can subdue their tempers or change their hearts but God? And though in a way of sovereignty, he confers his grace upon some who neither seek it themselves, nor have it sought for them by their friends, yet we are not authorised to expect it without prayer.

It is necessary, also, not only to pray for our children, but with them. We should take them apart, each by himself, to commend them to God, and thus make them the witnesses of our deep solicitude, and our intense agony for their eternal welfare. If they have been disobedient and wicked, it may be well when they are brought to a right mind, and when we ourselves have forgotten them, to conduct them to the throne

of divine grace, to beg for them the divine forgiveness: but this never must be done as a punishment, for this is the way to make them dread a parent's prayers, as a visitation of his displeasure.

But besides this, there must be family prayer. The necessity and propriety of this arise out of the constitution of a family; and were it not enjoined in the word of God either by precept or example, would still be binding upon the conscience of every parent, by the relation in which he stands to his family, and the extent of their dependence upon God. Do we not want family mercies, and who can give them but God? So obviously obligatory is this duty, and so naturally does its performance arise out of all our conjoint feelings as parents and as Christians, that those who neglect it cannot even pretend to feel the right influence of godliness. No duty, however, has been more abused than this. By some it is only occasionally performed; being taken up, in times of domestic distress or solicitude: by others, it is attended to on a Sabbath evening only; and with many, very many others, it is, though regularly observed, nothing but a lifeless form, and thus felt not only to be insipid, but a mere burden. The following directions may be of service to guide the heads of families in this most interesting branch of domestic duty.

1. It should be offered up morning and evening, thus beginning and closing every day.

2. It should be observed with the greatest regularity and uninterrupted constancy. What a disgrace to a parent is it for a child or a servant to say, "Are we to have prayer this evening?" And yet, are there not

some families in which the practice is so irregular, as to leave the matter doubtful, till the bell rings?

3. All the members of the family should be present, except very young children whose restlessness would be a disturbance to every one else, and utterly destroy the solemnity of the service.

4. It should be attended to so early in the morning as not to subject the service to the intrusion and interruption of visitors and secular business; and so early in the evening, as not to be rendered the mere form of a drowsy circle, who ought at the time to be in bed. It is an offence to the Almighty to conduct a family into his awful presence merely to sleep there.

5. There should be a fixed hour for it, and that hour should be most sacredly kept, and not interfered with except in case of necessity. In order to this, the heads of families should not sup from home, nor yield to the modern practice of late visiting. In many families fashionable hours at night are driving out evening prayer, and the eagerness of commercial pursuits is putting a stop to the morning sacrifice.

6. A portion of holy Scripture should be read from the Old Testament one part of the day, and from the New Testament the other. A book should be read through in regular course, and not a chapter picked out, or stumbled upon by accident. The Scriptures should be read audibly, and in a reverential manner, and with a devotional spirit, for very great evils result from reading the Scriptures in a careless, slovenly, and irreverent manner. It would be well for the parent to require the children and servants to bring their Bibles with them, that the eye may help the ear in fixing the

attention of the mind. The domestic prophet should also accompany what he reads with short explanatory and hortatory remarks of his own, or the expository comments of others.

7. Where there are persons in the family that can sing, family praise should be a part of the service. The morning or evening hymn of a pious family, is one of the most touching sounds in our world.

“Lord! how delightful 'tis to see
A 'pious household' worship thee:
At once they sing, at once they pray;
They hear of heav'n, and learn the way.”

8. Then follows the prayer, which should be not so long as to weary, nor so short as to seem like a mere form: it should be fervent, for a dull, cold, heartless repetition of almost the same things, in almost the same words, is sure to destroy all the interest of this delightful service, and render it a mere form, which wearies and burdens, if it do not disgust. How difficult is it to keep up the life and vigour of this engagement! And why? Because we do not keep up the life and vigour of our own personal religion. It is worth while to remark that the habit of reverentially reading the Scriptures tends to feed the flame of devotion, and to kindle the fire of the sacrifice of prayer. The prayer of the head of a family should be in a very peculiar degree family prayer. It should respect the children, the servants, the circumstances of the household. All should feel that the service belongs to them, and not merely to the individual who prays, or to the church, and the world. Fervour, life, and earnestness, as opposed to dullness and formality, are of immense consequence. A few petitions breathed forth with a fervour that kindles

the fire of devotion in all around, are far better than half-an-hour's talking about religion to God.

Oh! with what dignity, grace, sanctity, and authority, does a holy and fervent father rise from his knees, and take his seat in the midst of his family, while yet the rays of divine glory play upon his countenance.

"Children," says Dr. Dwight, "naturally regard a parent with reverence; but they cannot fail to reverence him more or less, on account of his personal character. "Wherever they have been accustomed to behold their parent daily sustaining the office of minister, or servant of God, they necessarily associate with every idea they form of his person and character, this solemn and important apprehension. Every image of this venerable relation presented to their minds, will include in it that of a divinely appointed guardian of their spiritual concerns; a guide to their duty given them from above; a venerated and beloved intercessor for their salvation." And the same writer speaking of family worship, says, "In the devotion of this little assembly, parents pray for their children, and children for their parents; the husband for the wife, and the wife for the husband; while brothers and sisters send up their requests to the throne of Infinite Mercy, to call down blessings on each other. Who that wears the name of man can be indifferent here? Must not the venerable character of the parent, the peculiar tenderness of the conjugal union, the affectionate intimacy of the filial and fraternal relations; must not the nearness of relations long existing, the interchange of kindness long continued, and the oneness of interests long cemented, all warm the heart, heighten the importance of every petition, and increase the fervour of every devotional effort."

It may be now proper to inquire, How it comes to pass that such a system as this is so often unsuccessful? For it may, with very great propriety, because with truth, be affirmed, that the families of professors are not always, as it might be expected they would be, the nurseries of the church. It is not enough to resolve the matter into the sovereignty of divine grace, till we have first enquired whether any thing can be found in the conduct of parents which can be said with truth to

account for the painful fact of irreligious children being found in religious families.

Have the parents in question really adopted and pursued a judicious system of religious education? Can it be said, that means, such as I have directed, or any thing at all like them, have been regularly pursued? Has there been a deep, a constant solicitude for the eternal welfare of their children?

In the introduction to my volume, entitled, "A Christian Father's Present to his Children," I have stated the following obstacles which often prevent the success of a religious education.

1. Religious education is oftentimes maintained very ignorantly, negligently, and capriciously, where it is not altogether omitted. It is not a first object: it is attended to with no earnestness, no anxiety, no system, no regularity. It does not run through every thing, and is opposed by many things at variance with it. The parent's eye and heart are more intently fixed upon the worldly prosperity and respectability of his children, than on their religious character.

2. The relaxation of domestic discipline is a powerful impediment in the way of success. There is in some households no family government, no order, no subordination. The children are kept under no restraint, but are allowed to do what they like; their faults are unnoticed and unpunished, and their tempers allowed to grow wild and headstrong; till, in fact, the whole family become utterly lawless, rebellious against parental authority, and unamiable to all around them. How many have had to curse the over-indulgence of fond and foolish parents! How many, as they have ruminated amidst the desolations of poverty, or within the walls

of a prison, have exclaimed, "O, my cruelly fond parents! had you exercised that authority with which God entrusted you over your children, and had you checked my childish corruptions, and punished my boyish disobedience; had you subjected me to the salutary restraint of wholesome laws, I had not brought you to your grave with a broken heart, nor myself with a ruined character to the jail!"

Over-indulgence is awfully common, and continually making shocking ravages in human character. It is a system of great cruelty to the children, to the parents themselves, and to society. This practice proceeds from various causes; in some instances, from a perverted and systematic sentimentalism; in others, from absolute indolence, and a regard to present ease, which leads a silly mother to yield, and to adopt any means of coaxing, and bribery, to keep the young rebels quiet for the time: in others, from a mistake as to the time when restraint should begin, or a spirit of procrastination, which leads parents to say, "I shall take them in hand by and by; there is no time lost; when their reason is a little more matured, I shall put more restraint upon them:" and in some it is mere animal affection, without the guidance of a particle of judgment; a mere instinct, like that which in the irrational tribes leads to busy yet blind care. It is not uncommon for parents to treat the first acts of puerile rebellion rather as freaks to be smiled at than as faults to be reformed. "O," says the mother, "it is only play, he will know better soon. He does not mean any harm. I cannot scold him." And if the father, wiser than herself, does, she cries, and perhaps in the hearing of the child, reproves her husband for cruelty. From whatever cause it proceeds, it is in the

highest degree injurious to the character of the children; let those who are guilty of it read the fearful comment on this sin which is furnished for their warning in the history of Eli and his family.

3. Undue severity is probably more injurious than over-indulgence; and it is, perhaps, a conviction of this, and an observance of the mischievous consequences of extreme rigour that have driven many into the opposite extreme. I have seen the dreadful effects of parental tyranny, and the reign of household terror, in the broken spirits, the reckless desperation, the hardened contumacy, or the deep and sullen melancholy of those who have been the subjects of these hard measures. It is a truly revolting sight to see a father employing the iron rod of oppression to beat, bruise, and crush the minds of his own offspring into abject submission. He may succeed, but let him not wonder if at the same time that he has suppressed rebellion he has extinguished affection. I have known parents who saw their error too late, and who would have given the world, if they had possessed it, and it had been possible to do away the ill effects which their severity had produced in the characters of their children; but the mischief was irreparable. No subsequent kindness could expand the heart which they had closed for ever against themselves, or win the confidence which they had repulsed from them. A close sullen melancholy disposition had been nurtured: a susceptibility to the emotions of wretchedness had been planted in the bosom, which no future tenderness on the part of the parent could remove. He saw it, and repented it, but could not alter it. "Ye fathers, provoke not then your children to anger, lest they should be discouraged."

This language is very striking, and well deserves the serious attention of every parent.

4. The inconsistent conduct of parents who are professors of religion, is a great hindrance to the success of religious education. Many persons have no need to wonder that their children are not pious; it would be a wonder with every body else if they were, for they have seen nothing at home but what was calculated to disgust them with religion. They would have been far more likely to have thought well of the ways of godliness, if their parents had said nothing about the matter.

5. The bad conduct of an elder child often counteracts all the efforts made for the benefit of the rest. Let parents see the importance of beginning upon a good system. Children are creatures of imitation, and the model they copy is their elder brother or sister. A mother should educate the character of her first child with the recollection that he will be a pattern, which the rest will in all probability more or less conform to. I do not think this has been sufficiently considered.

6. Partiality has a very corrupting and fatal influence. The history of the patriarch Jacob will remain for ever a warning to all parents against the dangers of domestic favouritism. The balance of government must be held, in every family, by even-handed justice, or misery is sure to ensue. Envy and jealousy are the natural consequences of partiality, all conspire against the favourite, the father and mother are embroiled, and the other children are set against each other.

Behold these obstacles and avoid them.

And now, can motives be necessary to admonish christian parents to the diligent performance of their duty? If so, take the following:

1. Are you zealous for the cause of religion in the world, for the prosperity of Zion, for the kingdom of the Redeemer, for the glory of God? Be diligent and anxious to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Would you have them the enemies or the friends of God and his cause? Dare you pretend to be the disciples of Christ, if this is a matter of indifference to you? If you are neglectful in this matter, you may expect to see your offspring united with the children of this world, if not with infidels, scoffers, or the profane. But if you are anxious and conscientious to train them up for God, that daughter over whom you watch with such parental care and tenderness, may be joined with the female worthies, who by their chaste conversation, and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and their zeal for the cause of Christ, have done so much to diffuse religion in the world. That son, whom you now train with such holy solicitude, for future usefulness, as a disciple of the Saviour, may become eminent in the church, as a consistent and intelligent member, or an able and faithful minister. "Many a congregation," says Baxter, "that is happily fed with the bread of life, may thank God for the endeavours of some poor man or woman, that trained up a child in the ways of God, to become their holy and faithful teacher." The church of God looks to the families of the righteous, and expects and asks from them supplies to recruit its numbers, and to repair the ravages of death.

2. I urge this duty on the ground of regard for the temporal and eternal welfare of your children. You love your children, and would deem it a most cruel and insulting insinuation to have your affection for a moment

questioned. But do what you will for them; devote as you may the energies of body and mind to your children's comfort; wear out your strength in ceaseless labour and solicitude; if you neglect their religious education, you are guilty of most horrid cruelty towards them, the consequences of which may begin in this world in profligacy and vice, and extend to the other in all the bitter pains of eternal death. Unrestrained by sentiments of piety, uncontrolled by a conscience which has never been enlightened, what is to prevent them from being plunged into infamy by their unbridled passions? Have not many young men at the hulks, in the land of exile, or at the gallows; and many unhappy females, when closing in misery a course of infamy, cursed their parents for not giving them a religious education? But even though they live and die in worldly honour and respectability, what will that do for them amidst the sorrows of life, the agonies of death, the solemnities of judgment, and the torments of perdition. Hear them as they stand shuddering and affrighted on the brink of that gulph into which they are about to plunge: "Of what avail are the riches, and honours, and pleasures of the world, which my parents were so anxious to obtain for me? Why did they not tell me that the salvation of my soul was of more importance to me as an immortal creature, than the possession of the universe? Cruel, cruel parents! Fool that I was, to be blinded and rendered careless by you; but my self-reproaches are now unavailing, I perish deservedly; but my blood be upon the heads of those that neglected me." Ah, cruel parents indeed, who neglect the religious education of their children; more cruel in some respects than

Herod; he slew the bodies of children, they murder their souls; he murdered the children of others, they murder their own; he employed the agency of his servants, they do the work of slaughter themselves.

3. Do you regard your own comfort? Do you love yourselves? Are you anxious to avoid painful and incessant solicitude, bitter reflection, domestic disquietude, dreadful forebodings? Then let your first and ceaseless care be as to their religion. Should God crown your efforts with success, what a harvest of joy you will reap even in this world. When you see your children enter the paths of wisdom, you will exclaim, "Thank God my highest ambition has at length reached its object. My children are decided Christians. I am now no longer distressingly anxious for their future prospects in this life. In one way or other, God will provide for them. And as to eternity they are safe." Who can describe the pure elevated felicity with which such parents mark the course of their children, in going from strength to strength in their progress to Zion. What a season of delight is it, when they publicly assume the profession of a Christian, and connect themselves with the church! What joy is felt on beholding them at their side at the table of the Lord, and holding communion with them in the joys of faith and the anticipations of eternity! And what satisfaction is experienced in seeing them enrolling their names as the friends of God and man, and giving their support to those institutions which are formed to promote the highest interests of the human race! As they grow in experience, in usefulness, in respectability in the church, their parents' joy and gratitude are continually increasing, and they

feel the honour of having sent such members into the fellowship of the faithful. Should God, in the mysteries of his providence, remove them by an early death, you will be cheered amidst the agonies of separation, by their consolation in death; their piety will wipe away your tears, and be a balm to the wounds of your mind; and when they have departed, you will solace yourselves with the healing thought, that they are gone to that world of glory in which you will soon be reunited with them. Or, should the order of nature be observed, and you precede them to the tomb, will not their presence and attentions in your dying chamber be more soothing by the consideration that they are so many saints, as well as children, ministering to your comfort? Will not their piety give a sanctity and a sweetness to all the offices of their affection? "I die," will be your expression, as like departing Jacob, you address yourselves to them, "but God will be with you, and we shall meet again where there will be no more death."

But should you unhappily neglect their religious education, and they, through your inattention, grow up without any due sense of the claims of God, is there not a danger of their becoming immoral, as well as irreligious? And how could you bear to witness, or hear of, their profligacy and vice, if you were conscious that it was in any measure occasioned by your neglect? Perhaps they may be unkind and disobedient to you; for God may justly render that child a scourge to his parent, whose parent did not train him up in the ways of religion. O what scenes of domestic misery, what heart-rending spectacles of confusion and wretchedness, have profligate children occasioned in the families to which they belong! How many parents have thus had

their hearts suddenly broken, or their grey hairs brought down by the slow process of withering sorrow to the grave; and the worst sting of all has, in some cases, been the consciousness of their own neglect. No sin more heavily punishes itself than this, nor mingles for its object a more bitter cup.

But there remain the eternal consequences of this neglect. See the heart-stricken parent, wringing his hands over a son departing without repentance! Not a syllable escapes his lips that sounds like penitence: the father weeps, prays, and entreats; but the son hearkens not, and dies, and makes no sign. In what a burst of agony does the father give vent to his feelings, over the corpse from which the spirit has departed, but not to the mansions of the blest: "Oh, my son, Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee: O Absalom, my son, my son." Or, in the event of your own death, what thorns will it plant in your pillow, with what deeper shades will it invest your descent to the dark valley, to reflect that you have not cared for the religious character of your children, and the eternal salvation of their immortal souls. Then, amidst those fearful scenes, to awake to a sense of your duty, when it is too late to perform it, except by one parting admonition! Then, to see those around your bed, with whom you have been entrusted, but whom you have neglected!

But there are other scenes more dreadful still. The faithless parent must meet his ruined children at the day of judgment, before the bar of God. Fearful will be the interview, and to us now utterly inconceivable. No imagination can pourtray the scene, and I attempt it not. And then eternity, oh! eternity! who shall

foreshadow from the secrets of that impenetrable state, the condition of children lost in any measure through the neglect of their parents; and the condition of parents, hearing through everlasting ages the imprecations and reproaches of their own offspring, all echoed back from their own conscience! But the picture is too appalling. And if the mere anticipation chills with horror, what must be the reality?

Look for a few moments at a brighter scene, and anticipate the meeting at the judgment day, of pious parents with children, reclaimed, converted, and saved by the blessing of God upon their affectionate solicitude, and judicious and persevering efforts. And beyond this, everlasting ages remain for the child to be blessed with salvation, and the parent to be blessed with the consciousness of having been the instrument of eternal blessedness to his offspring. But this is as much too bright for the imagination, as the other is too terrific; it is glory, honour, and felicity, too great to be imagined.

CHAPTER VI.

**THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN
TO THEIR PARENTS.**

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.” EPHES. vi, 1-3.

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother; bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.” PROVERBS vi, 20-22.

“The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice; and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.” PROVERBS xxiii, 24, 25.

PERHAPS there is no duty, the obligations of which are more generally acknowledged than filial piety; none which in the performance yields greater pleasure, or which, if neglected, brings a more severe or righteous retribution. All nations’, however sunk in barbarism, or elevated by science, have admitted the strength and justice of parental claims, and the unhappy youth who resists them, stands convicted, condemned, and reprobated before the tribunal of the world. On the other hand, an eminently dutiful child is an object of delight, admiration, and esteem, to all who have an opportunity

of witnessing his conduct; he goes through society surrounded by a glory purer than that of fame, and far more conducive to his own comfort; he is a blessing to his parents, and is blessed himself. Children, may all of you be such: and for that purpose, I ask your fixed attention to the statement of your duties, as set before you in this chapter. The obligations of social life are reciprocal. If your parents owe to you all that I have enjoined upon them, how much do you owe to your parents? I have been your advocate with them, I now become theirs with you.

Consider well the relation you sustain to your parents. There is a natural connexion between you, inasmuch as they were the instruments of your existence: a circumstance which of itself seems to invest them, as I have already said, with an almost absolute authority over you. The commonness, the universality of the tie, takes the mind off from contemplating its closeness, its tenderness, its sanctity. You are literally parts of them, and you cannot, one should think, dwell for a moment upon your descent, without being struck with the amazing and solemn weight of obligation that rests upon you towards your father and your mother. But consider, there is not only a natural, but in reference to duty, an instituted connexion between you; Jehovah himself has interposed, and uniting the language of revelation with the dictates of reason, and the force of authority with the impulse of nature, has called you to filial piety, as a matter not only of feeling, but of principle. Study then the relation, look narrowly and seriously at the connexion subsisting between you. Weigh well the import of the word Parent; think how much is implied

in it, how many offices it contains in itself; guardian, ruler, teacher, guide, benefactor, provider: what then must be the obligations of a child!

The following is a brief summary of filial duties:
1. You ought to love your parents. Love is the only state of mind from which all the other duties that you owe them can arise, and surely it is due to a father and mother. The very relation in which you stand to them demands it. If you are destitute of it, if you have no going forth of heart towards them, you are in a strange and guilty state of mind. Till you are married, or are in prospect of it, they ought, in most cases, to be the supreme objects of your earthly affection. It is not enough for you to be respectful and obedient, and even kind; but where there exist no reasons for alienating your heart, you should be fond of them. It is of infinite importance that you should watch over the internal state of your mind, and not suffer dislike, alienation, or indifference, to extinguish your regard for them. Do not take up a prejudice against them, or allow an unfavourable impression to be made upon your mind with regard to them. Respect and obedience, if they do not spring from love, are valueless in their nature, and very precarious in their existence.

If you love them, you will delight to be in their company, and take pleasure in being at home with them. It is painful to them to see that you are happier any where than at home, and fonder of any other society than theirs. No companion should be so valued by you as a kind father or mother.

If you love them, you will strive in all things to please them. We are always anxious to please those whom we regard, and to avoid whatever would give

them pain. If we are careless whether we please or displease any one, it is impossible that we can have any affection for him. The essence of piety towards God is a deep solicitude to please him; and the essence of filial piety, is a solicitude to please your parents. Young people, dwell upon this single, simple thought, a child's pleasure should be to please his parents. This is love, and the sum of all your duty. If you would adopt this rule, if you would write this upon your heart, if you would make this the standard of your conduct, I might lay down my pen, for it includes every thing in itself. O, that you could be brought to reason and to resolve thus: "I am bound by every tie of God and man, of reason and revelation, of honour and gratitude, to do all I can to make my parents happy, by doing whatever will give them pleasure, and by avoiding whatever will give them pain. By God's help, I will from this hour study and do whatever will promote their comfort. I will make my will consist in doing theirs, and my earthly happiness arise from making them happy. I will sacrifice my own predilections, and be satisfied with their choice." Noble just and proper resolution! Adopt it, act upon it, and you will never repent of it. Do not have any earthly happiness that is enjoyed at the expense of theirs.

If you love them, you will desire their good opinion. We naturally value the esteem of those to whom we are attached: we wish to be thought highly of by them; and if we are quite careless about their respect for us, it is a sure sign we have no regard for them. Children should be desirous, and even anxious, to stand high in the opinion of their parents; and nothing can be a more decisive proof of a bad disposition than their being

quite indifferent what their parents think of them. All love must be gone in such a case as this, and a youth is in the road to rebellion and destruction: commendation has lost its value, censure its efficacy, and punishment its power.

2. Reverence is the next duty. "Honour," says the commandment, "thy father and mother." This reverence has respect to your feelings, your words, and your actions. It consists in part of an inward consciousness of their superiority, and an endeavour to cherish a reverential frame of mind towards them, as placed by God over you. There must be high thoughts of their superiority, both natural and instituted, and the submission of the heart to their authority, in the way of sincere and profound respect. Even your love must be that which is exercised and expressed towards a superior. If there be no reverence in the heart, it cannot be expected in the conduct. In all virtue, whether it be that higher kind which has respect to God, or that secondary kind, which relates to our fellow-creatures, we must have a right state of heart; for without this, virtue does not exist. Your words should correspond with the reverential feelings of your heart. When speaking to them, your address, both in language and in tones, should be modest, submissive, and respectful; not loud, boisterous, impertinent, or even familiar; for they are not your equals, but your superiors. If at any time you differ from them in opinion, your views should be expressed, not with the flippancy and pertinaciousness of disputants, but with the meek inquisitiveness of pupils. Should they even reprove you more sharply than you think is due, you must lay your hand upon your mouth, and neither

answer them again, nor show resentment. Your reverence for them should be so great as to impose a considerable restraint upon your speech in their company; for much is due to the presence of a parent. It is exceedingly offensive to hear a pert, clamorous, talkative young person, unchecked by the countenance of a father or mother, and engrossing much of the conversation of the company to himself. Young persons should always be modest and retiring in company, but more especially when their parents are present. You should also be careful about the manner of speaking of them to others. You should never talk of their faults, for this is like Ham's uncovering the nakedness of his father. You must not speak of them in a jocose or familiar manner, nor say any thing that would lead others to think lightly or to suppose that you thought lightly, of them. If they are attacked in their reputation, you are with promptitude and firmness, though with meekness, to defend them, so far as truth will allow; and even if the charge be true, to make all the excuses veracity will permit, and protest against the cruelty of degrading your parents in your presence.

Reverence should extend to all your behaviour towards your parents. In all your conduct towards them, give them the greatest honour; let it be observed by others that you pay them all possible respect, and let it also be seen by themselves, when no one else is present. Your conduct should always be under restraint, when they are in your sight; not the restraint of dread, but of esteem. How would you act if the king were in the room? Would you be as free, as familiar, as noisy, as when he had retired, or before he had entered? Parents let down their dignity, and undermine their authority,

by allowing the same rude and boisterous behaviour in their presence, as in their absence. This should not be. When reason is expanding in children, they should be made to understand and feel the truth of what I have already affirmed, that great respect should be shown for the mere presence of a parent. All rude and noisy rushing in and out of a father's or mother's company is unmeet. It is the etiquette of our court, that no one shall enter the royal presence, when the king is upon his throne, without obeisance; and in retiring, no one must turn his back upon the throne. I do not ask for the same obsequiousness in families, but I do ask for the principle from which it arises, a respectful deference for authority.

3. The next duty is obedience. "Children obey your parents," says the apostle in his epistle to the Colossians. This is one of the most obvious dictates of nature: even the irrational creatures are obedient by instinct, and follow the signs of the parent beast or bird. Perhaps there is no duty more generally acknowledged than this. Your obedience should begin early; the younger you are, the more you need a guide and a ruler. It should be Universal; "Children, obey your parents," said the apostle, "in all things." The only exception to this is, when their commands are, in the letter or spirit of them, opposed to the commands of God. In this case, as well as in every other, you must obey God rather than man. But even here, your refusal to comply with the sinful injunction of a parent, must be uttered in a meek and respectful manner, so that it shall be manifest you are actuated by purely conscientious motives, and not by a mere rebellious resistance of parental authority. Your obedience should

have no exception but such as is made by conscience: in your situation, inclination and taste are out of the question; both must be crossed, opposed, and set aside, when opposed to parental authority. Obedience should be Prompt. As soon as the command is uttered, it should be complied with. It is a disgrace to any child, that it should be necessary for his father or mother to repeat a command to him. You should, if possible, anticipate their injunctions, and not wait till their will is announced in words. A tardy obedience loses all its glory. It should be Cheerful. A reluctant virtue is no virtue at all. Constrained and unwilling obedience is rebellion in principle; it is vice clothed in the garment of holiness. God loves a cheerful giver, and so does man. A child retiring from a parent's presence, muttering, sullen, and murmuring, is one of the ugliest spectacles in creation: of what value is anything he does, in such a temper as this? It should be Self-denying. You must give up your own wills, and sacrifice your own predilections, and perform commands that are difficult, as well as those that are easy. When a soldier receives an order to exchange rest and comfort for a post of danger, he hesitates not, for he knows that he has no option. A child has no more room for the gratification of self-will than a soldier has; he must obey. It should be Uniform. Filial obedience is generally rendered without much difficulty to parents when present, but not always with the same alacrity to them when absent. Young people, you should despise the meanness, and abhor the wickedness, of consulting the wishes, and obeying the injunctions, of your parents, only when they are there to witness your conduct. Such hypocrisy is detestable. Act upon noble princi-

ples. Let it be enough to ensure obedience, for you to know what is the will of your father, even though continents lie, and oceans roll, between yourselves and him. Carry this injunction with you every where; let the voice of conscience be to you instead of his voice, and the consciousness that God sees you, be enough to ensure your immediate compliance. How sublimely simple and striking was the reply of the child, who, when pressed in company to take something which his absent parents had forbidden to him, and reminded that they were not there to witness him, replied, "Very true, but God and my conscience are here!" Be it your determination to imitate this beautiful example of filial piety, and obey in all things your absent parents.

4. Submission to family discipline and rule is no less your duty than obedience to commands. In every well-ordered family there is a rule of government; there are subordination, system, discipline, rewards, and punishments; and to these all the children must be in subjection. Submission requires that if at any time you have behaved so as to render parental chastisement necessary, you should take it patiently, and not be infuriated by passion, or excited to resistance. Remember that your parents are commanded by God to correct your faults, that they are actuated by love in performing that self-denying duty, and that it costs them more pain to inflict it, than it does you to endure it. Ingenuously confess your faults, and submit to whatever punishment their authority and wisdom may appoint. The loveliest sight in the domestic circle, next to a uniformly obedient child, is a disobedient one brought to a right sense of his misconduct, and quietly submitting to the penalty he has incurred. It is a proof both of strength of mind

and of a good disposition of heart, to say, "I have done wrong, and it is right I should bear chastisement."

In the case of elder children, all other correction than that of rebuke, and the expression by language of parental displeasure, is of course out of the question; but where this is necessary, such young persons as have merited it should exercise profound submission. It is exceedingly painful when a parent, in addition to the extreme pain which it costs him to administer reproof to such children, has to endure the anguish produced by their utter indifference, smiling contempt, sullen murmuring, or insolent replies. This conduct is the more guilty because those who display it are arrived at an age, when they may be supposed to have advanced so far in the growth of their understanding, as to perceive how deeply the foundations of parental authority are laid by nature, reason, and revelation, and how necessary it is that the reins of parental discipline should not be relaxed. If, then, you have committed one error in deserving reproof, do not commit another in resenting it. Keep all still within, let not your passions rebel against your judgment, but suppress in a moment any rising tumult of your soul. The conduct of some children after reproof is a deeper wound to the heart of a parent, than that which preceded and deserved the reproof. On the other hand, I know not a greater mark of nobleness of mind, nor anything which tends to raise a young person higher in the esteem of a parent, or to endear him more to a father's heart, than humble submission to reproof and an ingenuous confession of his fault. A friend of mine had a son, long since gone to join the immortals, who having one day displeased his father before his younger brothers and sisters, not only meekly submitted

to parental rebuke, but when the family were assembled at the dinner table, rose before them all, and after having confessed his fault, and craved his father's forgiveness, admonished the junior branches of the family to take warning by his example, and be cautious never to distress their parents, whom they were under such obligations to love and respect. Nothing could be more lovely or more impressive than this noble act: he rose by his apology to a higher place in the regard and esteem of his parents and the family, than he occupied before his fault; combining as he did heroic magnanimity with the profoundest humility.

Subjection implies also the due observance of the rules laid down for the maintenance of family order. In every well-ordered family, things are not left to chance, but regulated by fixed laws; there is a time for every thing and every thing is found in its time, a place for every thing and every thing is in its place. Meals, prayers, going to bed, and rising in the morning, have all their appointed season. To these rules it is the obvious duty of every branch of the family to submit. Sons and daughters may be growing up, or have arrived at full age; that matters not; they must submit to the law of the house, and their age is an additional reason for their submission, as it supposes a maturity of judgment which enables them to perceive more clearly the grounds of the moral obligation. They may think the rules too strict, but if the parent has enacted them, they should be in subjection to them, as long as they continue members of the little community, though it be almost to old age. It is for the parent to decide also what visitors shall be brought to the house; and it is in the highest degree unbecoming for a child to introduce, or

even attempt or wish to introduce, any companion contrary to the known will of a parent. The same remark will apply to recreations; parents must determine this point, and no child that has the proper feelings of a child, would desire to set up any amusements, which the taste, and especially which the conscience, of a father or mother forbid. Instances occur of young people, in the absence of their parents, inviting such friends, and joining with them in such diversions, as they know to be decidedly contrary to the law of the house. This is such an act of base and wicked rebellion against parental authority, and such an unprincipled disregard to parental comfort, as cannot be too strongly characterised. Even the books which are brought into the house must be in accordance with the domestic rule. If the parent forbid the introduction of novels, romances, or any other books, a child in most cases should forego his own predilections, and yield to an authority which he cannot resist without opposing the institute of nature and religion.

5. It is the duty of a child to advise with his parents. They are the guides of your youth; your natural counsellors; the family oracles, which you are ever to consult, and the responses of which are to be received with pious reverence. Even if you have just reason to suspect the solidity and penetration of their judgment, it is due to the relation in which you stand to them, to undertake nothing without laying the matter before them, and obtaining their opinion. How much more ready should you be to do this, where you have every reason to confide in their wisdom! You are young and inexperienced; the path of life is in a considerable degree untrodden by you, and contingencies are perpetually

arising which you have yet acquired no experience to understand, and to turn to account. They have travelled the road, and know its turnings, its dangers, and its difficulties. Go to your parents, then, with every affair; consult them on the subject of companions, books, recreations. Let your father's and your mother's ear be the depository of all your cares. Have no secrets which you conceal from them. Especially consult with them on commencing business or marrying. As to the former, you perhaps need their pecuniary assistance; and how can you expect it, if you do not take their advice as to the best way of employing their property? As to marriage, I need not repeat at any length what I have already said on this subject. The Scripture exhibits many instances of the deference paid in patriarchal times by children to their parents in this respect. Isaac and Jacob both appear to have left the selection of their wives to their parents. Ruth, though only a daughter-in-law, was willing to be guided entirely by Naomi. Ishmael asked his mother's advice: and Sampson sought for his parent's consent. The simplicity of that age has departed, and in the advance of society, more of the power of selection now vests in the children; but it should not be exercised independently of parental advice. An old divine said thus to his sons: "When you are youths, choose your callings; when men, choose your wives, only take me along with you; it may be, old men see farther than you." Another ancient writer has this remark: "It may be considered, that parents who brought forth and bred up their children, should by no means be bereft of them without their consent; and since they are so much their goods and possessions, it were a kind of pur-

loining to give themselves away without their parents' leave." And on this subject, a heathen may teach many who profess to be Christians; for Cyrus, on a proposal of marriage being made to him, replied, "I like the lady, her dowry, and family; but I must have these agree with my parents' will, and then I will marry her."

6. Imitate the good example of your parents. I say their good example, for if they unhappily set you a bad one, it is at the peril of your soul that you follow it. It was a noble answer which Frederic, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, returned to the prince, who advised him to follow the example of his father Lewis: "In the business of religion we must follow the example of parents and ancestors, only so far as they are agreeable to the will of God." Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, when he came to the throne of the Roman Empire, publicly expressed his determination not to follow the usual conduct of the Caesars, but to live as a disciple of the pious Antoninus, and to act, speak, and think, as his foster-father did. Survey the conduct of your parents; let their failings be thrown back in shadow, their excellences brought out in full relief. Where they are truly pious, be followers of their religious character. You bear the likeness of their bodies, receive also the impress of their minds. Seek to catch the family feature of their piety. A wicked child of godly parents is the most awful character upon earth. With what horror do we look on such an one! That he should swear, who was taught to pray! That he should violate the Sabbath, who was taken from his infantine days to the house of God! That he should despise religion, who has seen its beautiful form in the example of his

godly father and his pious mother! That he should be a friend of profane and unclean persons, who from a child has been the companion of saints! Shocking spectacle! But even where there may be no actual irreligion, there is oftentimes a want of true religion; and this also is distressing. What an aggravation is it to the sin of being without piety, to have lived all the earlier part of life with an example of true godliness before our eyes! This is a resistance of the most alluring means which heaven ever employs for the conversion of a sinner; it is a resolute determination to neglect and forget religion, in spite of an interesting and powerful memorial of it constantly before your eyes. What a meeting will such children have with their parents at the last day!

7. The last duty I shall mention is kindness. This should extend through the whole of your deportment; but there are several cases in which it will have a more enlarged opportunity for displaying its beauty and exerting its energy. When parents are greatly inferior in talents and acquirements, there is a fine occasion for the exercise of filial piety. Sometimes parents are lamentably deficient not only in information, but in judgment; their weakness is manifest to all, and cannot be concealed from their family, by whom, indeed, the sad effects of their imbecility are daily felt and deplored. Such cases afford an opportunity for the display of noble and exalted kindness on the part of children. Young people, if you are placed in such circumstances, endeavour constantly to remember that your parents, notwithstanding all their weakness, are your parents still, and have the claims of parents. Never, never taunt them with their defects, for this is cruelty in the

extreme; but on the contrary, strive to the uttermost to prevent them from suffering any painful consciousness of their inferiority. Do not laugh at their mistakes, or even suffer yourselves to expose or correct them so as to wound their feelings. If they are obstinate, yield to them; if irritable, bear with them; and when they show their incapacity for governing with wisdom, instead of snatching the sceptre from their hand, insensibly assist them to wield it with greater propriety. It is a beautiful sight to behold an intelligent, strong-minded son or daughter, straining every nerve, and employing every faculty to endure and conceal the faults of such a parent, and to throw an air of respectability over one that has no respectability of his own.

“There is often, especially in the middle classes of life, as great a difference of mental culture in the parent and the child, as if they had lived at the distance of many centuries. The wealth that has been acquired by patient industry, or some fortunate adventure, may be employed in diffusing all the refinements of science and literature over the children of those to whom the very words, science and literature, are words of which they would scarcely be able, even with the help of a dictionary, to understand the meaning. In a rank of life still lower, there are not wanting many meritorious individuals, who, uninstructed themselves, labour indefatigably to obtain the means of liberal instruction for one, whose wisdom in after years, when he is to astonish the village, may gratify at once their ambition and love. It would indeed be painful to think that any one whose superiority of knowledge has cost his parents so much fatigue, and so many privations of comforts, which, but for the expense of the means of his acquired superiority, they might have enjoyed, should turn against them in his own mind, the acquirements which were to them of so costly a purchase, despising them for the very ignorance which gave greater merit to their sacrifice; and proud of a wisdom far less noble, when it can thus feel contempt, than the humble ignorance which it despises.”

Kindness will show itself in generous attention to

poor parents. In the revolutions of this world, and by the vicissitudes of human affairs, many children have left their parents behind them in the humble vale of poverty, and some of them have lost their filial piety in the ascent. Few more shocking scenes can be presented to a feeling mind, than a rich son or daughter ashamed of and unkind to a poor father and mother. Such wretches deserve the fate of the proud monarch of Babylon, and would have no more than their desert, if they were driven from the company of men to herd with beasts, to which they are more allied in disposition than to human beings. How beautiful a scene, the very opposite of that which I have just considered, was exhibited in the palace of Pharaoh, when Joseph, then the Prime Minister of the state, led in a poor old shepherd to the presence of the king, and before all the lords of the Egyptian court, introduced the decrepid and careworn pilgrim as his father. Who after looking at this, will ever be ashamed of a parent because he is clad in the garb of poverty? What a halo of glory did that one act throw round the honoured brow of Joseph; the lustre of the golden chain which the king had hung on his neck was dim compared with the brightness of this action, and the chariot in which he rode with almost imperial pomp before the people, raised him not to an eminence so high as that which he attained when he stood before the monarch with the patriarch of Canaan leaning on his arm. Never be ashamed of your parents, then, because of their poverty. Let your kindness operate in the way of affording them all things necessary for their comfort. The author of the *iEneid* has denominated his hero the pious *Æneas*, because of the heroic manner in which he bore his

decrepid father from the flames of Troy. Two inhabitants of Sicily obtained celebrity in ancient story, for their kindness to their aged parents, in carrying them upon their shoulders from an irruption of Mount Etna. We have another instance in modern times:

“Mr Robert Tillotson went up to London on a visit to his son, then Dean of Canterbury, and being in the dress of a plain countryman, was insulted by one of the Dean’s servants, for inquiring if John Tillotson was at home. His person, however, being described to the Dean, he immediately exclaimed, ‘It is my worthy father;’ and running down to the door to receive him, he fell down upon his knees in the presence of his servants, to ask his father’s blessing.”

There are, however, few instances of more touching kindness to parents, than that mentioned by Mr Bruce, in his *Juvenile Anecdotes*:

“An officer having remained some time at Kingston, in Surrey, for the purpose of raising recruits, received orders to join his regiment. On the evening before his departure, a young man of the most engaging aspect made his appearance, and desired to be enlisted into his company. His air at once indicated a well cultivated mind, and commanded respect. He betrayed, however, evident marks of perturbation, and was greatly embarrassed; the officer asked the cause of it: ‘I tremble,’ said he ‘lest you should deny my request.’ Whilst he was speaking, the tears rolled down his cheeks. ‘No,’ answered the officer, ‘I accept your offer most heartily; but why should you imagine a refusal?’ ‘Because the bounty which I expect may perhaps be too high.’ ‘How much, then, do you demand?’ said the officer. ‘It is no unworthy motive, but an urgent claim, that compels me to ask ten guineas: and I shall be the most miserable of mankind if you refuse me.’ ‘Ten guineas,’ said the officer, ‘that, indeed, is very high: but I am pleased with you; I trust to your honour for the discharge of your duty, and will strike the bargain at once. Here are ten guineas: to-morrow we depart.’ The young man, overwhelmed with joy, begged permission to return home to perform a sacred duty, and promised to be back within an hour. The officer, impressed by the honesty of his countenance yielded to his desire; but observing something mysterious in his manner, he was induced by curiosity to follow him at some distance. He saw him hastening towards the

town prison, where he knocked and was admitted. The officer quickened his pace; and when he came to the door of the prison, he overheard the young man say to the jailor: 'Here is the money for which my father is imprisoned; I put it into your hands, and I request you will conduct me to him immediately, that I may release him from his misery.' The jailor did as he was requested. The officer delayed a few minutes, that the young man might have an opportunity of being alone with his father; he then followed him. What a scene! He saw the son in the arms of a venerable and aged father, who, without uttering a word, pressed him to his heart, and bedewed him with tears. A few minutes passed before he observed the officer, who, deeply affected, approached them, and said to the old man, 'Compose yourself, I will not deprive you of so worthy a son. Permit me to restore him to you, that I may not regret the money which he has employed in so virtuous a manner.' The father and son fell upon their knees at his feet. The young man refused, at first, to accept his proffered freedom: but the worthy officer insisted that he should remain with his father. He accompanied them both from the prison, and took his leave with the pleasing reflection of having contributed to the happiness of a worthy son and an unfortunate father."

What mind is not enamoured, what heart is not affected, by such touching instances of filial kindness? And what child is not ready to exclaim, "O my father, my mother, I will share with you my last crust, and feel at once both honoured and happy to return upon you in your old age, the kindness you bestowed upon me in youth, childhood, and infancy."

Kindness will manifest itself by affectionate attention and tender sympathy in their sickness. I do not know where in all our world to find a lovelier, holier, sweeter scene, than that of a pious and affectionate daughter devoting her time, strength, and inventive assiduity, to the comfort of a mother or a father, confined for years to the room and the bed of sickness. Such children I have known, who, with taste and capacity for the pleasures of society, have debarred themselves from all

company, to be the constant and almost sole companion of one dear sufferer, to alleviate whose sorrows was their only happiness. Scarcely have they permitted themselves to walk abroad and enjoy the scenes of nature even to recruit their wasting strength, and prepare for fresh activities in the sick chamber, lest in their absence a pang should be felt which none could so well mitigate as they, or a want endured which they could best supply. I knew one such, who, had her sick father lived much longer, would have preceded him to the grave, and died a martyr to filial piety. Nothing could ever tempt her away from his side by day, and not often did a night pass, without her stealing quietly to his chamber door, at which, unconscious of the frost which was assailing her delicate frame, she stood listening to ascertain if all was still, not daring to enter, lest she should disturb that slumber which he might be enjoying. I remember, in another case, visiting a cottage, in which a sick man lay dying, who had been long ill; his wife was ministering to his comfort, and in one corner of the room there was a girl of twelve years of age busily employed at her needle. On my asking how they were supported in their affliction, the mother replied, "Principally, sir, by that child's work; she is up every morning at four o'clock, and is diligently employed till late at night; she cheerfully bears all this labour, and gives its produce to sustain us." Young people, read and ponder these interesting details, and imitate these beautiful examples. Put forth all your tenderness, shrink from no self-denial, endure, not only without murmuring, but with cheerfulness, any sacrifices to comfort a sick parent. Aspire to the character of being a ministering angel to a father or mother. Let them see that you account it not hardship,

but felicity, to wait upon them. It is in your power to alleviate or aggravate to an inconceivable degree their sufferings, according as you are kind or unkind. Covet the testimony which many a one has received, when the sufferer has said, with tears in her eyes, "that dear child is my companion, my friend, my nurse, and all my earthly delight." O what is the concord of sweet sounds at the concert, what the gay glittering attractions of the ball room, what the dazzling scenes of the theatre, or to come to more lawful enjoyments, what the exhilaration of the public religious meeting, compared with the consciousness of having smoothed the bed of sickness and alleviated the suffering of disease for an afflicted parent. If the conscience of any that shall read these pages shall reproach them for neglect; if they know that they have heard their parents mildly reprove them for their want of sympathy, let them consider what must be the anguish of those parents' hearts, who have to say in the bitterness of soul to their own children, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, come, see if there was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow;" and who disappointed in the hope of tenderness from their own offspring, turn for help to their neighbours, saying with Job, "Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Unfeeling youths, your neglect will one day find you out, and at some future time may be, perhaps, returned upon you by the cruel conduct of your own children.

Kindness is put to a severe test, by the bad temper, or the stern and tyrannical government, of parents. It is difficult, I know, to be kind to those who are unkind to us; but this is our duty in all cases, most of all to a parent. Nothing must cause you to be other than a

dutiful, affectionate child. No ebullitions of passion, no manifestation of unreasonable discontent, no caprice, no unmerited reproach on their part, should throw you off your guard. It may be sometimes necessary to remonstrate, but it never can be proper to return railing for railing. Kindness may do more in such circumstances, to soften and remove the evil, than angry resistance; "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

"Lovely as virtue is," says Dr Brown, "in all its forms, there is no form in which it is more lovely than in the tender ministry of offices of kindness: where the kindness perhaps is scarcely felt, or considered less as kindness than as the duty which might have been fairly demanded, and which there is no merit, therefore, in having paid. Though we have often the gratification of seeing, in the progress of life, many beautiful examples of age, that is not more venerable for its past virtues, than amiable with a lasting and still increasing gentleness which softens the veneration indeed, but augments it, even while it softens it, it is not always that the last years of life present to us this delightful aspect; and when the temper is in these last years unfortunately clouded; when there is no smile of kindness in the faded eye, that grows bright again for moments only when there is fretfulness in the heart; when the voice that is feeble only in the utterance of grateful regard, is still sometimes loud with tones of a very different expression; the kindness which, in its unremitting attention, never shows by a word or look the sadness that is felt on these undeserved reproaches, and that regards them only as proofs of a weakness that requires still more to be comforted, is a kindness which virtue alone can inspire and animate, but which, in the bosom that is capable of it, virtue must already have well rewarded. How delightful is the spectacle, when amid all the temptation of youth and beauty, we witness some gentle heart, that gives to the couch of the feeble, and perhaps of the thankless and repining, those hours which others find too short for the successive gaieties with which an evening can be filled, and that prefers to the smile of universal admiration, the single smile of enjoyment, which after many efforts, has at last been kindled on one solitary cheek!"

Another circumstance remains to be mentioned, which will render it extremely difficult, sometimes,

to be at once obedient to God, and to your parents; difficult to manifest all the kindness which they may expect, and at the same time to regard the dictates of conscience; I mean, where the children are pious, and the parents are still in an unconverted state. This is no uncommon case, and is always a trying one, wherever it occurs. Those who are placed in such a situation need much wisdom and much grace to conduct themselves with propriety, so as to give no unnecessary pain to their parents, and yet at the same time to maintain their consistency as Christians. To young persons in such circumstances I say, let there be deep and unaffected humility; no spiritual pride, and no apparent consciousness of moral superiority; no saying, "stand by, I am holier than thou:" nothing approaching, in the most distant manner, to contempt of your parents, on account of their state. When it is necessary, as it sometimes may be, to oppose their wishes and refuse their requests, because they interfere with your duty to God, let your dissent not assume the shape of disobedience to them, but let it be expressed in a mild and respectful manner, and be made to appear the result of conscientious motives, and not of caprice, or any want of right feeling towards them. In all other things in which religion is not concerned, let there be additional effort and ingenuity to please them, so that they may have nothing against you, but as touching the law of your God. It may be sometimes necessary for you to express the solicitude which you ought always to feel for their spiritual welfare; you must then be careful to avoid the appearance of dictation, lecturing, and reproach, and address yourselves to them in an humble and prudent manner. You should put suitable

books in their way; and if they are not in the habit of hearing the gospel preached, you may invite them to hear the joyful sound. With all this, you must take especial pains that your own religion may be consistent, practical, and visible in all your conduct; but more particularly conspicuous in the kind, tender, and dutiful manner in which you discharge your obligations to them.

This is a compendium of filial duties. Let children read and study it, sincerely desire to practise it, and pray to Almighty God for the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to assist them in discharging their obligations.

Many and cogent motives may be brought forward to enforce the performance of these duties.

Observe the manner in which they are enjoined in Scripture. Perhaps there are few branches of moral obligation more frequently alluded to, or more variously enjoined, than that of filial piety. The lives of the patriarchs, from the beginning of the world, are recorded so as to exhibit and recommend this virtue. It is commanded in one of the precepts of the moral law. By the law of Moses, stubborn disobedience to parental authority was punished with death. The book of Proverbs contains almost innumerable apothegms on this subject. The prophets very frequently allude to it; and Jeremiah, in the history of the Rechabites, has preserved a very extraordinary instance of hereditary filial obedience, perpetuated through a period, which, in the time of that prophet, amounted to three centuries, and which was rewarded by the following testimony and promise of the Lord: "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel; because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab,

your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." If we come forward to the New Testament, we find it again and again brought into view. We see it embodied and enforced in the example of Christ; of whom it is said, "Jesus went down and was subject unto his parents." Yes, in the matchless constellation of perfect moral excellences that formed his character, and are presented for our admiration and imitation, one bright and beautiful star is filial piety. Fix, young people, your eye upon that star, so mildly beaming, and so radiantly shining, as an example for you. That wonderful personage, God manifest in the flesh, was subject, we have reason to believe, to his parents, till at the age of thirty, he entered upon his public ministry; and those parents, be it remembered, were a poor couple, who earned their daily bread by the sweat of their brows. With them he dwelt in their humble abode, and laboured, in all probability, for their support. And even amidst the agonies of the cross, neither his own personal suffering, nor the sublime and glorious scenes connected with the redemption of the world, abstracted his thoughts and solicitude from the mother of his human nature; for even then did his filial piety shine forth. The apostles enforced it by various commendations. "Children, obey your parents," says St. Paul, in one place, "for it is right;" a thing not obligatory merely because it is commanded, but commanded because it is right; not a mere positive institute, but wholly moral; a duty enjoined not only by revelation, but by reason; one of the first lessons taught

by nature to a rational creature: so right and proper is it, that all nations, ancient and modern, civilized and savage, admit its obligations. In another place, it is declared to be "well-pleasing unto the Lord." It is that in which he delights, because it is the very disposition which he requires towards himself. And the apostle specifies disobedience to parents, in his catalogue of the darkest deeds, most horrid dispositions, and most atrocious characters. The loud, strong voice of revelation is lifted to proclaim over the surface of the globe, "Children, obey your parents, and honour your father and mother; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord:" while the voice of nature echoes back the command, "Children, obey your parents, for this is right."

A child of any degree of generosity will be influenced to obey his parents, by consideration for their comfort. The earthly happiness of a father and a mother depends far more upon the conduct of their children, than upon any thing else. Their trade may prosper, their wealth accumulate; they may dwell amidst every kind of luxury and splendour, in as beautiful a spot as the creation can present; yet an undutiful child may by his disobedience and unkindness, throw a dark and chilling shadow over all, and envelope everything in gloom. On the other hand, affectionate and obedient children supply the lack of riches, soften the weight of care, sweeten the cup of affliction, and shed a pleasing light over what would be otherwise a dark and dreary scene of human woe. Children have their parents' happiness in their keeping. They stand at the fountains of our earthly destiny, and send into our dwellings the waters of bitterness or of sweetness, according as their conduct is dutiful or unkind to us. They cannot know,

till experience shall teach them, the trembling and exquisite sensitiveness of our hearts, and how slight a puncture draws the life's blood of our peace. So true it is, as was said by the wise man, that "a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother," aye, and of his father too; he is a spot on their honour; a thorn in their hearts; a nuisance to their family; and a blasting of their hopes.

Nearly connected with this, as another motive, is gratitude. No child can know, till he becomes a parent himself, what he owes to his parents; and not then, till he has added all the cares, toils, and anxieties which are excited by the child, the boy, the youth, and the man, in addition to those which are awakened by the infant. Parental solicitude is, of course, produced by the first sight of the child; but the infancy of the babe is but the infancy of our solicitude, which grows with its growth, and strengthens with its strength. Children are ever contracting obligations from the first moment of their existence. What does not the babe owe to his mother, for that watchfulness, labour, and anxiety, which cease not day nor night? Other animals, though nourished by their parents, are taught many things by instinct: but man, the most helpless of all creatures, in the first stage of his existence, must learn every thing from his parents. Let any one calculate, if he can, the hours of labour, sleeplessness, and anxiety; the tears, the tremblings, the alarms, which one weakly infant costs a mother, before he leaves her arms, and stands erect upon his feet in his own strength. My young friend, had your mother remitted her care for one single hour, or ceased but for a short season her vigilant inspection, you might have been burnt in your

cradle, or have been now a cripple or an idiot. How many months rolled by before you could help yourself to medicine or to food, express in articulate language a single want, put on a garment, or defend yourself against an enemy as feeble as a wasp. What then are your obligations to the woman who did all this for you, and delighted to do it? I cannot follow you through the successive stages of your existence, at each of which you were accumulating fresh obligations to both father and mother, for education with all its advantages, for instruction in trade, and that capacity you now possess for attaining to respectability in life; but above all, for that ceaseless, manifest, and earnest solicitude for your eternal happiness, by which you have had the road to glory, honour, and immortality, opened to your view, and been admonished to walk in it. O, sum up, if you can, your obligations to your parents: but you cannot. And can you resist this motive to obedience? What, has gratitude perished in your soul till its very root has died in the soil of your depraved nature? Yes, it must be so, if you are unkind to your parents: you stand proved before the universe, to have nothing of a child, but the name and the mere natural relation, which you possess in common with the tiger, the serpent, or the toad; but you have not the feelings of a child; you are a monstrous production, out of the course of nature, and like all such productions, fill the mind with loathing and horror. Few there are, I hope, that will read these pages, to whom such an expostulation is applicable; on the contrary, many, I believe, will experience as they proceed, the generous emotions of gratitude swelling higher and higher in their bosom, till with a burst of virtuous

feeling, they exclaim, "Accept, my parents, of the surrender, which a sense of my obligation to you compels me to make, of my whole future life to the promotion of your comfort."

Interest pleads with children for their dutiful behaviour to their parents. An undutiful child cannot be a happy one. Peace must leave the breast with filial piety, when that departs; and uneasiness, misery, and occasional shame and remorse, enter it; but the affectionate and dutiful child has a source of perpetual happiness in his own feelings. Observe the language of the apostle, "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." This is an allusion, it is true, to the temporal promises of the Sinai Covenant, and perhaps to the law which doomed the disobedient son to be judicially cut off from the people. But yet, as repeated by a New Testament writer, it must, to a certain extent, be in force still. Dr. Dwight has the following remarks on this passage, which deserve consideration:

"In conversing with the plain people of this country, distinguished for their good sense and careful observation of facts, I have found them to a great extent firmly persuaded of the verification of this promise in our own times; and ready to produce a variety of proofs from cases in which they have seen the blessing realised. Their opinion is mine, and with their experience my own has coincided. Indeed no small measure of prosperity seems ordinarily interwoven with a course of filial piety. The comfort which it ensures to parents, the harmony which it produces in the family, the peace which it yields in the conscience, are all essential ingredients of happiness. To these it adds the approbation of every beholder, the possession of a fair and lasting reputation, the confidence and good will of every worthy man, and of consequence, an opportunity of easily gaining those useful employments which good men have to give. Beyond this it naturally associates itself with temperance,

moderation, and sobriety, which furnish a solid foundation for health and long life. In my own apprehension, however, these are not all its blessings. I do not say that miracles are wrought for its reward. Neither will I say that purer gales breathe to preserve its health; nor that softer suns arise, or more timely rains descend, to mature its harvest; nor that more propitious winds blow, to waft its ships home in safety: but I will say, that on the tide of Providence, multiplied blessings are borne into its possession, at seasons when they are unexpected, in ways unforeseen, and by means unprovided by its own forecast, which are often of high importance; which, altogether, constitute a rich proportion of prosperity; and which, usually, are not found by persons of the contrary character. At the same time, those who act well as children, almost of course act well as men and women; and thus have taken, without design, the scion of happiness from the parental stock, and grafted it upon other stems, which bears fruit abundantly to themselves. Here, in the language of Dr. Watts,

‘It revives, and bears

‘A train of blessings for their heirs.’”

If motives so forcible and tender as these have no effect, nothing is left me to do, but to remind the children of disobedience of that day of judgment which God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, and to give to every one according to the things done in the body, whether they are good or bad. “In that most awful season, when the wicked shall see the Judge sit above them, angry and severe, inexorable and terrible; under them, an intolerable hell; within them, their consciences clamorous and diseased; without them, all the world on fire; on the right hand, those men glorified, whom they persecuted and despised; on the left hand, the devils accusing;” then shall it be found that the severest sentence of the Almighty, and the bitterest dregs of the vials of his wrath, will be poured out on the disobedient and ungodly child of parents, who trained him up in the nurture of the Lord.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE FRATERNAL
DUTIES.

“Next in order to the relationship of the parent and the child, may be considered the relation which the child bears to those who are united with him by the same tie, to the same parental bosoms. If friendship be delightful, if it be above all delightful to enjoy the continued friendship of those who are endeared to us by the intimacy of many years, who can discourse with us of the frolics of the school, of the adventures and studies of the college, of the years when we first ranked ourselves with men in the free society of the world; how delightful roust be the friendship of those who, accompanying us through all this long period with a closer union than any casual friend, can go still farther back, from the school to the very nursery, which witnessed our common pastimes; who have had an interest in every event that has related to us, and in every person that excited our love or our hatred; who have honoured with us those to whom we have paid every filial honour in life, and wept with us over those whose death has been to us the most lasting sorrow of our heart. Such, in its wide, unbroken sympathy, is the friendship of brothers, considered even as friendship only; and how many circumstances of additional interest does this union receive, from the common relationship to those who have original claims to our still higher regard, and to whom we offer an acceptable service, in extending our affection to those whom they love. In treating of the circumstances that tend peculiarly to strengthen this tie, Cicero extends his view even to the common sepulchre that is at last to enclose us. It is indeed a powerful image, a symbol, and almost a lesson, of unanimity. Every dissension of man with man, excites in us a feeling of painful incongruity; but we feel a particular incongruity in the discord of those, whom one roof has continued to shelter through life, and whose dust is afterwards to mingle under a single stone.” DR. THOMAS BROWN.

To secure the comfort and well-being of a state, it is necessary not only for the sovereign to be wise and patriotic, and the laws justly and impartially administered, but the people must be well affected both towards the government, and towards each other: there must be a tie binding them to each other, as well as to the state: there must be the fellowship of good neighbourhood. So also the happiness and welfare of a family depend not exclusively on the conduct of the parents to the children, or on the conduct of the children to the parents, but also on the conduct of the children to each other. No family can be happy where right feeling is wanting on the part of brothers and sisters. Nothing can be a substitute for this defect, and it is of great importance that all young people should have this set in a proper light before them. Many households are a constant scene of confusion, a perpetual field of strife, and an affecting spectacle of misery, through the quarrels and ill-will of those, who as flesh of each other's flesh, and blood of each other's blood, ought to have towards each other no feeling but that of love, and to use no words but those of kindness.

I will divide the fraternal duties into three kinds; as they are severally appropriate to the seasons of childhood, youth, and manhood. The general principles which are to regulate the discharge of these duties, and on which indeed they rest, are the same in reference to all seasons of life. Love, for instance, is equally necessary, whether brothers and sisters are sporting together in the nursery, dwelling together as young men and women beneath the parental roof, or descending the hill of life at the head of separate establishments and families of their own. Over and above the feelings of friendship

or of moral esteem, there must be those of affection for them, as related to us by the ties of consanguinity; a consciousness, that by the dispensations of Providence in uniting them to us by a bond of nature which nothing but death can dissolve, they have acquired a claim upon our efforts to make them happy, which is stronger than that of any strangers, except it be in those cases where our brothers and sisters have by their unkind and cruel conduct, thrown off every thing of relationship but the name, and a stranger has assumed towards us the heart of a brother. And even in this case, we must still consider that they are our brothers or sisters, mourn their alienation with grief, view their aberrations with pity, watch them in their wanderings with anxious interest, and keep the way open for their return to our fellowship. Children of the same parents who are wanting in love, are wanting in all the virtues of a brother and sister as such. It is true, they may find companions more to their taste, considered as mere subjects of intellectual or general companionship, persons of more agreeable manners, of more pleasing tempers, of more cultivated minds; but they are not their brothers; nor must the perception of their great superiority in many respects, destroy that natural impulse towards a brother or a sister, which the heart ought ever to feel and obey. This love must, of course, be increased or diminished in its exercise by circumstances, such as good or bad conduct, kindness or unkindness, but nothing must destroy the principle. The Scripture, which is so replete with admonitions on almost every other subject, has said little on this: it has left nature spontaneously to send forth its fraternal energies; and though containing many exhortations to the children of God to abound in

brotherly love, has said little on this topic to the children of men: a reserve which seems to imply rather that the duty is so obvious and so easy, as not to need an injunction, than that the discharge of it is not obligatory or not important. A child, a youth, or a man, who feels no goings forth of his heart, no peculiar interest, no appropriate and restrictive emotions, for his brother or sister, is wanting in one of those social virtues, which it was certainly the intention of Providence should arise out of the relative ties.

But I will now go on to state how the various fraternal duties should be discharged in childhood. Brothers and sisters should make it a study to promote each other's happiness. They should take pleasure in pleasing each other, instead of each being selfishly taken up in promoting his own separate enjoyment. They should never envy each other's gratifications; if one has a more valuable plaything than the other, the rest, should rather rejoice than be sorry. Envy in children is likely to grow into a most baneful and malignant disposition. They should never take each other's possessions away, but be always willing to lend any thing which does admit of being divided. Each must do all he can to promote the happiness of the whole. They should never be indifferent to each other's sorrows, much less laugh at and sport with each other's tears and griefs. It is a lovely sight to see one child weeping because another is in distress. A boy that can see his brother or sister weep, and be unconcerned or merry at the sight, will, when he becomes a man, in all probability, see them starve without helping them. Children should never accuse each other to their parents, or like to see each other punished. An informer is a hateful and

detestable character: but an informer against his brother or sister is the most detestable of all spies. If, however, one should see another doing any thing wrong, or known to be contrary to the will of their parents, he should first, in a kind and gentle manner, point out the wrong, and give an intimation that if it be not discontinued, he shall be obliged to mention it: and if the warning be not taken, it is then manifestly his duty to acquaint their parents with the fact. They must not tease or torment one another. How much domestic uneasiness arises from this source: one of several children, perhaps, has an infirmity or weakness of temper, an awkwardness of manner, or some personal deformity; and the rest, instead of pitying it, tease and torment it, till all get quarrelling and crying together! Is this promoting their mutual comfort? If there be any one of the family in bad health or weakly, all the rest, instead of neglecting that one, ought to strive to the uttermost to amuse him. How pleasing a sight it is to see a child giving up his play-time, to read to, or converse with, a sick brother or sister; while nothing is more disgusting than that selfishness which will not spare a single hour for the amusement of the poor sufferer upon the bed, or the little prisoner in the nursery. As to fighting, quarrelling, or calling ill names, this is so utterly disgraceful, that it is a deep shame upon those children who live in such practices. Dr. Watts has very beautifully said:

“Whatever brawls disturb the street,
There should be peace at home,
Where sisters dwell and brothers meet
Quarrels should never come.
Birds in their little nests agree;
And 'tis a shameful sight

When children of one family-
 Fall out, and chide, and fight.
Hard names at first, and threat'ning words,
 That are but noisy breath,
May grow to clubs and naked swords,
 To murder and to death."

Children removed together from home to school should be both watchful over and kind to each other. They should manifest a peculiar and kind interest in each other's comfort, and not neglect one another. It is pleasant to see two brothers or two sisters, always anxious to have each other for playmates, and for members of the little circle with which they associate; defending one another from oppression or unkindness, and striving to make their absence from home as comfortable as they can by their mutual kindness.

I go on now to show in what way brothers and sisters should behave towards each other, during the season of youth. Supposing them to have arrived at the age of fourteen, I state their obligations between that period and the time when they settle in life. There should of course be tender attachment to each other, becoming stronger and more visible, as they acquire greater ability to understand their relationship, and the design of Providence in forming it. Instead of this, however, we sometimes see brothers and sisters become more and more indifferent to each other, as they recede further from the period of infancy. They should reason upon the closeness of their relationship, and let their understandings give additional impulse to their hearts. They should be fond of each other's society, and put forth all their ingenuity to please one another. It would have a delightful influence upon their mutual attachment, if their little separate proportion of pocket

money were sometimes employed in making each other presents. How happy a state of feeling would be produced, if a sister, after having incidentally expressed a wish for some little article, were to be surprised soon after by finding that a brother had, unknown to her, purchased the elegant or useful trifle, and placed it upon her toilet or work-table. Sisters should put forth all their assiduity to provide for brothers whatever the needle can do for their personal accommodation, and feel a hallowed delight in giving their labour to increase the comforts and conveniencies of those whom it should be their study to please. A family of grown-up children should be a scene of uninterrupted harmony, where love, guided by ingenuity, should put forth all its powers to please, by those mutual good offices, and minor acts of beneficence, of which every day furnishes the opportunity, and which, while they cost little in the way either of money or labour, contribute so much to the happiness of the household. One of the most delightful sights in our world, (where there is so much moral deformity to disgust, and so much unkindness to distress,) is a domestic circle where the parents are surrounded by their children, of whom the daughters are being employed in elegant or useful work, and the elder brother reading some instructive and improving volume, for the benefit or entertainment of the whole. This is the scene which more than justifies the beautiful apostrophe of the sweetest and most tender of all poets:

“Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that hast survived the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmixed with drops of bitter, which neglect

Or temper shed into thy crystal cup.
 Thou art the nurse of virtue, in thine arms
 She dwells, appearing, as in truth she is,
 Heaven born, and destined to the skies again.
 Thou art not known, where pleasure is ador'd,
 That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist,
 And wand'ring eyes, still leaning on the arm
 Of novelty, her fickle, frail support;
 For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
 And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love,
 Joy that her stormy raptures never yield:
 Forsaking thee, what shipwrecks have we made
 Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!"

Scenes are to be found, (but alas, how rarely,) which give meaning and force to this lovely strain. Young people, seek your happiness in each other's society. What can the brothers find in the circle of dissipation, or amongst the votaries of intemperance, to compare with this? Where can the sisters, amidst the concert of sweet sounds, find music for the soul, compared with this domestic harmony? Or what is there in the glitter and confusion of the ball-room, to be compared with the pure, calm joys which are to be found at the fireside of a happy family? What can the theatre yield that is comparable to this?

"“Oh, ev'nings worthy of the gods!” exclaimed
 The Sabine bard. Oh, evenings, I reply,
 (More to be priz'd and coveted than yours,
 As more illumin'd, and with nobler truths,)
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
 That idleness has ever yet contriv'd
 To fill the void of an unfurnish'd brain;
 To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.”

I would advise all young people to read “The Task” of Cowper, and especially the fourth book; and to read it, till they grow in love with those pure and hallowed

home-born pleasures, which are at once the most attainable and the most satisfying of any to be found in our curse-stricken world.

It is of great importance to the pleasant intercourse of brothers and sisters, that each should pay particular attention to the cultivation of the temper. I have known all the comfort of a family destroyed by the influence of one passionate or sullen disposition. Where such a disposition unhappily exists, the object of it should take pains to improve it, and the other branches of the family, instead of teasing, irritating, or provoking it, should exercise all possible forbearance, and with ingenious kindness help their unfortunate relative in the difficult business of self-control.

As woman seems formed by nature to execute the offices of a nurse, sisters should be peculiarly kind and tender to sick brothers; for there are few things which tend more to conciliate affection, than sympathy with us in our sufferings, and the gentle and willing efforts, which, if they cannot mitigate our pains, have such power to soothe our minds and divert our attention from the sense of suffering.

Mutual respect should be shown by brothers and sisters; all coarse, vulgar, degrading terms and modes of address should be avoided; and nothing but what is courteous either done or said. The intercourse of such relatives should be marked, not indeed by the stiffness of ceremony, the coldness of formality, or the cautious timidity of suspicion, but by the politeness of good manners blended with all the tenderness of love. It is peculiarly requisite, also, that while this is maintained at home, there should not be disrespectful neglect in company. It is painful for a sister to find herself more

neglected there than the veriest stranger, and thus appear to others as one in whom her brother feels no interest.

Brothers ought not, even in lesser matters, to be tyrants over their sisters, and expect from them the obsequiousness of slaves. Poor girls are sometimes rendered miserable by the caprice, freaks, and iron yoke of an insolent and lordly brother. Where the parents are living, they ought not to suffer this oppression. Of such a despot let all young women beware, for he that is a tyrant to a sister, is sure to be a tyrant also to a wife.

It is of great consequence that brothers and sisters should maintain epistolary correspondence when absent from each other. It must be a very strong regard, which separation, especially when it is for a long time, does not diminish. Flames burn brightest in the vicinity of each other. An affectionate letter, received from an absent friend, tends to fan the dying spark of affection. Those who can be long separated without such a bond as this, are already in a state of indifference to each other, and are in rapid progress to still wider alienation.

Brothers and sisters should be very careful not to become estranged from each other after the deaths of their parents; of this there is always some danger. While one parent remains, though the other be gone to the sepulchre, there is a common centre of family affection still left, by drawing near to which, the members are kept near to each other; but when this survivor has also departed, the point of union is gone, and the household is likely, without great watchfulness, to be divided and distracted. How often does this happen

by the division of the family property! The grave has scarcely closed over the parental remains, before strife, confusion, and every evil work begin, in reference to the patrimonial possessions. To guard against this, the father should ever have his will made upon the principles of wisdom and equity. Any attempt upon the part of one child to turn a parent's mind from the line of strict impartiality and equity in his own favour; any advantage taken of opportunities of more frequent access to a parent's ear and prejudices, to gain more than a just share of his property, is an act so base, so foul and wicked, as to deserve the most severe reprehension. Even in this case, however, the injured branches of the family should not so far resent the matter, as to withdraw from all intercourse with the supplanter: remonstrate they may, and abate something of their-esteem and regard they must, but still they are required by Scripture to forgive him, and not to cherish hatred, or to manifest revenge. Unless in cases of unusual and extraordinary rapacity, the fraternal intercourse ought not to be stopped by unfair conduct of this kind.

There are instances, however, in which an unequal division of property is not an unjust one, and ought not to be felt as such by the party which receives the lesser share. If one child has become possessed of wealth from another source, I do not think that he ought to consider himself unfairly dealt with, if he do not receive so large a portion of the family property, as his brothers and sisters do. Or if there be one branch of the family prevented by the visitations of Providence from all active labour, the rest ought not to think it unfair, if a parent make a larger provision for this deformed or helpless child, than for the other branches. The aliena-

tion of brothers and sisters on account of pecuniary matters, is usually a matter of deep disgrace to them all; not only to the spoiler, but also to the rest.

But in what terms shall I depict the atrocious wickedness of a villainous brother, who, after the death of their parents, would employ his influence to wheedle and swindle an unmarried sister out of her property, and reduce her to poverty and dependence, to indulge his own rapacity, or to avert calamity from himself? Such wretches have existed, and do exist; who, taking advantage of a sister's strong affection, combined with her ignorance of money matters, never cease, till, by all the arts of subtlety, they have got out of her possession the last shilling she has in the world; and then, perhaps, when she has nothing more for them to pilfer, abandon the victim of their cruelty, with the remorselessness of a highwayman, to want and misery. Let such monsters remember, that there is One in heaven whose eye has been upon all their wicked arts and cruel robbery, and who for all these things will bring them into judgment. He also must be regarded as a cruel brother, who, though without any dishonest intention, allows himself to jeopardise the property of a sister, in order either to increase his own gain, or to avert his own apprehended misfortune. She may be very unfitted to struggle with poverty, and altogether disqualified for supporting herself by her own industry, and therefore ought not to be exposed to the danger of losing her property. Cases do occur sometimes, in which it may be proper and even necessary, for the property of unmarried sisters to be employed in the trade of their brothers; but as a general rule, it is improper; and where it does happen, the latter should let all their

conduct be guided by the principles of the greatest caution, the most rigid integrity, and the noblest generosity.

Brothers ought ever after the death of their parents, to consider themselves as the natural guardians of unmarried sisters; their advisers in difficulty; their comforters in distress; their protectors in danger; their sincere, tender, liberal, and unchanging friends, amidst all the scenes and vicissitudes of life. It is rarely advisable that a sister should permanently dwell with a married brother; but if she does, even the claims of his wife ought not to cancel or throw into oblivion those of his sister.

I will now suppose the case of one or more branches of the family, who are brought by divine grace to partake of true religion; and point out what is their duty to the rest. And it is manifest that they cannot escape from the solemn obligation to seek, by every affectionate, scriptural, and judicious effort, the real conversion of those of the family who are yet living without heartfelt religion. O how often has the leaven of piety, when by divine mercy and power it has been infused into the heart of one of the family, spread through nearly the whole household! How often has fraternal love, when it has soared to its sublimest height, and, with a heaven-kindled ambition, has aimed at the loftiest object which benevolence can possibly pursue, by seeking the salvation of a brother's soul, secured its prize and received its rich reward! Young people whose hearts, being under the influence of piety, bleed for those, who, though they are the children of the same earthly parent, are not the children of your Father in heaven, I call upon you by the love you

bear your brothers and sisters, by all the affection you bear for your parents, by all the higher love you bear to God and Christ, to seek, by every proper means, the conversion of those, who, though bound to you by the ties of nature, are not yet united to you by the bond of grace. Make it your object to win their souls. Pray for it constantly. Put forth in your own example all the beauties of holiness. Preserve the most undeviating consistency, since a single failure in this respect will strengthen the prejudice you are anxious to subdue. Let them see your religion in your conscientiousness, your joy, your humility, your meekness, your love. Be more than ordinarily exact in all the general duties of life. Win their affections by the kindest and most conciliating conduct. Avoid all affectation of superiority. Attempt not to scold them out of their sins. Avoid the language of reproach. Draw them with the cords of love, for they are the bands of a man. Now and then recommend to their perusal a valuable book. When they are absent, write to them on the subject of religion. But at the same time do not disgust them by boring them with religion. Seize favourable opportunities, and wisely improve them. Point them to eminently happy, consistent, and useful Christians. Comply with all their wishes that are lawful, but give not up one atom of your consistency. Falling in with their tastes and pursuits, if they are contrary to God's word, will only disgust them; mild firmness will secure their respect. And crown all with earnest prayer for that grace, without which no means can be successful. How knowest thou but thou shalt gain thy brother? And O, what a conquest!

And what shall be said to the unconverted party?

Shall such means be unsuccessful? Will you resist this holy, benevolent influence? Will you oppose these efforts to draw you to heaven? Will you leave your sister to travel alone to the skies, and determine to separate from her for ever, and pursue your course to perdition? Will you seek the dreadful, the fatal distinction, of being alone in your family as the enemy of God, the captive of Satan? Shall a sister's solicitude for your salvation, and all the active efforts which inputs forth, be only a savour of death unto death to you? Pause and ponder, young man! Alter your purpose; take her by the hand and say to her, "Your affection has conquered, I will go with you, for I know that God is with you." But perhaps instead of this, you are a persecutor. What! a persecutor of religion, and of a sister at the same time? Yes, you reject with scorn such efforts for your salvation, and treat her with ridicule and unkindness, by whom they are made. Is it so? What, wicked enough for this? What, carry your enmity to piety so far as to embitter the life of a sister, for no other reason than because she bows her heart to its influence? Recollect the contest is not between you and her, but between you and God. It is not as a sister, but as a Christian, that she is the object of your displeasure; and therefore your ill-will is against religion, and if against religion, then against God, for religion is the image of God in the soul of his rational creatures. Did you ever read or hear that fearful denunciation? if not, read it now, "Woe to him that contendeth with his Maker." This woe is uttered against every persecutor of religion, and therefore against you.

The responsibility of elder brothers and sisters, espe-

cially that of the first-born, is great indeed. They are looked up to by the younger branches of the family as examples, and their example has great influence, in some cases greater than that of the parents: it is the example of one more upon a level with themselves, more near to them, more constantly before them, than that of the parents, and is on those accounts more influential. It is of immense consequence, therefore, to their juniors, how they conduct themselves. If they are bad, they are likely to lead all the rest astray; if good, they may have great power in leading them aright. They furnish companions, books, and recreations, to the rest, and these will be proper or improper according to their own taste. It is a most distressing spectacle to see an elder brother or sister training up younger ones, by example if not by precept, in the ways of wickedness. Such a youth is an awful character; like Satan, he goes about seeking whom by his temptations he may destroy: but in some respects he is more wicked and more cruel than his prototype, for he marks out his own brother as the victim of his cruelty, and the dupe of his wiles. Whole families have in some cases been schooled in iniquity by one unprincipled elder son. What will such a brother have to answer for in the day of judgment, and what will be his torment in hell, when the souls of those whom he has ruined will be near him, and by their ceaseless reproaches become his eternal tormentors! In other cases, what a blessing to a family has a steady, virtuous, and pious elder brother or sister been! Many a weak and sickly mother has given daily thanks to God for a daughter, who by her attention was a second mother to the younger members of the family, doing her uttermost to train them up in her own useful and

holy habits. Many a father has felt with equal gratitude the blessing of having in his first-born son, not only a help to himself in the cares of business, but in the work of education; a son who lent all the power of an amiable and religious example, to form the characters of his younger brothers. Let such young persons consider their responsibility, and at the same time let those who are their juniors in the family consider their duty. If they have a good example in their elder brothers and sisters, they should make it the object not only of attention and admiration, but also of imitation: but on the other hand, if, unhappily, the conduct of their seniors be bad, let them not follow them in their evil course; let no threats, no bribes, no persuasions, induce them to comply with any temptation to do what is wrong.

I have now to allude to the discharge of the fraternal duties during the whole period of life, after the season of youth has passed away. This has been anticipated in part already. Families are soon broken up; the parents die, the children marry and form separate establishments, and bring around them separate families of their own. This division of the original stock does not however destroy, although it necessarily must weaken, the fraternal tie. Pope beautifully remarks,

“Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;
The young dismissed to wander earth or air,
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,
Another love succeeds another race.
A longer care, Man’s helpless kind demands:
That longer care contracts more lasting bands,

Still as one brood, and as another rose,
These natural love maintained, habitual those.
Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,
At once extend the interest and the love;
And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise
That graft benevolence on charities.”

Great care is necessary, that when the centre of fraternal charities is gone, and each child becomes himself a centre of similar emotions and impulses, the interest of brothers and sisters in each other does not altogether cease. Brothers and sisters are brothers and sisters still, though they dwell in different quarters of the globe, are at the head of families of their own, are distinguished in their circumstances by the varieties of affluence and poverty, and have attained to the age of threescore years and ten; and the tie that unites them ought to be felt coiling round their hearts, and its influence ought to be seen in producing all those tender offices, which their common relationship to their parents certainly demands. The next generation may, from various causes, lose their interest in each other. Regard for remote relations becomes, in every country, less and less, according as law extends its protection, commerce diffuses its wealth, and civilization multiplies its comforts. Where clanship is necessary for mutual protection, “the families that spring from one common stock, continue to cling to each other for aid, almost as if they lived together under the same roof: it is truly one wide family, rather than a number of families; the history of the tribe in its remote years of warfare and victory, is the history of each individual of the tribe; and the mere remembrance of the exploits of those who

fought with one common object, around the representative of their common ancestor, is like the feeling of the fraternal or filial relation, prolonged from age to age." This is not the case in the state of society in which we are placed, where the feeling of affectionate interest and fraternal love rarely survives the next generation from the father, and often dies long before that has completed its course. Brothers and sisters ought, however, to keep up their mutual love as long as they live. They should not suffer new, even though nearer relations, to produce a total oblivion of, or alienation from, each other. If dwelling in distant parts of the kingdom, epistolary correspondence should be maintained, sympathy in their mutual joys and sorrows should be cherished, occasional visits as opportunity may allow, should be paid, and every thing done by mutual kind offices to comfort each other on the rough and stormy journey of life. If dwelling together in the same town, their intercourse should be such as to constrain spectators to exclaim, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." There should be a tenderness, which will lead to all the delicate attentions that affection delights to pay, and at the same time, a confidence which will prevent offence from being taken, when these are accidentally prevented. How utterly disgraceful is it to see brothers and sisters who dwell in the same town, living in a state of continual strife, and sometimes in an utter suspension of all intercourse! In such cases there must be faults on all sides, though it may not be in equal proportions. Those who marry into a family should be very cautious not to carry discord into it. Not unfrequently has it

happened, that brothers have been embroiled by their wives, and sisters by their husbands; and those, who till they were married, scarcely had an angry word from each other, have never lived in peace afterwards. Happy and honourable is that family, which, though it consists of numerous branches, and those, perhaps, nearly all married, and dwelling in the same vicinity, maintains, not indeed a state of coldness and formal intercourse, of which the highest praise is that it is free from strife, but a fellowship of sympathy, helpfulness, and love.

If by the vicissitudes of life and the various allotments of Divine Providence, one of a family has been more successful than the others, peculiar care must be exercised on their part not to expect too much from him in the way of attention and relief, and on his, lest he should yield them too little. For any man to be ashamed of his poor brothers and sisters, and to treat them with cold neglect or insulting pride, discovers littleness of mind which deserves contempt, and depravity of heart which merits our severest indignation; it is at once ingratitude to God and cruelty to man. It must be admitted, however, that it is extremely difficult to meet the demands and satisfy the expectations of poor relations, especially in those cases where their poverty is the fruit of their own indolence or extravagance. They have claims, and a good brother or sister will readily allow, and cheerfully meet, them; but prudence, under the guidance of affection, must fix the extent to which this shall be done. It is unquestionable, that though there have been some few who have indiscreetly impoverished themselves, to help a needy, and perhaps un-

deserving, brother or sister, the majority have erred on the other side. Men or women of wealth, who choose to live in celibacy, and who have needy brothers and sisters, are cruel and hard-hearted creatures if they suffer such relatives to want any thing for their real comfort. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" And what shall be said of those, who, in bequeathing their property, forget their poor relations? The man who passes over a poor brother or sister and their families, to endow a hospital, or enrich the funds of a religious society, to which, perhaps, he gave next to nothing while he lived, offers robbery for a burnt offering.

I have now said all that appears to me to be important on the subject of fraternal duties. Is it necessary to call in the aid of motives to enforce the discharge of such obligations?

Let your parents' comfort be a plea with you. How often have the hearts of parents been half broken by the feuds of their children? And even where the calamity has not gone to this extent, their life has been embittered by the wranglings, quarrels, and perpetual strifes of those who ought to have lived in undisturbed affection.

Your own comfort and honour are involved in an attention to these duties. You cannot neglect the claims of a brother or a sister, without suffering a diminution of your happiness, or your reputation, or of both.

The interests of society demand of you attention to fraternal claims. As a son, you learn to be a good subject; as a brother, you learn to be a good citizen. Rebellious children are traitors in the bud; and he who

has none of the right feelings of a brother is training up to be the curse of his country.

As to religion, fraternal duties necessarily arise out of its general principles, are enforced by its prevailing spirit, more than by particular precepts, and are recommended by some of its most striking examples; for the first murder which stained the earth with human gore sprang from a want of brotherly affection; and the family in which the Son of God found his loved retreat on earth, was that where, in the persons of Mary and Lazarus, fraternal love was displayed and adorned.

CHAPTER VIII.**THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.**

“Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him.” EPHES. vi, 9.

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.” COL. iv, 1.

“A party of friends setting out together upon a journey, soon find it to be best for all sides, that while they are upon the road, one of the company should wait upon the rest; another ride forward to seek out lodging and entertainment; a third carry the portmanteau; a fourth take charge of the horses; a fifth bear the purse, conduct and direct the route; not forgetting, however, that as they were equal and independent when they set out, so they are all to return to a level at their journey’s end. The same regard and respect; the same forbearance, lenity, and reserve, in using their service; the same mildness in delivering commands; the same study to make their journey comfortable and pleasant, which he whose lot it was to direct the rest, would in common decency think himself bound to observe towards them, ought we to show towards those, who, in the casting of the parts of human society, happen to be placed within our power, or to depend upon us.” PALEY.

“There are duties which we owe to the lowest of those who serve us, that are not fulfilled by the most bountiful allotment of wages, and lodging, and sustenance. Of these duties, which are not duties of supererogation, but flow from the very nature of the bond which connects the master and the servant by reciprocal benefits, the surest rule is to be found in that brief direction which Seneca, in the spirit of the noble Christian precept of morals, has so happily given us in

one of his epistles, in which he treats of the cruelty and contumely of Roman masters. 'So live with your inferior as you would wish your superior to live with you.'" DR. THOMAS BROWN.

"It has been justly remarked, that all authority over others is, in fact, a talent with which we are entrusted for their benefit, as well as our own; and so the discharge of our duty to them is only, in other words, securing our own interest as well as theirs. This, however, is especially manifest in the case of servants dwelling under one roof, as members of the same family. Thereby how much our care over the souls of our servants contributes to their knowledge of God and themselves, so far have we secured their conscientious regard to our interests, and furnished them with principles which will not only augment the stock of domestic happiness, but certainly contribute towards the Divine favour resting on our dwelling, as well as on all we possess. Thus then is the fear of God in master and servant found to be at once the only foundation of relative duty, and the only effectual security for the discharge of it." ANDERSON.

"The highest panegyric that private virtue can receive is the praise of servants, for they see a man without any restraint or rule of conduct but such as he voluntarily prescribes to himself. And however vanity or ignorance may look down with contempt on the suffrage of men undignified by wealth, and unenlightened by education, it very seldom happens that they commend or blame without justice.

"The danger of betraying our weakness to our servants, and the impossibility of concealing it from them, may be justly considered as one motive to a regular and irreproachable life. For no condition is more hurtful and despicable than his, who has put himself in the power of his servant; in the power of him, whom perhaps he has first corrupted, by making him subservient to his vices, and whose fidelity he therefore cannot enforce by any precepts of honesty or reason. From that fatal hour, when he sacrificed his dignity to his passions he is in perpetual dread of insolence or defamation; of a controller at home, or an accuser abroad." JOHNSON.

Of all the domestic connexions, that of master and servant is perhaps the least understood, or at any rate the most neglected. In the two preceding cases, nature, imperfect, and corrupt as she is, has come in with her aid; but this is a connexion, affecting very extensively the vital interests of the family, but left by God to

conscience and Scripture alone. Should these two be neglected, what wonder is it if duty is on either side. It is not a connexion founded on mutual love, like that of man and wife; nor on consanguinity, like that of parent and child, or brother and sister; but on mere convenience. It seems at first sight a destruction of the natural equality of the human race, and an invasion by one party of the rights of the other. It did not exist originally, but soon grew out of the natural course of things, such as the varied degrees of men's acquired property, or the love of ease on the one hand, and the urgency of necessity on the other. It was wealth or power that made the first master; and want or weakness that made the first servant; and the circumstances which originated the relation, preserve it. No one is a servant by choice, but of necessity, and becomes a master as soon as he can. All this shows that there is great propriety and importance in stating with clearness, and enjoining with frequency, the duties of this connexion; and that there needs great impartiality in adjusting the claims of both parties, so as to prevent the master from becoming a tyrant, and the servant from becoming a rebel; in other words, to guard the master against the disobedience and dishonesty of the servant, and the servant against the oppression and cruelty of the master.

To the right performance of the duties of masters and mistresses the following qualifications are necessary.

1. A correct view of the nature and design of the family compact, as intended to train up all the persons that compose it to be good members of the civil community, and of the church of Christ. They must keep in constant recollection that the domestic constitution

has reference to religion, to heaven, and to eternity; and that those who are appointed to be the head of it, are accountable to God for the degree in which they give it this direction. Every household is intended to be a seminary for virtue and piety, of which the master and mistress are the teachers: and the servants, as well as the children, are the pupils.

2. They should be partakers of true religion. They are directed to consider that they have a Master in heaven, and to perform their duties with a believing and constant reference to their accountability to Christ. Without personal religion, they cannot seek on behalf of their servants the highest end of the domestic constitution, which is their spiritual and eternal welfare. Nor can they be so well prepared to discharge even the ordinary duties of their station. True religion will not fail, wherever it exists in full vigour and operation, to teach a man the best rules, ends, and measures of action in reference to every thing; and especially will the grace of God, in that case, prevent the pride, passion, cruelty, and unkindness, which make a man a bad master; and at the same time it will implant those virtues which are the germs of a master's greatest excellence. Religion is the strongest basis and the firmest support of authority; it not only renders all the commandments which are delivered, holy, and just, and good; not only infuses wisdom and equity into all the laws which are enjoined, but invests the lawgiver himself with the beauty of goodness, and the power of sanctity. A peculiar awe seems to have been impressed upon the inferior creatures for man while innocent, in reverence for the divine image which he bore; and the more holiness there is in a man's character now, the

more power is there in his authority, and the more nearly does he come back to his original dominion over the rational creation. If we would govern well, easily, and pleasantly, we must inspire reverence rather than fear, and nothing does this like religion. "Them that honour me, saith God, I will honour:" and this is never more remarkably exemplified, than in the case of eminently holy masters and mistresses.

3. They should entertain correct notions of the nature and design of the relation they stand in to their servants; whom they are to consider as their equals in nature, though their inferiors in rank, and not as beings of another and inferior race. Servants are not mere speaking brutes, but rational men and women, who are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, and who on the ground of natural equality covenant with you to give you so much service for so much wages. They are your equals in the eye of the law of the land, and are as much protected as you are; equal in the eye of God, who is no respecter of persons; equal in personal formation, having the same corporeal senses, members, and beauty, and the same mental faculties; equal in the church of God, being redeemed by the same blood of atonement, regenerated by the same Holy Spirit, and entitled to the same heaven; and on all these grounds they justly claim the respect that is due to men and Christians; as such they are to be treated; and not spoken to and addressed like beasts.

I now lay down one or two preliminary remarks.

1. Professing Christians should be very careful in the selection of their servants. It is desirable, when it can be done, to engage such as are truly and consistently pious. I know that this cannot always be accomplished

in reference even to the household, much less to the manufactory and the shop. In a business that depends upon the skill of the workmen, a master must have such as will suit his purpose, whether they possess moral qualifications or not. But when he cannot get good men, he should endeavour to reform, to the extent of his ability, such as are bad. It must be admitted that there are many, both men and women, who, as to their general qualifications are most excellent servants, but yet do not possess true piety; they are industrious, good tempered, honest, and cleanly, and contribute far more to the comfort of the families that employ them, than conceited, cross, and indolent professors of religion. Notwithstanding this, it is every way desirable to obtain, if we can, those to serve us who, we have reason to believe, serve the Lord Christ. Other things being equal, pious servants are much to be preferred to those who are without the fear of God. They may bring the blessing of God with them into your house. You have the benefit of their example and of their prayers: in the time of sickness, you have the consolation of their remarks as well as their sympathy: and hence they have been, in many cases, sources of inconceivable comfort to the households in which they have been placed. If you have a family, how immensely important is this matter. Think of what incalculable mischief one unprincipled servant may be the author in a circle of young children. On this account, if a person of decided piety cannot be found, at least determine that none but such as are strictly moral, shall be inmates in your habitation. David determined that no liar should dwell in his family. The utmost caution should be exercised to keep from the nursery all improper persons. Nor

ought a mother to trust her children too much to any servants, however excellent; and on admitting servants into her house she should very minutely instruct them in all those points of conduct towards the minds of her children, as well as their bodies, which she expects them to observe, both what they are to avoid, and what they are to do. "I would sooner take a toad into my bosom," said an old author, "than a wicked servant into my family." Well might he say this, for the poor reptile is belied in being said to be armed with venom, but the wicked servant has poison for the mind both of her fellow servants and the children. Christian parents are not sufficiently cautious on this head. They are not impressed with the importance of the subject, till they learn it by the serious mischief that has been done. The present age has peculiar advantages for a good selection, inasmuch as by the extension of education, many young women of respectability are trained for the important situation of nursery governesses.

2. When you engage a servant, let there be a very explicit statement of what each party expects from the other. The master or mistress should most fully explain to the servant all that will be demanded in the way of service, and all that will be given in the way of wages and privileges, both temporal and spiritual. Nothing should be concealed, or left to be brought forward at some future time; this is in the highest degree dishonourable, and subjects the encroaching party to the justest reproach. It would be well for you to inform your servants, in a very minute and particular manner, of all the religious habits of your family, and what compliance with these you will expect from them.

The duties of Masters and Mistresses may be classed under three heads.

1. You owe them a duty of justice. This requires that you should give them a fair remuneration for their labour. The amount should not only be enough to support them in mere existence, but in comfort. It is an utter disgrace to any man, much more to a professing Christian, to screw down those whom he employs, till they cannot earn enough for their decent clothing, and the nourishment of their strength. Is not this to grind the faces of the poor? But as in trade there are certain rates of wages, from which it may be difficult for a master, however pious or humane, to vary, I shall merely remark, that such men ought never to be forward in lowering the price of labour, beyond what is actually necessary to keep possession of the market. As to household servants, to whom this chapter more especially applies, it is very dishonourable to a mistress to higggle about a few shillings, with a poor dependent creature, whom she is scarcely willing should earn enough to procure herself reputable apparel. I do not wish servants to be encouraged in dress and expensive habits; there is too great a propensity to this in many young women, which ought to be checked, and if by no other means, it should be done by a reduction of wages. But enough ought to be afforded in all cases, for suitable attire, and for a little surplus fund, which they should be encouraged to form against a time of destitution and helplessness. If we do not furnish them, by sufficiency of wages, with the means of honestly supplying their wants, are we not tempting them to make up the deficiency by dishonesty? And of course their wages

should be regularly paid. It is disreputable to be long in debt to any one, but it is utterly scandalous when the creditors are servants, who ask, without success, for what has been due to them for months. I wonder that the pride, if not the principle, of some people does not prevent them from putting on new finery, while the servants in the kitchen are saying, "That bonnet and gown are mine, for I am owed the money which paid for them, if indeed they are paid for."

Justice demands that you should remunerate your servants for all the work they do; and that every thing in respect of time or labour above the stipulated or usual quantity of service to be rendered for the sum agreed upon, should be equitably paid for. There are some persons who are proverbially mean, for exacting not only what is actually due to them for the wages they pay, but for getting, if possible, a little extra service, without remuneration: this remark applies of course to cases of day work. If a woman be hired to work in the parlour, or the kitchen, or a man be engaged for the garden, these persons will generally detain them, if they can, an hour or two beyond the usual time, on pretence perhaps of finishing up the matter, or getting ready something of importance. This would be all very fair if they paid an extra sum for the extra work; but, no; they want the additional hour or two to be thrown in for nothing: when the case is reversed, and the workman or woman is obliged to go away an hour or two earlier than the usual time, they are forward enough to make a deduction from the amount paid to them. This is not only detestably mean, but actually dishonest, for it is taking the labouring person's work without paying for it. Many persons, and some of

them professors of religion too, have no conscience in this matter, and get a character for extortionate selfishness from all whom they employ. In our money transactions with those who serve us, we should always lean to the side of generosity, or at least, should pay to the uttermost farthing for all the work which is done for us.

Justice requires that your domestic servants be well provided with all the necessaries and accommodations of life. Their food should be wholesome and sufficient; their lodging should be such as is convenient for them in respect to warmth and protection, and not such as a person of even tolerable humanity would scarcely allot to his dogs. If people really cannot afford to give such wages as will procure decent attire, nor such food, both as to quantity and quality, as is necessary to keep up the strength of a servant, they ought not to have one, and should do their work themselves. I pity from the very bottom of my heart poor girls (very likely orphans hired, if not from the workhouse, from friends glad to get them off their hands at any price,) who, although burdened with excessive labour, are not allowed meat and drink sufficient to support their strength, and to nourish their stunted frames, and are in a condition, which, with the single exception of liberty, is more pitiable than that of many African slaves. Medicine and surgical assistance also should be procured for our domestic servants at our cost, as long as they are in our employ. I do not like the practice of hurrying them off, except in the case of contagious diseases, to hospitals and dispensaries, and thus calling upon the public to provide for the relief of those whom it is our duty to take care of. Much less is it equitable to make them

pay the expense of their cure. I have known servants half-beggared by doctors' bills, which ought to have been discharged by those in whose service they had contracted the ailments which reduced them to suffering and poverty.

Justice also equally demands in the case of apprentices, that they should be well taught the business which they came to you to learn; especially where, as in many cases, a premium is paid with them. No man can honestly retain such premium, or indeed, the apprentice with whom it is given, if he do not take pains to instruct him. If there be any secret in the trade, it must be communicated to him, for he comes to you for that very purpose. Nor is it enough not to hinder him in acquiring the business, but you must take pains to help him. I do think that this part of their duty is very much forgotten by masters, not excepting those that make a profession of religion. Apprentices, I know, are taken with a primary view to the master's interest; but in return for the help which a servant affords towards the accomplishment of this object, a master covenants to instruct him in his trade; and the man who employs an apprentice in any thing else than that which he came to learn, and suffers him through his neglect to remain ignorant of his trade, is guilty of a double act of robbery; he robs the parent of the youth of his property, and at the same time robs the youth himself of all his future means and opportunities of success.

Justice demands that when they leave your service, you should dismiss them, as far as you can do so consistently with truth, with a good character. Their character is their wealth, and if it be gone, their

means of subsistence have vanished. Do not disallow them the right of leaving you when they please, nor avenge yourselves upon them in such a case by insinuating any thing to their disadvantage. On the contrary, do all you can to raise their reputation, and say all the good you can in their favour.

“There is a carelessness and facility, in ‘giving characters’ as it is called,” says Paley, “especially when given in writing, or according to some established form, which, to speak plainly of it, is a cheat upon those who accept them.” They are given with so little reserve and veracity, ‘that I should as soon depend,’ says the author of the ‘Rambler,’ ‘upon an acquittal at the Old Bailey by way of recommendation of a servant’s honesty, as upon one of these ‘characters.’ Sometimes this arises from carelessness, and sometimes from a desire to get rid of a bad servant, without the unpleasantness of a dispute; and nothing can be pleaded for it but the most ungenerous of all excuses, that the person whom we deceive is a stranger.

“There is a conduct the reverse of this, but more injurious, because the injury falls where there is no remedy; I mean the obstructing a servant’s advancement, because you are unwilling to spare’ his service. To stand in the way of your servant’s interest is a poor return for his fidelity, and affords slender encouragement for good behaviour, in this numerous and therefore important part of the community. It is a piece of injustice, which if practised toward an equal, the law of honour would lay hold of; as it is, it is neither uncommon nor disreputable.”

It is but common justice also, to do something for the provision of servants who have worn themselves out in your service. To leave them to penury and want in the wintry season of their old age, is an instance of great and disgraceful cruelty. How much they have

contributed either to your wealth or to your comfort, and perhaps to both! By the Levitical law it was provided, that a servant who had been six years in the employ of a master, should be treated with great generosity. "He shall not," said the Lord, "be sent empty away; but thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press; and that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him." Now if six years' service under the law, were considered to entitle a servant to such an acknowledgment, surely a whole life's labour under the Gospel dispensation, entitles them in their old age to no less. I ask this, not on the ground of kindness, but of justice; for it partakes of oppression and extortion, to give them no more for their time and strength than they need for the passing moment, and then to cast them upon the parish, when we can no longer render them subservient to our interests.

2. Kindness comprehends another extensive class of duties owed by masters and mistresses to their servants. You must be careful not to overwork them. A merciful man will not overload his beast. We are often shocked to see in a street or road, small weak half-starved animals cruelly used by being compelled to drag burdens much beyond their strength: but is not a scene of equal cruelty to be beheld in many a house, where is to be found a poor, young, friendless girl, whose pallid looks and delicate frame indicate to every one but her hard-hearted mistress, that she is incompetent for the tasks which without cessation she is mercilessly compelled to perform? Her toil commences, perhaps, at five or six o'clock in the morning, and continues without intermission till eleven at night. Of work, she has

too much for a robust and well-nourished frame, but especially for her weak and ill-fed constitution. Some unfeeling creatures seem to think that the payment of five or six pounds a year, gives them a right to exhaust all the energies of the poor hapless beings who are unfortunate enough to be employed by them. And even where unkindness is not carried to this extent, I am persuaded that servants are in very many cases much overworked: they are so urged by incessant demands for their labours, that from the beginning to the end of the week, they have scarcely a moment to keep their clothing in proper repair, much less to attend to the concerns of their souls; their employers seem to think, that every moment they sit down, is so much time stolen from them. Are there any professing Christians who act thus? Yes: and in so far they are a disgrace to the Christian name.

Your method of addressing them, while it accords with your station, and partakes of the dignity of superiority, should be as remote from bitterness and contemptuous pride, as it is from familiarity. Do not speak to them as if they were a race of inferior creatures, whom it almost disgraced you to notice. There are some masters and mistresses, who though they do not swear, or storm, or call reproachful names, yet have a method of addressing their servants, which they would scarcely use to a brute. I have myself heard tones, and seen looks, which the persons who were guilty of them would not have used to their dogs. Servants are not stocks and stones, but men and women; and how galling to their feelings, how insulting to their rank as rational creatures, must it be to be addressed as a reptile race, scarcely entitled

to the commonest civilities? And as pride is improper, so is passion. Masters are commanded to “forbear threatening.” This is particularly specified, because there is a great proneness to it in many, if not in most persons. When an inferior displeases us, the temptation to undue sallies of wrath, gusts of passion, and threatening words, is peculiarly strong: the individual is so much below us, and in our power, that let us say what we will, we have nothing to fear in return. But how mean, cowardly, and execrable is it, to say nothing of the wickedness of such conduct, for any one to hector, bully, and threaten a poor defenceless creature, because the tyrant has no need to apprehend any thing in the way of revenge! We must as Christians, be gentle towards all, to those who are below us, as well as to those who are above us. Occasions will, of course, often present themselves, when it will be necessary to find fault, and to express displeasure; but this should never be done in a passion. A fury never can be respectable; we never go into a rage without disgracing ourselves in the eyes of our servants; at such times we may be terrible, but we cannot be respectable. Abusive epithets and ill names lower our dignity, and undermine our authority. Mild firmness, rational expostulation, and meek reproof, will do far more, both in the way of punishing faults, and of reforming them, than petulance and passion. Speak kindly to them, then, at all times. Let your words, and even your tones, partake of a dignified courtesy, blending and softening authority with good will. At the same time, avoid all familiarity, and do not encourage an obtrusive and encroaching boldness. You must keep them in their place, and in order to this, you must keep yours. Do

nothing to remove the line of demarcation between you, nor encourage them to step over it. You must not joke with them, nor make yourselves merry with them; you must not enter into gossip with them about the floating occurrences of the neighbourhood, or allow them to bring you tales, or employ them as your purveyors of scandal. Some persons, who would not run the risk of being thought busy bodies themselves, scruple not to encourage their servants to bring them all the news of the town. All this is mischievous in the highest degree, and tends to degrade, in the eyes of their domestics, those who are foolish enough to indulge in it.

You should manifest an unvarying regard for their comfort. Take a deep interest in their welfare, and make it clear to them that you wish to see them happy. Watch over their health; tenderly inquire into the causes of their ailments; and by mitigating their labour, and procuring them medical assistance, do all you can for their recovery. Advise them for their good, and do not refuse your counsel whenever it can be of service to them. Convince them by the whole of your conduct, that you are their real friends, and truly anxious to make them happy and respectable.

Bear with patience those lesser infirmities which may comport with substantial excellences. Do not be strict to mark, at least with severity, their more trivial faults. Some mistresses render their servants miserable by incessant complaint; they are such slaves to excessive neatness, that they are always in bondage themselves, and make every body miserable around them.

Kindness to servants would lead us to administer commendation as often as possible, and to censure with as much lenity as a due regard to justice will allow.

“There is a certain moral pleasure which we particularly owe them. They may do well, and in doing well they have the same title to our praise which our best actions have to the glory with which we expect the world to be ready to reward us. If we withhold the approbation which is due, we take from them one powerful incentive to a continuance of that species of conduct which rendered them worthy of approbation; and at the same time, we take from them one of the most delightful feelings of which he who has sold his freedom is still capable; the feeling that he has done something, which was not actually sold with the very labour of his hands; that in the additional duties performed by him, he has been free still, and that our praise is something, which, as it was not an actual condition, like the livery and the daily bread, is an offering to his own gratuitous virtue. The duty of approbation, then, when approbation is due, is another of the duties which the master owes to the servant; and a duty which, though he may legally withhold it, he is not entitled morally to withhold.

“But servants share not our love of praise only, but passions of a less commendable kind. They are assailed by temptations like those which assail us, and they sometimes fall, as we too fall. They neglect to do what we have desired; and they often do what is positively injurious to us. In such cases they might deserve all our severity of punishment, if we were not men, and they were not men. Our reproof they unquestionably deserve, not merely because they have failed in their part of our mutual contract, but also because our reproof may, even to them, be attended with moral advantage. Yet though our reproof of any gross inattention is not excusable only, but, if we consider all its consequences, an act of humanity, it is not to be the reproof of one who seems almost pleased with the offence itself, in the eagerness which is shown to reprehend it. In censuring, we are silently to have in mind the human weakness of our own moral nature; and to remember, that if even we, with better light and nobler recreations, err, the ignorant, who by their very ignorance, are incapable of seeing many of the consequences of actions, and who have few recreations but those which seduce them from what is good, may still more naturally be imagined to err. In condemning them, therefore, we condemn ourselves; or we declare that we are frail creatures, of whom less knowledge and less virtue are to be expected, than from them. There are beings with gentle voices, and still gentler eyes, and with smiles that seem never to be willed, and scarcely even to fade and brighten again, but to be almost the native character of the countenance, like the very lustre that is

ever blooming on the lip and on the cheek; there are beings who seem to exist thus only in a perpetual moral atmosphere of radiance and serenity, that on the sight of a single particle of dust on a book, or a table, or a chair, as if in that particle a whole mountain of misery were before them, can assume in an instant all the frowns and thunders of all the furies; whose delicate frame is too weak to bear the violent opening of a door, but not too weak, after the door is opened, to shake the very floor with the violence of their own wrath on the unfortunate opener of it.”*

Kindness should lead us to allow our servants all possible indulgences and recreations that are not incompatible with religion.

They are capable of gratification like ourselves, and have the same desire for it; but are denied by their circumstances access to many sources of delight which are continually open to us. Those who seem to grudge domestic servants an occasional remission of their labour, that they may have communion with others at the feasts of innocent enjoyment, convert their service into slavery, and render the oppression additionally bitter, by the circumstance that it is endured in the land of freemen. I have often been delighted at those meetings which are convened for promoting the various objects connected with the cause of religion and humanity, to see the cheerful faces of female servants who seemed to drink in the streams of eloquence and piety, with as eager a thirst, and as exquisite an enjoyment, as their more enlightened and better educated masters and mistresses. And I have known masters, who, when going to a neighbouring town or village to attend a religious service of a public nature, have placed a female servant on the box seat of the carriage that conveyed them, that she might share the pleasures of the day. It is not less a duty, of course, to keep

* Dr. Brown's Lectures.

them from all polluting and vitiating amusements; but it is not less a duty of benevolence, to give them as often as it is convenient to us, and consistent with their interests, an opportunity of enjoying the liberty and the sunshine of innocent and proper pleasure.

It is no credit, but very much otherwise, to any family, to be always changing their servants. Some persons have as many as there are months in the year. Their place has acquired so bad a reputation, that no good servant will offer herself for it. It is astonishing how extensively the character of every household is known amongst persons of this description. Those who keep register offices can tell, perhaps, the repute in which most of the families in a town are held, for oftentimes upon mentioning a house to one who has applied for a place of service, they receive some such reply as this: "I will not offer myself there, for I shall not be kept above a month or two if I go." This is not to the honour of any one, much less to the professor of religion: for, as those who leave the place are naturally enough anxious to justify themselves to their friends, they scruple not to tell all the faults of their mistress, and oftentimes, of course, with great exaggeration, and thus the credit of religion suffers. "Besides, what a risk is it, where there are children, to be always receiving fresh servants into the family; and what an interruption also to domestic comfort! Avoid, then, unnecessary changes, and every thing that leads to them, whether it be bad temper, inflicting excessive labour, or striving after unattainable perfection.

A kind master or mistress will prevent their servants from being insulted or oppressed by the children. It is really affecting to see what cruel scorn and imperti-

nence are, in some families, allowed to be practised towards respectable men and women, by little tyrant masters and misses, whose weak parents uever suffer them to be opposed in any thing. They may utter the grossest falsehoods, indulge in the most wanton and distressing vexation, vent the most scurrilous abuse, and utter the foulest epithets against the servants, and their pitiless or unjust mother or father, with the full knowledge of the fact, allows this cruel insolence to continue. Children ought not to be permitted to be guilty of such impropriety as this in any kind or degree. They should be kept from being familiar, but equally so from being impertinent. As I would never allow a servant to strike children, I must not permit her to be struck or in any way oppressed by them.

Peculiar attention, partaking at once of respect and kindness, should be shown to those who have served us long and faithfully. "Reckon," says Mr Janeway, "that one who has been a faithful servant to you seven years, deserves to be esteemed next to a child ever after." Tried fidelity should be marked with peculiar approbation. At the end of each seven years of faithful service you should present them with some substantial present, as a token of your respect and gratitude: and the present should increase in value at each septennial period. Where there is property to be disposed of by will, I think that aged and valuable servants should be remembered. Think how much you owe to their faithfulness; how long your property has been in their power, how constantly you have been served by them; how much they have contributed to your domestic comfort, perhaps to your success. You owe them not only wages, but esteem.

3. But there are duties of a still higher and more sacred character, owed by you to your servants; I mean those of religion. They have souls as well as you; like you, are immortal creatures; like you, are sinners; and like you, the objects of redeeming mercy. The very circumstance of their being brought within the comprehension of your domestic circle, has made them a part of that little community, the spiritual welfare of which you are to promote, and to watch with all possible solicitude. They are members of your domestic constitution, as well as hired servants. We surely cannot suppose that the extensive power which is lodged by the family compact in the master's hand, was vested there for so trivial a purpose as the mere payment of those wages, and the affording of that sustenance, which are necessary for supplying the servant's bodily wants. It is also to be recollected, that moral duties are required from servants, and ought therefore to be taught. With what propriety can we look for truth, honesty, temperance, chastity, if we have never inculcated these virtues? How can we expect they will be faithful in serving us, if we have never taught them to serve God in sincerity and truth?

(1.) Our first care must be, not to oppose their religion, or to hinder their salvation. We may do this by the influence of a bad example. In what a heathenish state do some families live! Heathenish? No: for pagans have their household deities, and make some show of religion, though it be a false one, in their houses: but great multitudes in this Christian land, live as if there were no God, and are to all intents and purposes practical atheists. There is no family prayer; no reading of the Scriptures; no observance of the

Sabbath; no regular attendance upon public worship. The holy day of rest is to them as other days; they keep the same company and seek the same recreations then, as at any other time. Religion is rarely introduced, but as an object of contempt and of ridicule. The servants in such families hear swearing, perhaps, but no prayer; drunkenness, but no worship; card playing, dancing, and conviviality, but no acknowledgment of God. How can such masters expect good servants? If they habitually break God's commands, how can they expect their servants to keep theirs? Unreasonable men, can you look for sobriety in them, if you set them the example of intoxication? For chastity, if you teach them lewdness? For truth, if you teach them falsehood? For religion, if you teach them profanity? O, that you would consider that your wickedness ensures not only your own damnation, but hazards that of all the persons under your charge. Is it not enough to have your own sins laid to your charge, but that you must be answerable for your servants' sins also? Is one curse too light, but you must seek to multiply it? Are the flames of hell so cool and tolerable, that you are busy in adding fuel to that terrible fire, to make it burn seven times hotter? Yours will not be the privilege of perishing alone, but will be the fate of the pilot, who drowns others with himself.

Some carry the matter so far as to hinder the salvation of others not only by example, but by direct temptation. How many masters have by their atrocious and murderous arts, corrupted the virtue, blasted the reputation, and ruined the souls of those females, whom, having received into their house, they were

bound, by every principle of honour, as well as of religion, to protect! Such wretches deserve the gallows far more than many who suffer there. How many poor unhappy women have been sent by such vile transgressors into the career of prostitution, to an early grave, and to that place of punishment where each will meet her seducer to be his tormentor through eternity! Neither a word, nor a look, should ever be given to a servant, which has the remotest tendency to injure her modesty.

Nor ought you to tempt them to sin, by employing them to practise dishonesty and falsehood in the way of trade. Do not engage them in acts of fraud upon the revenue; nor make them the witnesses of your own evasion of the laws which regulate the taxes; for all such conduct as this is laying a snare in their way, and tempting them to sin. And by what sophistry can any one attempt to justify that practice of commanding their servants to say to visitors, that they are not at home, while they are in the house at the very time? This is teaching falsehood by system, and ought we to wonder if our servants should lie to us, when we have thus taught them to lie for us? People that make any profession of religion cannot, of course, adopt this iniquitous custom, for it disgraces the most general acknowledgment of piety; but it is to be feared that some who pass for real Christians, and wish to be thought such, are guilty of many things in reference to their servants, which are altogether unworthy of their characters, by making them either the witnesses or instruments of evasions, artifices, and dishonourable acts; and by these they really tempt them to go much further astray on their own account. We can easily conceive, with what

insufferable loathing and disgust some such servants must come to the domestic altar, at the time of the morning or evening sacrifice. It is a most shocking instance of hypocrisy when a master says to his servants, "After you have done so and so," (alluding to some act of imposition upon others) "come to prayer." "Come to prayer," one might imagine they reply, "thou hypocrite, what to sanctify the dishonesty thou hast just commanded us to perform?" Many who have witnessed these things, or any thing like them, have taken an inveterate prejudice against religion, by concluding that all its professors are alike, and that all are hypocrites together.

We hinder their salvation, when we keep them away from the means of grace. Their work should not be so oppressive even on week-days, as to allow them no time for reading the Scriptures and prayer; but to compel them to spend even their Sabbaths in such a manner as to deprive them of opportunity to hear the Word of God explained and enforced by the preaching of the gospel, is to place a most powerful hindrance in the way of their salvation. How exceedingly cruel and disgraceful is it to keep them from public worship to dress a warm dinner. Without affirming that the Christian Sabbath is to be observed with the same ceremonial strictness as the Jewish Sabbath was, I do contend that no unnecessary work should be done on that day in our dwellings. I suppose that no one will contend that a warm dinner is necessary. Is it not a crime, then, against the spiritual welfare of our servants, as well as God, to occupy their Sabbath in preparing for our luxurious gratification? Even as it respects their bodies, it is an act of great oppression, for they need rest from

their labours far more than we do; and as respects their souls, it takes away both the opportunity and the inclination to attend to them; it occupies their time in the morning, and unfits them for attention in the afternoon. All who thus employ their domestics on the Sabbath, may be truly said to feast upon their servants' birth-right, and to gratify their palate at the expense of their fellow-creatures' spiritual and eternal welfare. How long and how loudly shall the voice of indignant and faithful reprobation be raised in vain against this sinful practice? I put it to every professing Christian's conscience how he can any longer determine thus to hinder the salvation of those who are under his care? "Will he not make even this small sacrifice for the spiritual welfare of the members of his domestic constitution? Is this his professed zeal for God, and compassion for souls? But perhaps he will reply, somebody must be at home to guard the house. Be it so. But need they be slavishly occupied in the drudgery of cookery? If they must be deprived of the public means of grace, is it necessary that they should be deprived of those that are private also? But they will not improve their time at home. How do you know? Have you tried them? Have you, before you left the house seen that they have a suitable book to read?

In some families the servants are kept away from the house of God far more than they need to be, for other purposes besides cooking. If there are two children, one must be detained from public worship for each, and perhaps a third to guard the house. But is this necessary? I would have all proper care taken, both of children and of property; but I would not have more servants than are absolutely requisite kept away from

the house of God. The Sabbath is of more importance to them than it is even to us. Their incessant occupation through the week renders it more necessary for them to have a day of rest and leisure to attend to their soul's concern, than it is for us. Nor do I think it enough to grant them merely the afternoon of the Lord's day, for that is the part of the Sabbath which we find the least edifying to ourselves; and if this be the case with us, how much more so must it be with them? If then we keep away our servants from suitable public means of grace, we are placing a hindrance in the way of their salvation; for we know that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" and that God has ordained the preaching of the Gospel for the salvation of men's souls.

It appears to me that we tempt our servants to sin also, by improper negligence and carelessness about many of the more covetable parts of our property. Some persons are too much away from home, and leave their servants too much to themselves; and when they are idle abroad, is it any wonder that their domestics should be dishonest at home? If they will gossip away their time by hours, and days, and weeks together, can it be wondered at, that their property should be wasted by those who are only hired to watch it? If you are so much from home, is it not a temptation to them to invite company? Is this habit of neglecting them, the way to make them faithful? Will they not learn idleness from you, and do you not know that idleness is a parent sin? Or if you do not tempt them to sin by being too much from home, do you not do it by giving them too little employment? If you overwork them, you oppress their bodies; if you underwork them, you

endanger their souls. It is said of the wise and virtuous woman, that she would suffer none of her household to eat the bread of idleness. You must account, not only for your own time, but for theirs also. When your servants are idle, said an old author, the devil is at work; and our idle days are his busy ones: if you find them nothing to do, he will. Many have been ruined for both worlds by having nothing to do, but mischief. Do not tempt them to sin, by never calling them to account for what is entrusted to their care; especially in pecuniary matters. They may be honest; then keep them so, and put no temptation in their way to be otherwise, by not examining their accounts. Never let them feel that they are irresponsible. If you keep not your eye upon them, you may find a thief where you expected to find an honest man. Honesty itself should always be required to account for the uttermost farthing, and will wish to do so. Do not leave your property too much exposed. Some go to one extreme, and lock up every thing; others go to the opposite extreme, and lock up nothing; and here, as in many other cases, extremes meet, for one tempts to dishonesty by trusting too little, the other by trusting too much. Money, drinkables, and the lighter articles of female dress and decoration, should not be left too carelessly about. Nor should one party in married life, ever make a confederacy with servants to deceive the other. Wives should never engage their maids in a scheme of falsehood, imposition, or concealment of any kind against their husbands, though it be but in trifling matters; for this is teaching them intrigue and duplicity, which may not only be injurious to their own character, but seriously detrimental in the end to the interests of the

family. If a servant be employed by the wife to assist her to conceal any part of the husband's property, or appropriate it in any way unknown to him, she is in that act tempted by her mistress, so far as the influence of example goes, to take the same liberty on her own account; for she who is employed to purloin for another, will soon feel no scruple to steal for herself.

(2.) It is our duty, not only not to hinder the salvation of our servants, but to do every thing in our power to promote it. Seriously consider your obligation in this particular; and that as God sent them under your roof, that you might care for their souls, so he will require their souls at your hands. Yes, at the day of judgment he will say to you, "Give an account of those immortal beings which were placed under your instruction, inspection, and anxiety." Cherish, then, I entreat you, a deep solicitude for their spiritual welfare, and feel desirous to become the instruments of their salvation, in order to this, take care to set them a good example, and let them see in you, not only nothing that is contrary to religion, but every thing that can recommend it; that so an attractive influence may ever be exerted by your character on theirs. Many have learnt more of religion by what they saw in their masters and mistresses, than by all they heard from their ministers: they will never forget their example. Call them regularly to family prayer, and make them the peculiar subjects of your earnest supplications, that they may hear your entreaties with God on their account, and be the witnesses of your solicitude for their welfare. See to it that they have Bibles, and take care that they are able to read, for if this be not the case, it is your bounden duty to teach them. Furnish them with a few well-

selected books, and thus provide for them a kitchen library. Give them opportunities to attend public worship, and to keep holy the Sabbath,-day. Keep them not too late at work on Saturday evening, lest their worldly business trench upon the Sabbath, or unfit them by excessive fatigue for its hallowed occupations. Instruct them in the principles of true religion, that they may have their judgments rightly informed, and that they may not perish for lack of knowledge. It is a great disgrace to a Christian master or mistress, if any servants leave their house, without knowing, at least in theory, the way of salvation. In addition to this, you should talk to them in the most affectionate manner on their souls' concerns, warning them to flee from the wrath to come, and directing them to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Give them no rest till you have prevailed upon them to seek in good earnest the one thing needful. Observe what company they keep, and caution them against such as would lead them astray. Acquaint yourselves with the books they read, and examine what they understand and remember of the sermons they hear. Do all you can to convince them of the reasonableness, profit, and sweetness of true religion, and of the folly, danger, and misery, of living without it. If you see no fruit of your exertions at first, do not be weary of well-doing, but persevere in all your anxious and judicious efforts. Should you notice any solicitude about their souls, nourish to the uttermost these impressions, by giving suitable advice and proper books. Encourage them when you are convinced of their true conversion, to connect themselves with the church of Christ, and thus to make a public profession of religion. O, if you should be the instrument of sav-

ing the souls of your servants, what an honour and a happiness will be conferred upon you! How many have been so honoured; and in what bonds have their servants been held to them for ever after in this life!

To influence you to the performance of these duties, I may call upon you to remember that your Master also is in heaven, and to consider what a Master he is to you. Meditate upon his attributes, and upon the manner in which they are manifested in all his conduct towards you. How righteous, how faithful, how holy, how true, how merciful is he in his dealings towards his servants. And it is your duty to be like him. When in danger of acting improperly, by a want either of equity or kindness, think of God; meditate on his matchless grace, and surely such a reflection will be an immediate check to every kind and every degree of impropriety. To him also you are accountable, as for your conduct in general, so also for your behaviour to your servants. Prepare to meet Him in that awful day, and to meet them also at his bar.

Consider how much your servants need this kind interposition for their welfare. They are often young, inexperienced, and ignorant; rash and imprudent; and they also are an unprotected and dependent race. I know not a class of persons whose situation is more calculated to awaken our tenderest sympathies, than domestic female servants. Many of them are orphans, and have no friend in the world beyond their employers; and no home but what they find in their master's house. When they leave one place of service, they often know not where to find their next home, and are thus repeatedly beginning the world, and setting out on the journey of life afresh. How many dangers are they exposed

to! How many snares are laid for their feet! Masters and mistresses, be kind to them; they have found a refuge in your house, and let them find friends in you. Pity their condition, and labour to the uttermost for their welfare. You may be the means of blessing them for both worlds, and become their spiritual fathers and mothers, as well as their temporal masters and mistresses. Their souls may be given to your kind solicitude, to be your crown of rejoicing in the day of eternity.

The honour of religion is most deeply involved in the way in which you discharge your duties. Bad masters and mistresses bring great dishonour upon Christianity; while, on the other hand, those who in this situation exhibit whatsoever things are pure, and true, and honest, and just, and lovely, and of good report; who abound in that love which is not easily provoked, and thinks no evil, and is kind; who have the meekness and gentleness of Christ; and are merciful and compassionate, are bright ornaments of their profession, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. A good master or mistress is indeed a most honourable character; good men esteem it, bad men admire it, the world values it, the church applauds it, angels delight in it, and God commends and rewards it. Eyes too dim to see the beauties of holiness in the abstract, discern the excellence of this; and tongues that never speak of religion generally, but to scoff at it, are eloquent in the praise of this. I conjure you, then, by all the regard you bear to the honour of religion, strive to excel in this your appropriate duty.

Interest pleads with you for this. Consider how

much your own happiness will be promoted, by seeing others happy around you. The heart of that man who is not pleased to see around him in his dwelling a circle of happy minds and smiling countenances, cannot be in the state in which it ought to be. A good master is a central luminary in the domestic system, and every child and every servant a satellite, revolving in the force of his attraction, and reflecting the brightness of his glory. Or to change the metaphor, he is a fountain of gladness, continually sending forth in kindness and kind actions, streams of pleasure to all who are in the house. And then good masters or mistresses make good servants or find them. When I hear persons complain that they cannot find good servants, I suspect the fault is their own, and that they have a bad character for their conduct towards their domestics. If they are tormented, have not they been tormentors? If they can get no one to serve them willingly and honestly, have they been generous and kind? If they find none but such as are wicked, have they tried to make them holy? If they complain of their lying, their lewdness, their theft, have they not been so selfish as to seek or to produce right dispositions towards themselves, without endeavouring to found these dispositions on a right state of mind towards God? Try, then, to conduct yourselves rightly to those, whom you have so much interest in making what they should be. Body, soul, estate, wife, children, character, comfort, all are more or less concerned in this matter. Your servants may rob, or enrich you; may defend your reputation, or blast it; may corrupt your children, or improve them; may tempt you to sin, or warn you against it; may injure

your health, or protect it; may bless you by their prayers, or curse you by their vices; may render your dwelling continually pleasant, or perpetually miserable; your own interest, therefore, unites with God's commands, to make it your wisdom and your duty to train your servants, as well as your children, in the fear of the Lord.

“What have you to say against what I have been persuading you to? Will you not now, without delay, bewail your former neglect, and in good earnest set to your work, like persons that in some measure know the power of divine precepts, the worth of souls, and the greatness of the charge that lieth upon you? O, that there were in you such a heart. O, that all masters of families were resolved for that which humanity, reason, interest, reputation, and their comfort call for, as well as the law of God and men oblige them to. What blessed families then should we have! What noble corporations! What glorious cities! Might not holiness to the Lord be written upon every door? O, when shall it once be!”

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS.

“Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” EPHESIANS vi, 5-8.

“Honour and shame from no condition rise,
Act well your part, 'tis there true honour lies.”

GOD is the creator of all things and the disposer of all events; he is, therefore, the author of all those varieties which are to be found in nature, and of all those differences which exist in society. He who formed the sun to give light and to rule, formed also the planets to be illuminated and governed; and he who raises the king to the throne, ordains the lot of the servants in the house, and of the labourers in the field. There is no such thing as chance; no, not in the material universe, there each bird that flies, each insect that crawls, each flower that blooms amidst the desert which man's eye never explores, is the separate production of divine power and skill, no less than the Alpine height that lifts its snow-crowned summit to the skies, and receives the

admiring contemplation of millions. Nor is there any such thing as chance in society; the rank and station of the poor little servant girl in the humblest dwelling of the most obscure village, are as certainly determined by God, as the elevation of the conqueror and ruler of nations. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the disposal thereof is from the Lord." "The rich and the poor meet together, but the Lord is the disposer of them all;" that is not simply their Creator as men, but the disposer of their circumstances, as rich and poor. This is comforting, it is reconciling. It prevents the poor from being degraded in their own eyes, or in the eyes of others. They are not like the dust, chips, or dried and withered leaves in autumn, which are blown about by the gusts which sweep the surface of the earth amidst the more stately objects of nature and art; but they are in the place which God intended for them: and God has made every thing beautiful in its place and season. Who can mend what he has made? What cause we have to sit down contented, and thankful, in the place which he has ordained for us! What obligation was he under to give us existence? And what did he owe to us that he should have made us rational creatures, and not formed us beasts or reptiles? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

As God disposes every thing, so it is the highest excellence of a creature to discharge the duties of his station, and to shine in the orbit, and move with regularity through the course, allotted to him. A good servant is more honourable than a bad master; and a valuable subject than a worthless prince. He who is not relatively good, is not really so: while he who acts his

part well, is more truly dignified, though his rank be low, than he who stands on a pinnacle, but fails in the duty of his elevated station. What is true honour? Not riches, not rank, not beauty, not learning, nor courage. No. But virtue; whether it be clad in the garb of poverty, or the robe of affluence; whether it hold the plough, or grasp the sceptre; whether it be seated at the table, or stand behind the chair. Virtue is honour; let all servants write this sentiment on the heart, and ever act under its influence, as the living principle of all their conduct.

In stating the duties of servants, I would remind them.

I. That there are some which they owe to themselves, the performance of which will constitute the best and surest foundation of those which they owe to others.

1. Religion takes the lead of all. Religion is as much your business as it is your master's. You are immortal creatures, you are sinners, you are the objects of God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and invited to seek pardon, peace, and eternal life, as well as your employers. You have souls that must suffer eternal torments in hell, or enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven. You must be convinced of sin, repent, make confession to God, cry for mercy, commit your souls into the hands of Christ by faith, be born again of the Holy Ghost, lead a sober, righteous, and godly life, or you must depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. God is as willing to have mercy upon you, Jesus Christ is as ready to receive you, as your master and mistress. Your soul is as precious in the eye of heaven as theirs. God is no respecter of persons, and is not to be considered as less friendly

to your best interests, because he has placed you in service. Your situation is no excuse, therefore, for your neglecting the claims of religion. You are not to imagine that attention to your soul's concerns is not required from you, for it is; and I repeat it, unless you repent, and are born again, and believe in Christ, you will perish eternally. Your soul is your first concern, and must not be neglected for any thing. Think not that it is impossible for a person in your situation to attend to religion; for it is possible. Great multitudes of servants, both male and female, are truly pious. I have twenty or thirty in the church under my care, who are amongst its most consistent members. I charge you all to live in the fear of God. Remember your Creator. Set the Lord always before you. Consider that he is ever about your path, and that you act, speak, and think, in his presence. He is now the holy and ever present witness, and will hereafter be the inflexible judge, of your actions.

In order to cultivate religion, do not go into wicked families, where the Sabbath is profaned, the claims of piety despised and rejected, and you can have no opportunity of attending public worship. Do not dwell in a place where your Sabbath is taken away from you; let no amount of wages tempt you to go to, or to remain in, such a situation. Always stipulate for the privilege of going at least on one part of the Lord's day, to the house of God. Insist upon it as your right, and suffer nothing to deprive you of it. Endeavour to find a little time for reading the Bible and for prayer. Never go out of your room in the morning, or lie down on your pillow at night, without reading a portion, even though it be a short one, of God's Holy Word, and earnestly

praying for his mercy. Let religion be the basis of all your conduct, the very frame-work of your character, leading you to practise “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report.” Do not, then, as you would escape the torments of hell, as you would be brought at last to the felicities of heaven, do not neglect your souls. “Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.” Your situation is a very dangerous one; you are in a very unprotected state, and you need the fear of God to enable you to depart from evil. Men, and women too, of bad principles, are lying in wait for you, spreading snares for your feet, and seeking your ruin. Religion will guard you, and guide you, and comfort you; it will keep you in safety, and raise you to respectability. “Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall lead thee to honour when thou dost embrace her.”

2. A regard to truth, is another very important duty, which you will be sure to perform if you fear God. This duty you owe to your employers also; but while the inconvenience of the neglect of it will be felt by them, the more dreadful consequences of that neglect will be yours. Lying is a most hateful and wicked practice. And it is said, that “all liars shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire.” Strive to avoid every thing in your conduct, that needs a lie to cover it; but if you have at any time done any thing wrong, do not make one sin two, by telling a falsehood to conceal the matter. Let no temptation induce you to violate truth; rather endure the bitterest wrath of the severest master or mistress, than strive to avert

it by a falsehood. Lying is bad policy, as well as great wickedness; for when once detected in this vice, you will ever afterwards be suspected, even when you tell the truth. A servant, whose word can be implicitly relied upon, will always be esteemed. Such a virtue will be made to extend a friendly covering over many little faults. Never allow yourselves to be tempted by your master or mistress to commit a breach of truth. Inform them at once that they must tell their own falsehoods, for that you cannot do it for them. A clerk once waited upon me, to ask me what he was to do in a situation where he was obliged weekly to make a false written return in his own name, to defraud a public company, for the benefit of his employers. "Do," said I, with surprise that the question should have been asked me, "instantly refuse, and rather cast yourself and your family the next hour upon Providence, than ever repeat the falsehood." You must not, dare not, lie for others, any more than for yourselves. If required to adopt the modern practice of saying your mistress is not at home, when she is at the same time in the house, you must not dare to comply, for it is a falsehood, and as such, is a sin against God. When you are put by your employers upon committing any sin, whether it be cheating, calumny, lying, or any thing else forbidden by the Scriptures, let your reply be, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

3. Sobriety is a virtue you owe to yourselves and also to your master: but, as in the case of lying, the injury done to yourselves by intoxication is far greater than that which you inflict upon them. Beware of the besotting, impoverishing, debasing sin of drunkenness,

and of every thing that leads to it. Household servants have many opportunities, and many temptations, to practise this vice, if they have the propensity to indulge in it. It is impossible even for the most rigid watchfulness always to keep out of their reach malt liquor and wine; for a vicious and ingenious servant has means of gaining access by stealth to them, which no vigilance in a mistress can altogether prevent. If we cannot trust these things to the guardianship of your principles, our locks and keys will often be found an insufficient security. Do, do consider, that if the habit of drunkenness be once contracted, it is all over with you; and most probably you are ruined for both worlds. Let there be a distinct understanding between you and your master or mistress, what beverage you are to be allowed, both as to quality and quantity, and most sacredly abstain from touching a drop more, or a drop of any thing else. Stolen drams are double poison, they are venom for the body and damnation for the soul; they lead to two crimes at once, drunkenness and dishonesty. Beware of the temptation which is presented at those times, when company is in the house, and when through the supposition that extra exertion requires an additional glass, you may be led to take it, to love it, and to acquire the habit of it. I have known excellent servants, both male and female, ruined for ever by intoxication.

As to workmen, and the day servants employed in the manufactories, this vice is a damning sin, that is spreading immorality, desolation, and misery through almost the whole labouring classes of the community. It is distressing, beyond the power of language to describe, to think of the effects of this most prevalent, most dreadful infatuation. How many fine athletic

forms are enervated; how many wives are broken-hearted; how many families are reduced to beggary; how many souls are damned continually, by this crime. Drunken servants are the torment of almost all our master manufacturers, the curse upon our commerce, and the blight upon our national prosperity.

4. Chastity is a duty of infinite importance to the well-being of servants. I am now on delicate ground, and I will endeavour to step with caution; but no false refinement shall hinder me from discharging a duty, which, as a guardian of the public morals, I owe to a very large and a very much exposed class of my fellow creatures. I will not allow a prudish and affected sentimentalism to turn me away from holy and benevolent concern for the interests of female servants, nor prevent me from addressing to them the language of warning and expostulation. "When the miseries of prostitution are considered, and when the prevalence of this desolating crime and all its attendant evils, is at once admitted and deplored; when it is well known, that of the miserable and loathsome victims of seduction that crowd the paths of vice, a very large proportion were once female servants, betrayed from the ways of virtue in the first instance by their masters, or their masters' sons, or their fellow servants of the opposite sex; surely it is the duty of every one who is specially addressing young women in service, most solemnly and most pointedly to warn them against the wily arts of the basilisk seducer, who is fascinating them to their ruin. Young women, consider the value, even in this world, of your character. With an unblemished reputation, you are respectable in servitude: your virtue is your parents' honest boast,

your families' only renown, and your own wealth and honour: it will be your passport through the world, your letter of recommendation which will find you friends, or make them, and keep them, wherever Providence may cast your lot. But if this be lost, oh, what a poor, forlorn, withered, wretched creature you become; abandoned by your seducer, discharged from your place, disowned by your friends, you have the pains, cares, and labours of a mother, with the infamy of a prostitute; you have to bear from without the scorn of the world, the look and language of shame-stricken heart-broken parents, and the ceaseless reproach and remorse of a guilty conscience from within; and all this, but as preliminary to the misery which the prostitute endures, through her loathsome course on earth, and its awful termination in hell! Take warning, then, and reject with disdain and virtuous indignation, the very first encroachments that may be made, by any one, upon your feelings of modesty and propriety. If you have been unfortunate enough to draw upon yourself the attention of a master, or a master's son, consider, it is with the eye of lust, not of love, that he looks upon you; he may flatter your vanity by his admiration of your person, but it is the flattery of a murderer; he cannot mean any thing that is honourable; his passion, that he talks of, is a base, ruffian-like, deliberate purpose to ruin you. Turn from him, flee from him with more haste than you would from a serpent or a tiger, for more than a serpent or a tiger is he to be shunned by you. Make him feel that you are his superior in virtue, though his inferior in rank. If, on the other hand, you allow him to accomplish his purpose, and decoy you to

perdition, he will, in cold-blooded, remorseless cruelty, abandon you and your child to a workhouse, to a broken heart, and the bottomless pit.

Act in the same determined manner towards every one else. Preserve not only your virtue itself, but your modesty, which is its outwork. Allow neither act, nor word, nor look, in your presence, which is at variance with the most scrupulous purity. Let no prospect nor promise of marriage throw you off your guard. The man who acts thus is to be regarded as a traitor, deceiving you into iniquity. He that would destroy your reputation, will not scruple to falsify his own word; the vows of such a wretch are not to be trusted. Be careful to whom you give your company. Let not an anxiety to leave service, and be your own mistress, drive you to accept the offer of the first individual, without considering whether he be suitable or unsuitable, who may present himself to your notice.

5. Frugality is an incumbent duty upon persons in your situation. You are in very dependent circumstances. Your support depends upon your own labour, and that upon your health. You have no arm but your own to rely upon, and should therefore feel the obligation of laying up something in the day of prosperity, against the night of adversity. We are all enjoined to trust Providence, but not to tempt it. To spend all we get in vanity and useless trifles, under the idea that we shall be taken care of, in one way or other, is a presumption that generally brings its own punishment. There is in the present day, a most censurable propensity in female servants and work-women in general, to dress quite beyond their station. It is not easy in some cases, to distinguish between the maid and her mistress. What

abject folly is it, for a young woman to spend all her wages in gay apparel! When she is in ill-health and out of place, will it be any consolation to look upon finery which she is obliged to pawn, one article after another, for her support? The love of dress has led in some instances to stealing; in others, to prostitution; in more to poverty. Character, not dress, confers respectability. Harlots are fine and gaudy in their attire. Economise your little property, then; lay up in store for the time to come. I know several servants who have, one forty, another fifty, another a hundred pounds in a bank. Besides, it is desirable to save from unnecessary expense in dress, that you may have a little to give to the cause of humanity and religion. The mite of the servant may mingle in this age with the pound of the master, to help in spreading the blessings of Christianity over the face of the earth. And to have nothing to give to the cause of humanity or religion is to be poor indeed.

II. I now lay before you the duties you owe to your employers.

Honour them, for they are your superiors in station. Pay them the respect which is due to them; and in order to this, cherish for them a proper reverence in your heart. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke," said the apostle, "count their own masters worthy of all honour." Behave towards them with all proper humility and submission: not that you are to crouch and tremble before them, like slaves at the foot of a tyrant. Your address to them must be reverential, not rude, boisterous, or impertinent. In talking of them to others, in their absence, there should be no calling them names, no exposure of their

faults, no ridiculing their infirmities; on the contrary, you should, to the utmost of your power, as far as truth will allow, defend them against the attacks of slander, and the arts of detraction. If at any time they speak to you with tones of anger, and in language of rebuke, you must remember the apostle's injunction, and "not answer again." You may mildly and meekly explain, and sometimes expostulate, but you must not reply in an angry and impertinent manner. Should they so far forget their duty, as to let down their dignity, and be too familiar, do not forget your place, but respectfully keep your proper distance. Every thing rude in conduct, and obtrusive insolent or familiar in language, must, therefore, be most sedulously avoided, as an essential part of servants' conduct towards their employers.

2. Obedience is founded upon reverence, and is a necessary part of it. Observe the directions of the apostle Paul: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." We are of course to except those things which are contrary to the Word of God: for if they enjoin any thing that is manifestly sinful, you must mildly, but firmly, refuse to comply, and be prepared to take all the consequences of your disobedience. In all other matters, however self-denying or difficult, however contrary to your own views and wishes, you must submit; you are not to choose your commands, but in all things to obey. You are to obey, "with fear and trembling," that is with reverential regard for their authority, a dread of their displeasure, and also, which is probably the apostle's meaning, with a dread of the anger of God, who having enjoined obedience, will punish the disobedient. You

are to obey in “singleness of heart,” that is, with a willing and cheerful mind; and not with a mere compulsory outside show of submission: and are to be free from all selfish personal ends, and obey from the single consideration that it is right. You are to do this, “as unto Christ, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men.” You must consider that God commands it, and therefore you are to obey them, as obeying God; they are in God’s stead, in this particular, to you; and from a regard to conscience, and a respect to the divine authority, you are to do what they enjoin. “I do this,” you are to say, in reference to obedience, “not merely to please my master and my mistress, but to please God.” This is turning all you do into religion. It signifies nothing what is the nature of the thing, whether it be an act of the most menial kind in the kitchen, the parlour, or the garden; if it be done with a view to the divine command, that very aim elevates the humble service into an expression of piety towards God, and a service that will be remembered in the day of judgment. You are not to obey, “with eye service as men pleasers.” How many are there who need a master’s eye always upon them to keep them industrious! No sooner is his back turned, than they are indolent and neglectful. This conduct is as mean as it is wicked: it is detestable hypocrisy, flagrant injustice, and manifest wickedness: for is it nothing that the eye of God is upon you? Is He not there? Does He not disapprove this conduct? And is it a small matter to make light of His presence. Such servants will shortly find, to their fearful cost, that the eye of God is far more to be dreaded than the eye of the severest master.

Let it be your delight to do the will of your employers. Strive to please them in all things, and feel anxious to draw from them this testimony: "There is a servant, to whom no command, which it is in her power to obey, comes unwelcome; who never need to be told a second time to do a thing: who anticipates my orders; and whose very pleasure seems to arise from pleasing me."

3. Good temper is of great consequence. There are some servants who, let what work will come in unexpectedly, and even oppressively, receive all with cheerful acquiescence, and are never put out of their way. Their mistresses are never afraid of telling them of unlooked-for company having arrived, and extra exertion being necessary. While there are others, who with many valuable qualities, are withal so peevish, so soon put out of temper, so cross at any little unexpected addition being made to their work, that their mistresses are in constant bondage. I do not like to hear it said, "She is a very good servant, and has many excellent properties, but her temper is so bad, that I am quite afraid to point out to her, in ever so gentle a manner, the least imperfection, or to put her in the smallest degree out of her way." This is a serious blemish upon the greatest general excellence, and often proves a very great interruption to the comfort of a family, and a still greater interruption to the comfort of the poor waspish creature herself. Temper is not every thing, but it is very important. Study, therefore, to be obliging, and to avoid crossness, sullenness, and passion.

4. Fidelity is a duty of the highest rank. What a delightful testimony is that which our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as bearing to his people at the last

day. "Well done, good and faithful servant." Such also is the testimony, which it should be in our power to bear to our servants. Fidelity has reference to the property of your masters. Faithful servants will not steal the property of their masters. There are opportunities of this everywhere, if you choose to avail yourselves of them. Consider the horrible disgrace of being called a thief; and add to it, the danger in the present world, and the punishment of such a crime in the next. Write the eighth commandment upon your heart, and when tempted by a favourable opportunity to embezzle the property of your employer, let a voice more awful than thunder repeat in your ears the prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal." At that perilous moment in your history, let your imagination look up, and behold the flaming eye of God intently gazing upon you. In whatever profusion money, plate, jewellery, lace, may be spread out before you, touch them not, covet them not. Determine, by God's grace, that though you are ever so poor, you will, at least, be honest. Honesty is indeed the best policy, to go no higher for a motive and commendation. A single act of stealing may blast your reputation for ever; even to be suspected is dreadful; and what inestimable value is attached to a servant of tried honesty! Be honest even to scrupulosity. Touch nothing in the house in the way of eatables or drinkables, which you do not consider as belonging to you. If you want to taste the luxuries of the larder, ask for them; but do not appropriate to yourself what you think would be denied. I have read of a servant who went into the pantry only to make free with sweetmeats, but seeing some articles of plate lying about, he took them, and went on from one degree of theft to another,

till he died on the gallows. He was under the influence of a thievish disposition when he saw the plate, for he was going to take what he had no right to, and he was in a favourable state of mind to be tempted by Satan to greater crime. Servants should not allow themselves to appropriate any cast off articles of dress, nor give away broken victuals, or other articles of the kitchen, without permission. Habits begin in acts; little sins lead on to greater ones. She that commences by taking a sweetmeat, knowing that she is not allowed it, has violated so far her integrity, has done something to benumb her conscience, and has taken the first step towards confirmed dishonesty. Sin is deceitful; and the way of a sinner is like the course of a ball down hill. Servants, beware of the first act of sin. But fidelity, in reference to property, requires not only that you should not embezzle your master's property, but that you should not waste it. Those that carelessly waste, are almost as guilty as those that wilfully steal. You cannot be an honest servant, unless you are as careful of your employer's property as if it were your own. Furniture, goods, provisions, must all be thus preserved. You are not to say, "My master is rich, he can spare it, and we need not be so niggardly." His wealth is nothing to you; if he chooses to waste it, he has a legal right to do so, but you have none.

Nor is this all; for fidelity requires that servants should do all they can to make their employers' affairs prosper. They should grieve over their master's losses; rejoice in his success, and so identify their feelings with his interests, as to seem as if their fortune were bound up with his. We have a fine instance of this in the case of Joseph, while he was in the house of Potiphar.

Fidelity will also lead them to give their employers information and warning when their affairs are going wrong, or they are suffering loss either through their own neglect or ignorance, or the conduct of others. They cannot be honest, if they witness without reporting it any fraud practised upon them, either by fellow-servants, friends or strangers. Such a connivance is a participation in the crime, although it may not be rewarded by any participation of the profits. A proper feeling of concern for your master's welfare would certainly lead you, if he were flagrantly neglectful of his affairs, to suggest to him, in a respectful manner, your apprehension of the consequences. What man, except a fool or a madman, would be offended by such an appeal as the following, made to him by a servant: "Pardon me, sir, if I take the liberty of expressing my fears on the subject of your business, which I am induced to do by a sense of my own duty, and a true regard to your welfare. Your business is certainly declining, and I fear, through your being so frequently absent from it. Customers are offended by not meeting the principal in the shop, and by finding the stock so low and ill-assorted. I am so concerned for your family, and so distressed at the idea of your doing otherwise than well, that at the risk of incurring your displeasure, which I entreat you not to indulge against me for this self-denying act of faithful service, I have determined to lay the matter before you, and to beg you to look into your accounts, and to attend more closely to your business." A servant that would do this, and in this manner, is fidelity embodied, and is a treasure beyond all price.

But faithfulness has reference also to a master's

time, for servants' time is their masters' property, and they as effectually rob their masters by idleness, as by stealing. This is always the case where they are hired by the day; and indeed, where, as in many branches of manufacture, they are paid by the piece, if by their idleness they prevent their employers from executing orders, and realising profits, they cannot be called faithful. When you hire yourselves, there should be an explicit understanding, as I have already said, how much time you are to render for the stipulated wages, and when this is known, all that by indolence you keep back, is just so much of your employer's property stolen from him.

Faithfulness has regard to the reputation of your master and mistress. You have their character in your hands, and by calumny and falsehood, might, if such a malicious disposition were in your heart, do them considerable harm, either by stating what is absolutely false, misrepresenting what is true, magnifying what is little, or exaggerating what is insignificant. Remember it is the utmost excess of base conduct, and the wickedest kind of dishonesty, to attempt to rob them of their good name.

Then there are also secrets which it would be a very unfaithful act in you to disclose. Workmen, clerks, and apprentices, are guilty of great impropriety, if they communicate the private methods of their master's business, or lay open his connexions to any one. Such an act is, by common opinion, an instance of criminal treachery. Female servants ought not to tell others what they see and hear in the families where they are placed. It is to be apprehended that much of the gossip, and many of the reports, which circulate so

much slander through society, are to be traced up to this source. You are not forbidden to form friendships with servants in other families, but to meet merely for the purpose of exchanging intelligence from the respective households in which you live, is highly censurable. You should maintain the strictest silence on these affairs, and not allow the most busy and inquisitive curiosity of others to draw any thing from you. Nor are you to tell these matters, as is often done, to one particular friend; for she may tell them to one more, till at length the affairs of the family are matter of public notoriety. Your admission into a family is attended with an implied condition, that you are to keep all its secrets.

5. Diligence is another duty, but is so necessarily connected with honesty, and indeed so essentially a part of it, that much need not be said, in addition, to illustrate and enforce it. The slothful servant is a wicked one, for, in some instances, more mischief may be done by a day's idleness, than others may be able to undo by a year's exertion. The habits of a sluggard are very unfriendly to your own reputation, and to the comfort of the family by which you are employed. Early rising is absolutely indispensable, if in addition to the duties of your station, you would attend to the salvation of your soul. And will you not sacrifice half an hour's sleep, for the purpose of seeking glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life? Diligence is opposed to sauntering, inactive and gossiping habits; to a slow, reluctant, grudging way of doing your work. A disposition to stint your labour, to do as little as you possibly can, and to do that little, in a careless, unneat, half-finished manner, is a great blemish in your character, and will be sure to militate against your interest.

6. Gratitude for kindness shown you, is very incumbent. You ought to be thankful for having your faults pointed out, and not resentful, as too many are towards those who are kind enough to show them what is wrong. If you have received kind attentions in sickness, and have discovered a constant solicitude on the part of your employers to soften as much as possible your labour, and to render you comfortable in your situation, you should convince them that their attentions are not thrown away upon one who is insensible to their kindness. Especially if they have taken pains to promote your interests, by warning you against bad company, or by endeavouring to correct your bad practices, you should be grateful for their pains, and endeavour to comply with their advice.

7. In all such cases as those mentioned above, where your masters and mistresses are your friends, and confer obligations by their kindness, you should be truly and cordially attached to them. Where there is really nothing to produce attachment, you cannot be expected to feel any. You cannot be required to feel gratitude, where you have received no favours, nor to cherish affection, where you have met with no indulgence. But all masters and mistresses are not tyrants, as some of you know by experience; for you have found in them something at least of the kindness of a second father and mother. If so, they have certainly strong claims upon your affection, and as they have cared for you with the kindness of parents, you should serve them with the deep interest and devoted attachment of children. They have a right to expect in such instances, that as they have studied your comfort, you will study theirs; that when sickness invades themselves or their family, you will minister at

the sick bed, by night or by day, not grudging your ease or your sleep, so that you may do them good; that when losses diminish their property or comforts, you will most tenderly sympathise with them, mingling your tears with theirs, and be willing to share with them the reduction of their usual plenty and gratification; that, in short, you will be afflicted with them in all their afflictions, and be sharers of all their joys. They did not, and they could not, bargain with you for such a duty as this; affection cannot be made an article of money contract; it must be given, or it is worth nothing; and, indeed, bought and sold it cannot be. Instances of generous affection of this kind we have perhaps all known; instances of servants so attached to their masters and mistresses, as to follow them, and remain in their service, through all the vicissitudes of fortune; to descend with them from the lofty eminence and luxurious gratifications of prosperity, down into the lowly desolate and barren valley of poverty, there to suffer want with them; to leave their native land, and cross the seas, and dwell in a foreign country with them; and to find in their love for their master and mistress, a principle and a feeling that reconciled them to all the sufferings they endured on their account. I know a servant who, when her master failed in business, brought down her little hoard of savings, amounting to nearly thirty pounds, and intreated him with tears to accept and apply it for the relief of his family. "Sir," said a lady to a minister who called upon her in sickness, "that girl," alluding to her servant, "who has just left the room, is a greater comfort to me than I can express. She watches me with the affection of a daughter, and the care of a nurse. When my con-

plaints make me peevish, she contrives something to soothe me. I often observe her taking pains to discover what would add to my comfort, and often am presented with the thing I wish for, before I express it in words. I live without suspicion, for I perceive her to be conscientious, even to scrupulosity: my chief complaint is, that she takes so much care of me, that I cannot make her take sufficient care of herself." Servants, look at this character, admire it, imitate it.

III. There are duties which servants in the same family owe to each other.

There ought to be no tyranny or oppression exercised by one over the other. This is often the case in those families which employ a numerous retinue of domestics, and which admit the distinction of superior and inferior servants. There is sometimes in such households, a system of great cruelty carried on altogether unknown to the master. Some poor creatures are degraded into the condition of slaves to the other servants, and drag on a miserable existence under the heavy yoke which has been imposed upon them by an unfeeling minion, who stands before the master's eye, and has his ear always at command.

Strive to agree with each other, for families are disturbed by the quarrels of the servants, and the uproar in the kitchen is often distinctly heard by the guests in the parlour. You should bear with one another's infirmities, and never take delight in thwarting each other. Instead of finding pleasure in converting the weaknesses of any one into a means of annoyance, and a source of vexation to her, carefully avoid whatever, by appealing to those imperfections, or bringing them into notice, would render the subject of them irritable or

sullen. Never tease one another, which is too often done, especially when an individual is known to be petulant. The worst consequences have sometimes arisen from this practice. A few days ago, I saw a young man put to the bar at the assizes, upon an indictment for manslaughter, under the following circumstances. His fellow-servants, aware of his petulant disposition, provoked him by some petty vexations, till, in his rage he hurled a hammer at them, which struck one of them in the head, and inflicted a wound of which he died.

Never bear tales to your employers for the purpose of exciting a prejudice against each other, and ingratiating yourselves in their favour. A supplanter is a most hateful character, at once despicable and despised.

At the same time, you are not to connive at sin; if your fellow-servants do any thing wrong, either in the way of drunkenness, lewdness, or dishonesty, you owe it to your master to make him acquainted with the fact. You are dishonest if you conceal the dishonesty of others, and you are a partaker of those vices which you allow to be perpetrated under your notice, without making them known.

Servants that make a profession of religion have great need to conduct themselves with singular propriety. Towards their masters and mistresses there should be the deepest humility, and the very reverse of every thing that bears even a distant resemblance to spiritual pride. There must be no affectation of superiority, no air of importance, no affected sanctity; but a meek, modest, unobtrusive exhibition of the influence of religion in making them strictly conscientious and exemplary in

the discharge of all the duties of their station. Their piety should be seen, not only in a constant anxiety to attend to the public means of grace, and in a regular performance of the private duties of religion, but also by its making them more respectful and obedient; more meek and submissive; more honest and diligent, than all the rest. That servant does not adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things, who does not shine in her sphere as a servant. There are occasions when you may seek to do good to those who employ you, if they are living without the possession of piety. Instances have occurred in which such as you have been the instruments of converting their employers: and a visible, but unostentatious exhibition of eminent and consistent piety, supported by as eminent a discharge of the duties of your station, followed by a modest and judicious introduction of the subject, when a suitable occasion presents itself, may, by the grace of God, be blessed for the salvation of even your master and mistress.

If, on the other hand, your profession of religion be not supported by consistency; if it render you proud, conceited, and consequential; if it be accompanied by an unsubdued temper, or by habits of inattention to the duties of your place; if it make you troublesome about your religious privileges, so that in a time of emergency or sickness, you will not give up a single sermon without murmuring and] sullenness, you do not glorify God, but dishonour him; you excite a prejudice against religion, rather than produce a prepossession in its favour.

Towards your fellow-servants you should be meek, obliging, and generous; assuming nothing on the ground of your piety, never disgusting them by any apparent consciousness of superior sanctity, but at the same time

never scrupling to let them know and see that you fear God. Timidly to conceal your regard to the claims of religion, and to profess it vauntingly, would equally excite prejudice; but to adhere to it with firmness that ridicule and opposition cannot bend, consistency that scrutiny cannot impeach, and humility that the reproached conscience of those who are offended cannot misrepresent, will be sure to raise admiration, and, by the blessing of God, may produce imitation.

If any of your fellow-servants are living in the neglect of religion, it is your duty, in a solemn and affectionate manner to warn them. "I know a religious servant," says Mr Janeway, "that after other endeavours for the conversion of one of his fellows had proved ineffectual, spent some time at midnight to pray for him; and being very importunate, his voice was heard in the next chamber, where the object of his pious solicitude lay; who, on hearing the voice of entreaty, arose from bed to listen, and was so struck with the affectionate concern that was breathed out for him, that he was converted by the prayer."

Let me now, in conclusion, exhort you to attend to the duties which have been set before you. It should be felt as a motive to this, to consider that, though you are servants, you are not slaves, as was the case with those who are addressed by the apostles, in their inspired writings. Yes, they were slaves, and yet they were admonished to give honour and service to those who held them by a tie they could not break. You are free, and your labour is voluntary; you sell it for a stipulated price, and are not degraded by your situation: nothing but bad conduct can degrade you. Your interest lies in the faithful discharge of your duties. And this will

secure to you peace and serenity of mind, the respect and attachment of your employers, and all who know you; the testimony of your consciences and the approbation of God. You will thus help to diffuse happiness through the families in which you reside; for a good servant is one of the springs of domestic comfort, which daily refreshes by its pure and pleasant stream the members of the little community in the house; and they in return will do what they can to promote your present comfort, and provide for your future support, when the days of sickness and the years of old age shall come upon you. And remember that God is every where, and his eye is always upon you. "He com passeth your path, and knoweth your down sitting and uprising: and there is not a word upon your tongue, but he knoweth it altogether." You may have an absent master, but you cannot have an absent God. And he cites your conscience on his side, to preserve in your own bosoms a duplicate of the record of your actions, words, and feelings, which he writes down in the book of his remembrance. Time is short, life is uncertain, death is at hand, and the judgment is approaching when it will be of no consequence who was master and who was servant, but only who was holy and faithful. God is now your witness and will hereafter be your judge. Have the promises and threatenings of our Great Master little efficacy? Are heaven, glory, and eternal happiness, worth nothing? If so, what think you of condemnation, wrath, and everlasting misery? If the former signify nothing, do the latter signify no more? Then, I must confess, I know not what further to say, for I have exhausted all

arguments I can bring with regard to your condition in time or your doom for eternity; I have spread out the miseries which sin brings, and the pleasures which holiness produces, upon earth; and have added to them the consideration of the eternal torment which iniquity draws upon itself in hell, and the everlasting felicity which religion conducts the soul to enjoy in heaven: I can only say, choose ye whether to you it shall be said, in the last day, by the Lord Jesus Christ, “Thou wicked and slothful servant, depart accursed from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; or, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.”

THE FOLLOWING
ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS,
WAS PREFIXED TO THE EARLY EDITION OF THE
CHRISTIAN FATHER'S PRESENT TO HIS CHILDREN.

AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IT is a situation of tremendous responsibility to be a parent: for the manner in which you discharge the duties of this relation, you must give account in that awful day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be judged by Jesus Christ. With every babe that God entrusts to your care, he in effect sends the solemn injunction, "Take this child, and bring it up for me;" and, at the final audit, will enquire in what manner you have obeyed the command. It will not then be sufficient to plead the strength of your affection, nor the ceaseless efforts to which it gave rise; for if these efforts were not directed to a right end, if all your solicitude was lavished upon inferior objects, you will receive the rebuke of him that sits upon the throne.

It is of infinite importance that you should contemplate your children in the proper point of view. They are animal beings, and therefore it is highly proper that you should use every effort to provide them with suitable food, clothing, habitations, and every thing else that can conduce to the comfort of their present existence. They

are social beings, and therefore it is important that you should qualify them to enjoy the comforts, and discharge the duties of social life. They are rational beings, and therefore it is your duty to furnish them with every possible advantage for the culture of their minds. But if you look no further than this, you leave out of sight the grandest and most interesting lights in which they can be seen, and will of course neglect the most important of your duties towards them, for they are immortal beings; the stamp of eternity is upon them; everlasting ages are before them. They are like all the rest of the human race, depraved, guilty and condemned creatures, and consequently in danger of eternal misery. Yet are they through the mercy of God, and the mediation of Christ, creatures capable of attaining to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Looking upon them in this light, (and this is the light in which you profess to contemplate them,) say what should be your chief anxiety concerning them, and what your conduct towards them.

Recognising in your children beings placed in this world in a state of probation, and hastening to eternal happiness or torment, will you be contented to seek for them any thing short of eternal salvation? Even a Deist, who has any belief of a future state of reward and punishment, cannot act consistently, unless he is supremely desirous of the everlasting welfare of his children. None but an avowed Atheist can with the least propriety fix his aim for his children, lower than the possession of a happy immortality. But in the case of a Christian parent, it is in the highest degree inconsistent, absurd, cruel, and wicked, ever to lose sight of this even for an instant, in the arrangements which

he makes for his family, or the manner of his conducting himself towards them. Do you really believe in the ruin of the human race by sin, and their recovery by Christ; in the existence of such states as heaven and hell; in the necessity of a life of faith and holiness, in order to escape the one and secure the other? then act up to these solemn convictions, in reference not only to your own salvation, but to the salvation of your children. Let a supreme desire for their immortal interests be at the bottom of all your conduct, and be interwoven in all your parental habits. Let them have in the fullest sense of the term a christian education. Act towards them and for them, so that you shall be able to say to them, however they may turn out, "I take you to record that I am clear from your blood."

But my principal object in this address is, to point out what appear to me to be the most prevailing obstacles to success, in the religious education of children. That in many cases the means employed by christian parents for their children's spiritual welfare are unsuccessful, is a melancholy fact, established by abundant, and, I fear, accumulating evidence. I am not now speaking of those families, and are there indeed such, where scarcely a semblance of domestic piety or instruction is to be found, where no family altar is seen, no family prayer is heard, no parental admonition is delivered? What! this cruel, wicked, ruinous neglect of their children's immortal interests in the families of professors! Monstrous inconsistency! Shocking dereliction of principle, no wonder that their children go astray! This is easily accounted for. Some of the most profligate young people that I know, have issued from such households. Their prejudices against reli-

gion, and their enmity against its forms, are greater than those of the children of avowed worldlings. Inconsistent, hypocritical, negligent professors of religion, frequently excite in their sons and daughters an unconquerable aversion and disgust in reference to piety, which seems to inspire them with a determination to place themselves at the furthest possible remove from its influence.

But I am now speaking of the failure of a religious education, where it has been, in some measure, carried on; instances of which are by no means unfrequent. Too often do we hear the echo of David's sorrowful complaint uttered by the distressed and disappointed christian father, "Although my house be not so with God." Too often do we see the child of many prayers and many hopes forgetting the instructions he has received, and running with the multitude to do evil. Far be it from me to add affliction to affliction, by saying that this is to be traced, in every case, to parental neglect. I would not thus pour as it were nitre and vinegar upon the bleeding wounds, with which filial impiety has lacerated many a father's mind. I would not thus cause the wretched parent to exclaim, "Be-proach hath broken the heart already half broken by my child's misconduct." I know that in many cases, no blame whatever is to be thrown on the parent; for it was the depravity of the child alone, which nothing could subdue but the power of the Holy Ghost, that led to the melancholy result. The best possible scheme of christian education, most judiciously directed, and most perseveringly maintained, has, in some cases, totally failed. God is a sovereign, and he has mercy on whom he will have mercy. Still, however, there is, in

the order of things, a tendency in a religious education, to secure the desired result; and God usually does bless such efforts with his saving influence. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is certainly true, as a general rule, though there are many exceptions to it. I shall now lay before you the principal obstacles to success in religious education, as they strike my mind.

I. It is frequently too negligently and capriciously maintained, even where it is not totally omitted. It is obvious, that if at all attended to, it should be attended to with anxious earnestness, systematic order, and perpetual regularity. It should not be taken up as a dull form, an unpleasant drudgery, but as a matter of deep and delightful interest. The heart of the parent should be entirely and obviously engaged. A part of every returning Sabbath should be spent by him, surrounded by his filial charge; and it should be embodied, more or less, with the whole habit of parental conduct. The father may lead the usual devotions at the family altar; the mother may join with him in teaching their children catechisms, hymns, scripture: but if this be unattended by serious admonition, visible anxiety, and strenuous effort to lead their children to think seriously on religion, as a matter of infinite importance, little good can be expected. A cold, formal, capricious system of religious instruction is likely to create prejudice against religion, rather than prepossession in its favour.

Then again, a religious education should be consistent, it should extend to every thing that is likely to assist in the formation of character. It should not be mere abstract tuition, but should be a complete whole. It should select the schools, the companions, the amuse-

ments, the books of youth; for if it do nothing more than merely teach a form of sound words to the understanding and to the memory, while the impression of the heart and the formation of the character are neglected, very little is to be expected from such efforts. A handful of seed, scattered now and then upon the ground, without order or perseverance, might as rationally be expected to produce a good crop, as a mere lukewarm, capricious, religious education to be followed by true piety. If the parent is not visibly in earnest, it cannot be expected that the child will be so. Religion, by every christian parent, is theoretically acknowledged to be the most important thing in the world; but if in practice the father appears a thousand times more anxious for his son to be a good scholar than a real Christian, and the mother more solicitous for the daughter to be a good dancer or musician, than a child of God, they may teach what they like in the way of good doctrine, but they are not to look for genuine piety as the result: this can only be expected where it is really taught and inculcated as the one thing needful.

II. The relaxation of domestic discipline is another obstacle in the way of a successful religious education. A parent is invested by God with a degree of authority over his children, which he cannot neglect to use, without being guilty of trampling under foot the institutions of heaven. Every family is a community, the government of which is strictly despotic, though not tyrannical. Every father is a sovereign, though not an oppressor: he is a legislator, and not merely a counsellor: and his will is law, not merely advice. He is to command, to restrain, to punish, and children are required to obey: he is if necessary to threaten, to rebuke, to chastise,

and they are to submit with reverence. He is to decide what books shall be read, what companions invited, what engagements formed, and how time is to be spent. If he sees any thing wrong, he is not to interpose merely with the timid, feeble, ineffectual protest of Eli, "Why do ye thus, my sons?" but with a firm, though mild prohibition. He must rule his own house; and by the whole of his conduct, make his children feel that obedience is his due and his demand.

The want of discipline, wherever it exists, will be supplied by confusion and domestic anarchy. Every thing goes wrong in the absence of this. A gardener may sow the choicest seeds; but if he neglect to pluck up weeds, and prune wild luxuriance, he must not expect to see his flowers grow, or his garden flourish; and so a parent may deliver the best instructions; but if he do not, by discipline, eradicate evil tempers, correct bad habits, repress rank corruptions, nothing excellent can be looked for. He may be a good prophet, and a good priest; but if he be not also a good king, all else is vain. When once a man breaks his sceptre, or lends it to his children as a plaything, he may give up his hopes of success from a religious education.

I have seen the evil resulting from a want of discipline in innumerable families, both amongst my brethren in the ministry and others. Frightful instances of disorder and immorality are now present to my mind, which I could almost wish to forget. The misfortune in many families is, that this regimen is unsteady and capricious, sometimes carried even to tyranny itself, at others relaxed into a total suspension of law; so that the children are at one time trembling like slaves, at others revolting like rebels: at one time groaning beneath an

iron yoke, at others rioting in a state of lawless liberty. This is a most mischievous system, and its effects are generally what might be expected.

In some cases, discipline commences too late, in others it ceases too early. A father's magisterial office is coeval with his parental relation. A child as soon as he can reason, should be made to feel that obedience is due to his parents; for if he grows up to boyhood before he is subject to the rule of paternal authority, he will, very probably, like an untamed bullock, resist the yoke. On the other hand, as long as children continue beneath the parental roof, they are to be subject to the rules of domestic discipline. Many parents greatly err, in abdicating the throne in favour of a son or daughter, because the child is becoming a man or a woman. It is truly pitiable to see a boy or girl of fifteen, returning from school to sow the seeds of revolt in the domestic community, acting in opposition to parental authority, till the too compliant father gives the reins of government into filial hands, or else by his conduct declares his children to be in a state of independence. I am not advising a contest for power: for where a child has been accustomed to obey from an infant, the yoke of obedience will be light and easy; and if a rebellious temper should show itself early, a judicious father would be on his guard, and suffer no encroachments on his prerogative, and then the increased power of his authority, like the increased pressure of the atmosphere, would be felt without being seen, and would generally become irresistible.

III. Undue severity, the other extreme, is as injurious as unlimited indulgence. If injudicious fondness has slain its tens of thousands, unnecessary harsh-

ness has destroyed its thousands. By an authority which cannot err, we are told that the cords of love are the bands of a man. There is a plastic power in love. The human mind is so constituted as to yield readily to the influence of kindness. Men are more easily led to their duty, than driven to it: a child, says an eastern proverb, may lead an elephant by a single hair. You remember, and perhaps have often seen verified, the old apologue of the Sun, the Wind and the Traveller. Love seems so essential an element of the parental character, that there is something shockingly revolting, not only in a cruel, not only in an unkind, not only in a severe, but even in a cold-hearted father. Study the parental character as it is exhibited in that most exquisitely touching moral picture, the parable of the Prodigal Son. When a father governs entirely by cold, bare, uncovered authority; by mere commands, prohibitions and threats; by frowns untempered with smiles; when the friend is never blended with the legislator, nor authority modified with love; when his conduct produces only servile fear in the hearts of his children, instead of generous affection; when he is served from a dread of the effects of disobedience, rather than from a sense of the pleasure of obedience; when he is dreaded in the family circle as a frowning spectre, rather than hailed as the guardian angel of its joys; when even accidents raise a storm, and faults a hurricane, of passion in his bosom; when offenders are driven to equivocation and lying, with the hope of averting by concealment the severe corrections which disclosure always entails; when innocent enjoyments are unnecessarily prohibited; when, in fact, nothing of the father, but every thing of the tyrant, is seen; can we

expect religion to grow in such soil as this? Yes, as rationally as we may look for the tenderest hot-house plant to thrive amidst the rigours of eternal frost. It is useless for such a father to teach religion; he chills the souls of his pupils; he hardens their hearts against impression; he prepares them to rush with eager haste to their ruin as soon as they have thrown off the yoke of their bondage; and to employ their liberty when they obtain it for purposes of unbridled gratification. Like a company of African slaves, they are first tortured by their thralldom, and, by that very bondage, trained up to convert their emancipation into their destruction.

Let parents, then, in all their conduct, blend the lawgiver and the friend, temper authority with kindness, and realise in their measure that representation of Deity which Dr. Watts has given us, where he says, "Sweet majesty and awful love, sit smiling on his brow." In short, let them so act, that their children shall be convinced that their law is holy, and their commandment is holy and just and good: and that to be so governed, is to be blessed.

IV. The inconsistent conduct of parents themselves, is a frequent and powerful obstacle to success in religious education. Example has been affirmed to be omnipotent, and its power, like that of gravitation, is always in proportion to the nearness of the attracting body: what then must be the influence of parental example? Now as I am speaking of religious parents, it is of course assumed that they do exhibit, in some measure, the reality of religion: but may not the reality often be seen where much of the beauty of true godliness is obscured; just as the sun is beheld when his effulgence is quenched in a mist: or as a lovely prospect is seen through a haze,

which, though it leave its extent uncovered, veils all its beauty. Religion may be seen by the children in dim outline in their parents' conduct, but attended with so many minor inconsistencies, and such a mist of imperfections, that it presents little to conciliate their regard or raise their esteem. There is so much worldly-mindedness, so much conformity to fashionable follies, so much irregularity of domestic religion, such frequent sallies of unchristian temper, such inconsolable grief and querulous complaint under the trials of life, such frequent animosities towards their fellow Christians, observable in the conduct of their parents, that they see religion to the greatest possible disadvantage, and the consequence is, that it either lowers their standard of piety, or inspires a disgust towards it altogether. Parents, as you would wish your instructions and admonitions to your children to be successful, enforce them by the power of a holy example. It is not enough for you to be pious on the whole, but you should be wholly pious; not only to be real disciples, but eminent ones; not only sincere Christians, but consistent ones. Your standard of religion should be very high. To some parents I would give this advice, "Say less about religion to your children, or else manifest more of its influence. Leave off family prayer, or else leave off family sins." Beware how you act, for all your actions are seen at home. Never talk of religion but with reverence: be not forward to speak of the faults of your fellow Christians, and when the subject is introduced, let it be in a spirit of charity towards the offender, yet of decided abhorrence of the fault. Many parents have done irreparable injury to their children's minds by a proneness to find out, talk of, and almost rejoice over, the

inconsistencies of professing Christians. Never cavil at, or find fault with the religious exercises of the minister you attend: but rather commend his discourses, in order that your children may listen to them with greater attention. Direct their views to the most eminent Christians, and point out to them the loveliness of exemplary piety. In short, seeing that your example may be expected so much to aid or frustrate your efforts for the conversion of your children, consider “what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

V. Another obstacle to the success of religious instruction, is sometimes found in the wild conduct of an elder branch of the family, especially in the case of a dissipated sop. The elder branches of a family are found, in general, to have considerable influence over the rest, and oftentimes to give the tone of morals to the others: they are looked up to by their younger brothers and sisters; they bring companions, books, amusements into the house; and thus form the characters of their juniors. It is of great consequence, therefore, that parents should pay particular attention to their elder children; and if unhappily their habits should be decidedly unfriendly to the religious improvement of the rest, they should be removed, if possible, from the family. One profligate son may lead all his brothers astray. I have seen this, in some cases, most painfully verified. A parent may feel unwilling to send from home an unpromising child, under the apprehension that he will grow worse and worse; but kindness to him in this way, is cruelty to the others. Wickedness is contagious, especially when the diseased person is a brother.

VI. Bad companions out of the house counteract all the influence of religious instruction delivered at home. A christian parent should ever be on the alert to watch the associations which his children are inclined to form. On this subject, I have said much to the young themselves in the following work; but it is a subject which equally concerns their parents. One ill chosen friend of your children's, may undo all the good you are the means of doing at home. It is impossible for you to be sufficiently vigilant on this point. From their very infancy, encourage them to look up to you as the selectors of their companions; impress them with the necessity of this, and produce a habit of consulting you at all times. Never encourage an association which is not likely to have a decidedly friendly influence on their religious characters. This caution was never more necessary than in the present age. Young people are brought very much together by the religious institutions which are now formed, and although there is great probability that in such a circle suitable companions will be found, yet it is too much even for charity to believe, that all the active young friends of Sunday Schools, Juvenile Missionary Societies, &c, &c, are fit companions for our sons and our daughters. Encourage them to consider you as their chief friends, and so act towards them that they shall want no other. On this subject you will find a few remarks, in a note, in the following work.

VII. The schisms which sometimes arise in our churches, and embitter the minds of Christians against each other, have a very unfriendly influence upon the minds of the young. They see so much in both parties that is opposed to the spirit and genius of Christianity,

and enter so deeply into the views and feelings of one of them, that their attention is drawn off from the essentials of religion, or their prejudices raised against them. I look upon this to be one of the most painful and mischievous consequences of ecclesiastical contentions.

VIII. The neglect of young persons by our churches and their pastors, is another impediment to the success of domestic religious instruction. This, however, does not so much appertain to parents in their separate capacity, as in their relation as members of a christian society, and even in this relation it belongs less to them than to their pastors. There is a blank yet to be filled up in reference to the treatment of the young, who are not in church communion. I object to the rite of Confirmation as practised in the established church: but we want something, I will not say like it, but in lieu of it. We want something that shall recognise the young, interest them, attract them, guard them.

IX. The spirit of filial independence, which is sanctioned by the habits, if not by the opinions of the age, is another hindrance, and the last which I shall mention, to the good effect contemplated and desired by a religious education. The disposition, which is but too apparent in this age, to enlarge the privileges of the children by diminishing the prerogatives of their parents, is neither for the comfort of the latter, nor for the well-being of the former. Rebellion against a justly constituted authority can never be in any case a blessing, and all wise parents, together with all wise youth, will unite in supporting that just parental authority, which however the precocious manhood of some may feel it to be an oppression, the more natural and slowly approach-

ing maturity of others, will acknowledge to be a blessing. Children who find the parental yoke a burden, are not very likely to look upon that of Christ as a benefit.

Such, my dear friends, as they appear to my mind, are the principal obstacles to the success of those efforts which are carried on by many for the religious education of their children. Seriously consider them: and having looked at them, endeavour to avoid them. Survey them as the mariner does the flame of the light-house, for the purpose of avoiding the rock on which it is placed. Recognise your children, as every christian parent should do, not only as animal, rational, social beings, but as immortal creatures, lost sinners, beings invited to eternal life through the mediation of Christ; and while you neglect not any one means that can promote their comfort, reputation, and usefulness in this world, concentrate your chief solicitude, and employ your noblest energies in a Scriptural, judicious, persevering scheme of religious education. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

THE THIRD

PASTORAL LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SEVERAL INDEPENDENT
CHURCHES

UNITED IN THE WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION,

AGREED TO AT THE HALF YEARLY MEETING, HELD AT DUDLEY,

APRIL 18TH, 1837.

PASTORAL LETTER.

BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST,

WE addressed you in our last epistle, on the subject of "Social Devotion." and would wish to indulge a hope that, as the result of that letter, there has been on the part of professing Christians, within the limits of this Association, a more general and serious attendance upon Prayer Meetings. We now direct your attention to a branch of christian obligation, which, if we may, without impropriety, compare one duty with another, is still more important than even that which we last recommended to your notice: we mean Family Prayer.

It can be scarcely expected that those who have not enough of religion to acknowledge God in their households, should feel much interest in the engagements of social devotion. By family prayer, we mean the duty of heads of families, whether male or female, to gather together at stated seasons, their children and servants, for the purpose of worshipping God, in their domestic capacity as a household. This service should comprise the reading of the Scriptures, solemn prayer, and where it is convenient, the singing of a hymn. The last, however, is the least incumbent part of the duty, and must often of necessity be dispensed with, for want of

persons either to lead or follow in the act of psalmody. Where it can be observed, it is a delightful accompaniment of the domestic service, the morning or evening hymn of a pious family being one of the sweetest sounds ever heard in this discordant world.

The obligation to the duty of family prayer rests more on general principles than express command. There are some duties of religion resulting so plainly from the relations we bear to each other and to God, that they scarcely need to be made the matter of positive precept, and are, therefore, left to the deductions of intelligence, and the dictates of conscience. Of this nature is the one before us; we find our warrant for it, not so much in explicit injunction, as in its obvious connexion with God's glory, and our own welfare; in the rich promises of divine mercy to those by whom it is observed; in the fearful denunciations of divine wrath against those who neglect it; and in Scripture examples, recorded with the testimony of Jehovah's approbation and praise. Such is an epitome of the argument in favour of this duty. Is it not the only way by which a family, as such, can glorify God and praise his holy name? Is not that in appearance an atheistic household where there is no altar, no sacrifice, no priest for him? A house, silent, as regards his praise, looks more like a sepulchre of dead souls, than a habitation of living ones; while all the wealth, elegance, and plenty found there, are but as the garniture of the tomb, where the dead praise not the Lord. Even the heathen condemn such Godless, Christless, prayerless households, for they have their temple gods in addition to their family deities, which they never forget to propitiate and consult on every occasion of importance.

Are not your own welfare and comfort, dear brethren, deeply involved in this exercise? Not only does the neglect of it often awaken your consciences against you and make you uneasy, especially when you hear the subject enforced; but the performance of it is accompanied with that peace which the consciousness of having done what is right, more particularly when great interests are concerned, never fails to produce.

How conducive is this ever-recurring service to keep alive in your own heart a deep sense of the importance of personal godliness! It is a means of grace for the parent as well as for the children, and has a tendency to fan the flame of devotion in his soul. He hears his own voice express the desires of his own heart, which, by a natural influence, reflect back upon his spirit, and increase the source of devotional feeling from which they spring. Besides, is it not a fresh bond upon his christian consistency, to consider that he thus places himself so conspicuously and so constantly in the view of his family as a man of religion? And as regards his family, how soothing is it to a pious parent, amidst all the solicitude he feels for his children, to recollect, that he has referred them to Jehovah as a God of providence and grace, both in his closet and at the, domestic altar. Whether at home or abroad, this is his consolation, that he has committed them to the Lord, and made them the witnesses of the act of surrender. And provided he sustains this service by a consistent example, how much does it tend to exalt him in the estimation of his household! What an air of sanctity does it throw over his character! How prepared are they to submit to his authority as the king of his household, by the reverence they have acquired

for him as their priest! His prayers are felt to be motives for submission to his commands, and procure for him the obedience of love. Moreover, how can he expect family blessings without family prayer, or look for a continuance of family mercies without family praise? Can he have God's smile if he do not ask for it? Adversity comes with double gloom and terror into a prayerless house; while prosperity enters only as a golden curse into such a scene.

Dwell upon the blessed effects of family prayer to the household. It is a standing remembrance to them of God: it is a means of grace of daily recurrence, tending constantly to enforce upon them the claims of religion. It keeps them under the sound of instruction, and detains them constantly within sight of the cross of Christ, the throne of God, the solemnities of judgment, and the awful realities of eternity. It expresses a solicitude for their souls, and says to them with a clear and impressive voice, "How will you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" It has been eminently blessed in the conversion both of children and of servants, and has thus rendered innumerable families seminaries for the church, which have supplied not only members, but ministers and missionaries.

It has a blessed and obvious tendency to promote domestic peace and union.

"Even when wisdom and regularity have done their utmost, there are often little and untoward events between parents and children, masters and servants, that may mar the happiness of all, if they are not wisely controlled by a spirit of mutual good-will and forbearance. And by no other means can this spirit of union and kindness be so effectually secured as by due attendance at the domestic altar. Under the influence of the holy flame which burns upon it, the heart has often been softened into a forgetfulness of those little irritations

that if allowed to remain, would ripen into explosion, so far as not only to separate servant from master, but perhaps brother from brother, and parent from child.”

Are examples needed to urge the performance of this duty? Behold the father of the faithful and the friend of God, whose name, amidst the many honours which attend it on the page of Scripture, bears the following commendation from God himself; “I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep the way of the Lord/’ Hear the pious resolution of Joshua, a warrior, and the leader of the hosts of the Lord, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” If we leave the Scripture record, and come to the general history of the church, we shall find that there is scarcely any point of christian duty in reference to which there has been more consentaneous opinion, than on this. All good men of every age, country, and denomination, have agreed about the obligations of family prayer; so much so, that there is scarcely a section of the christian church, in which the man who lives in the neglect of this duty would not be thought grossly deficient in the essentials of the truly religious character.

Then again, how fearful is the language of denunciation against those who restrain this act of homage to God. “Pour out thy fury,” says the inspired prophet, “upon the families that call not upon thy name.” What a mark for the arrows of the Almighty is a prayerless family! What a recipient for the contents of his cup of fiery indignation!

By such cogent arguments as these, and by others that might be mentioned, may the practice of family prayer be enforced.

It may be proper to mention now, some things connected with its due performance.

It should be observed, with great seriousness, solemnity, and fervour; and not in a perfunctory, hasty, and careless manner. If it be a mere form, it is an insult to God, and an injury to the family. We fear that the manner in which it is attended to in some families, is calculated rather to inspire disgust, than to excite reverence. It is so short, so slovenly, so undevout, so monotonous, as to have the appearance of little else than a hollow, heartless compliment to the Almighty.

It should be regularly kept up, where it can be done, both morning and evening. That irregularity which leads the children or servants to ask frequently and in doubt, "Are we to have prayer to night?" is a most dishonourable inconsistency on the part of a professor of religion. In order to the regular performance of this solemn duty, it is necessary that heads of families should not visit late in the evening. It is deeply to be regretted that the modern habits of late hours, are most lamentably and mischievously injurious to the regular and serious attendance upon this service. Supper visiting is very undesirable on many other accounts, besides this.

Punctuality as to time should be observed. There ought to be a fixed hour, and that hour should be kept as far as possible. No company that may happen to be in the house should be allowed to form an excuse for putting aside or postponing the morning or evening sacrifice. There should be such order and regularity in the household arrangements, that its members shall know as certainly when to expect to be called to worship, as they do when to prepare for the meals.

It is of great consequence that the hour for evening worship be not driven off so late that the family, tired with the business of the day, are more fit for sleep than for prayer. It is reported of a living minister, that on being asked at a very late hour to conduct the domestic service, presented this short petition: "Lord, forgive us, that we have found time this evening for every thing but to worship thee. Amen." The reproof was keen, though perhaps bordering upon the irreverend. It is sad to see a company of professing Christians sitting till eleven o'clock engaged in all kinds of conversation, and then calling for the Bible, to hurry over the shortest Psalm that can be found, and a few hasty sentences, amidst the obvious disregard of the servants, and the somnolency of the guests.

To keep up the interest of the children and servants, special notice should be frequently and affectionately taken of them in the family devotions: but neither of them should be prayed at, or have their faults exposed in the form of supplication; this is perverting the worship, and is the way to produce unconquerable aversion to it in their minds.

A due medium should be observed, between wearisome length and careless haste. The tediousness of some good people is, to the last extreme, injudicious and injurious. Forgetting that they have only servants who feel perhaps but little interest in what is said, and children who understand but little of what is said, they go on to a length which would hardly be proper at a prayer meeting; while, at the same time, the strain of their petitions is suitable only to a company of experienced Christians. A prayer of ten minutes' length, composed of petitions judiciously selected, and uttered

with fervour, is quite long enough for almost any family devotions on ordinary occasions. On the other hand, great care must be taken that it do not degenerate into a mere hasty form. The great thing to be kept in mind is seriousness, fervour, and variety.

In those families which can command sufficient leisure it would be proper to read not only the word of God, but also a comment on its contents, or a practical improvement of them, such for instance as Doddridge's Family Expositor. The Cottage Bible, the Condensed Commentary published by Ward, or the Commentary sent forth by the Religious Tract Society, are all excellent and suitable for family use. We protest here, against the too common practice of making the Bible, or the passage of it read, a bell to ring the household together; all should be seated and in order before the service commences, and all should be furnished with a Bible in their hands to follow the person who is reading: this helps to fix the attention, and aids the mind in gaining instruction and impression.

It is our firm conviction, dear brethren, that family prayer is not only too much neglected in the case of some professors, but far too lightly attended to by others. It is not that grave, and solemn, yet delightful service which it should be. Even where it is maintained with the regularity of a fixed habit, it is often wanting in the fervour of a devotional service. It is the performance of a cold or lukewarm formalist, keeping up a decent custom, which he can not altogether omit without seeming to violate his consistency; but not the act of an importunate good man, breathing out his soul to God for his family, in such strains of devotion, as seem to bless them at the time, and to be the pledges of other

blessings to come. We are quite aware that this requires a higher tone of devotional feeling, and a more living spirituality of mind than is usually found among Christians in these days; but then this ought to be possessed, and the general deficiency is no excuse for individual neglect. It is, indeed, too true that the omission of this duty altogether in some cases, and the heartless, formal, and unedifying manner in which it is performed in others, must be resolved into the low state of personal piety by which great numbers of modern professors are characterised.

Permit us, dear brethren, to mention here two things of great importance connected with the subject of this letter. The first is, that the mere act of family prayer, with whatever regularity, punctuality, and even seriousness it may be performed, is not to be regarded as the whole of family religion; nor is it to be performed as a substitute for the other parts. The children are to be trained up in the way they should go. They are to be educated in the fear of the Lord. Instruction is a momentous part of the duty of every pious parent. He is not only to be the priest, but also the prophet of his family. The obligations of infant baptism, though primarily and immediately referring to the children, lie also upon the parent's conscience, and are to be discharged by him, in the way of doing all that means can accomplish, in bringing up his family for God. As soon as reason dawns, and invites instruction, parents are to begin the work of endeavouring to form the religious character of their offspring. By catechetical instruction, by familiar explanations of the word of God, by storing the mind with principles, by giving light and power to conscience, they are to endeavour to turn even the

childish heart to God, and educe his praise from the mouths of babes and sucklings: and for such efforts, no mere prayers, however fervent or numerous, can be a substitute. Prayers unattended by these exertions, must appear to the objects of them, so strongly characterised by insincerity, as to savour of hypocrisy, and must therefore be listened to with surprise, perhaps with disgust. It is a most reproachful thing for a parent, when a child for whom he has earnestly prayed, says, or silently thinks, "If my father is so anxious for my salvation, as his supplications seem to indicate, why does he not take more pains actually to save me, and obtain the answer to his prayers? Why does he not do as he is commanded to do by Christ, and seek, as well as ask and knock?"

These remarks apply with equal force to a neglect to instruct and admonish the servants, for he who prays for them, but never instructs or kindly admonishes them on their soul's concerns, can hardly persuade them he is in earnest for their welfare.

The second thing which we would suggest to those who habitually maintain family prayer, is the vast importance, too great indeed for us to describe, of their maintaining general consistency of conduct and also a kind and conciliatory deportment towards their household. Persons who regularly observe this pious custom, place themselves twice every day before their children and servants in the character of a professor of religion. They are heard reading the Bible and solemnly addressing God, and declare by such acts that they wish to be considered as partakers of genuine piety. What then if the very chapters they read, and the prayers they present, should actually condemn a large part of their

conduct, so far as that conduct has been observed by their family; will not such worship be offensive to them, and produce a prejudice against religion altogether? We should never forget that those whom we shall call to prayer in the evening, have been watching us all the day long; and with what sentiments will they come to the family altar, if they bring with them the evidence of their own senses, that he who is to act the priest, and to offer the sacrifice, has that day been guilty of gross inconsistency? With what feelings must some apprentices and shopmen, who have been witnesses of their master's bad principles in the shop, listen to his fervent prayers in the family? Or with what emotions must they hear him pray for them, after he has just ceased from threatening, scolding, or oppressing them? So also the children can be expected to hear with little reverence the prayers of a father, who is severe, tyrannical, and unkind to them; or obviously wanting in general consistency as a christian professor. But with what solemn effect, and holy awe, and deep impression are those prayers heard, which flow from the lips of consistent sanctity. It may seem severe, and almost irreligious to offer the advice, but there are some persons whom we should decidedly recommend to leave off family prayer, if they are determined not to leave off their inconsistent conduct. It would be far better that this service should be omitted altogether, than be employed merely as a substitute for religion, and a cover for hypocrisy. Let it ever be remembered, then, that he who leads the family devotions should be their leader also in all other good works.

It is painful to us, dear brethren, to express a fear that this solemn and incumbent duty is not only neg-

lected in too many families, but that the neglect itself, if not justified, is excused, and that on various grounds. Some plead their inability to conduct the devotions of the household in a suitable manner. Have you ever tried? You know not what you can do, till you have actually made the experiment. It is one of those cases of duty in which assistance may be expected from on high. But even admitting that you have made the trial, and that after repeated efforts you cannot sufficiently compose your minds, and command language for extemporaneous prayer, (a very possible, and indeed not uncommon case,) you could still avail yourself of those admirable helps, which have been furnished by wise and good men in the printed collections of family devotions. Forms of prayer are not desirable when they can be dispensed with, but they are invaluable aids, where they cannot. It is sincerity that constitutes the salt of all our sacrifices, which may be sprinkled over the precomposed form, as well as over the extempore effusion. It would be well in those cases, where prepared prayers are used to procure not only such as are purely evangelical and simple, but also such as are as much varied as possible, by the extent of the collection. Great care should be taken that the prayer should be read reverently, emphatically, and with solemnity. And where this is done with slowness and expression, it is not only far better than nothing, but is to be preferred, as we think, to many of those short, incoherent, and perhaps, almost unvarying supplications, which are presented by some who are ready to despise a form.

By others, a want of time is urged as an excuse for the neglect. Is not this a most awful admission for a

Christian parent? It is certainly a confession, that he has allowed the world so completely to engross the day, as not to have half an hour to spare for the worship of God. No time to bring down the blessing of God upon his household! Will God allow such an excuse to be valid? If not, should we? All we can say in this case is, that if there be no time, there ought to be, and by order and good arrangement there might be.

A more serious objection is advanced by others, and that is the unwillingness of grown up children, perhaps, of a still more influential opposer, a wife. Such cases have occurred, but not often, for it is but rarely that a wife and mother can be so desperately fixed in her enmity to religion, as to despise and oppose a husband's blessing on her children. Nor is it frequently the case, that children are so audaciously wicked, or so habituated to the chair of the scorner, as to scoff at a father's benediction. Besides, if this be the case, still you are the head of the family, and are to bear rule in the household over which Providence has placed you. An inflexible determination to adopt the practice and persevere in it, maintained by gentleness, will subdue opposition, and in some instances conciliate regard. It is the wavering and irresolute, the timid and the yielding, that will find the difficulty insuperable. As long as a single member of the family can be induced to join with him in this holy service, a good man should never allow himself to discontinue it. But O, what consistency should there be in the conduct of such an individual, that no part of his conduct may add to the objection which is taken against this incumbent duty!

A question may be put as to the duty of females in

this respect. Where the husband is dead, the obligation of course devolves upon the widow with its full weight. Should the husband, however, be still living, and indisposed to the duty, the wife by his permission, may lead the devotions of the household in his presence; or in the case of his refusal, she should, if she can gain opportunity, collect her children and her female servants in her apartment, and make supplication for and with them to God. It is greatly to be apprehended, that in many families where the duty is regularly maintained when the husband is at home, it is always neglected when he is away, even in those cases where the wife is a professor of religion. The fire on the domestic altar should never be allowed to expire, nor the sacrifice to be neglected; and in the absence of the husband, the wife should act the part of a priestess, and conduct the ceremony.

Permit us, dear brethren, now to ask you with faithful love, the solemn question, is family devotion kept up by you, or are yours the atheistic households, which being without prayer, are without God in the world? You are perhaps kind to your children, just to your servants, hospitable to your friends, attached to your ministers, loyal to your king, patriotic to your country; but you are not forgetful of your God? Is not He, your creator, preserver, and benefactor, the giver of your mercies, and the source from whom all future blessings must flow, that only Being whose claims are denied? Alas, that He should be selected to be the only object of neglect, who deserves and demands to be the first whose interests should be consulted, and whose favours should be sought. How affecting, that He, your Heavenly Father, should be

the only one who is denied an entrance to your habitation, though he asks it. "Behold, (says He) I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." Amazing condescension that he should, as it were, stand waiting and asking in the street, to be admitted to your family! Folly and wickedness more amazing still, if possible, that he should be denied an entrance! Open the doors we entreat you; admit the Divine Guest; welcome the King of kings to your house; humble yourself before him that you have so long kept him without; and from this day be found regularly and devoutly at his feet with the offerings of your lips, the sacrifice of prayer and praise.

It will require some exertion of moral resolution and decision, to begin the neglected practice. But wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen your heart. Scruple not to confess before your households your sin and sorrow for so long omitting a duty so incumbent; and boldly declare your purpose to supply the guilty defect for the future. If, however, one feels it to be an insurmountable difficulty to commence the service himself, his minister and pastor will gladly preside at the performance of the first act, and address his household on the subject.

And as to you, dear brethren, who do not wholly neglect this duty, bear with us if we ask you whether the service is performed with the regularity, fervour, and attractiveness, which its solemnity and importance demand? Are you, indeed, the pastors of your households, watching for their souls as those that must give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief? Are your children growing up, and your ser-

vants living, in the element of piety, and breathing in your house the atmosphere of devotion? Do they see religion in your character, hear it in your prayers, feel it in your conduct to them, and begin to love it for your sakes even before they are attached to it on its own account? How do you spend your sabbaths, or at least that portion of them which is spent in your own houses? You attend perhaps but twice at the sanctuary, how is the other portion of the day employed? Are you found, as your pious forefathers were, in the midst of the little circle, with the Bible and the catechism, training up your children in the fear and nurture and admonition of the Lord; rendering religion plain to their understandings by the familiarity of your explanations; attractive to their hearts by the sweet and gentle tone of your address; and so captivating to their imagination by the union of christian sanctity and parental love, that the recollections of these seasons in after life shall check them in their wanderings, and even recall them to the path of virtue? O, where are those lovely scenes of domestic piety fled, scenes that wherever they exist melt even the frozen heart of infidelity to transient sympathy, and extort from the charmed lips of the profane an echo of the admiration, that once ravished the soul of the wicked prophet: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. As the valleys are spread forth as gardens by the river side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."

Christian professors, we beseech you to consider the importance of a right domestic improvement of your sabbath. Let all the arrangements of that hallowed day be in strict harmony with its sacred design. If on

returning from the house of God, an instant transition be made from the solemn themes of the sermons, to the most trifling topics of the day; or if instead of speaking well and profitably of these discourses, jocular remarks or contemptuous criticisms be made upon them, what respect for the preacher, or what interest in his labours can be expected on the part of the children and the servants.

We would here remark, that the sabbath, though observed as a holy day, should not be made a sorrowful one in the tabernacles of the righteous. Instead of sepulchral gloom, there should be the sunshine of joyous countenances; and instead of spectral silence, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; instead of making the Bible a book of characters, awful and portentous as those emblazoned on the walls of Belshazzar's palace by the mystic hand, it should be represented as the most entertaining as well as most solemn book in the world. And here we recommend to parents the purchase of a work now publishing, called "The Pictorial Bible," intended to illustrate by cuts and notes, the geography, natural history, and customs alluded to in the sacred records, which are all in their place and degree important, and make the word of God an interesting study for youth.

Mothers, we would affectionately admonish you. The religious character of your children depend, perhaps, under God, more upon you, than upon your husbands, for these obvious reasons; as a general principle it is true, that children are more tenderly attached to the mother than to the father, and there is a plastic power in love, to soften the heart and mould the character: and besides this, your children are a great deal more

with you, at that period of life, when the character is first and most permanently formed, than they are with the father. O, use your influence well, and to do this, use it in the way of endeavouring to form the mind of your children to the love of Christ and fear of God. Millions have blessed God on earth, and will prolong the praise in heaven and through eternity, for a pious mother. Mothers next to ministers have been the chief instruments of God, in building up the church.

In conclusion, dear brethren, we direct your views forward to the last great day of universal account, and eternal doom, when parents and children must meet each other at the bar of God. In what a light, and with what feelings, will a prayerless father appear in that awful scene! How will he endure to hear his own offspring become his accusers, and bear testimony against him; and with accents, envenomed by the sting of the curse which they begin to feel, reproach him as at once the instrument of their being, and the occasion of their ruin? And then, oh! then the eternity that follows! but imagination fails.

Turn to a brighter scene, the present privileges and future happiness of a pious household. Such a family is blessed upon earth; it is the abode of piety and peace, where the ties of nature are strengthened and softened by grace, and they who are thus doubly united, love each other more because of their mutual love to God. Such a dwelling has in it the ark of the covenant: "And the Lord will bless it, and all that pertain to it, because of the ark of the Lord." Such a house stands near to heaven: on its lintel and the posts of its doors, is the sprinkled blood of the slain Lamb: and when the destroying angels are abroad in the land, they see the

life-ensuring signal, and pass on. Angels of light that minister to the heirs of salvation, encamp around the dwelling; and He who is the angels' Lord, the watchful shepherd that never slumbers or sleeps, is there. But follow that family to its last, its heavenly, its eternal home, in the mansions of glory, the "Father's House," above. Affliction had, sometimes, united it in a fellowship of tears upon earth, and death sent its members one after another to the silent abode of the grave, till, perhaps, one solitary mourner alone survived to tell the story of his family, and to read in the memorials of the dead, the prophetic characters of his own approaching end, but even he, as he stood in solitude by the tomb of his kindred, uttered the triumph of faith, "not lost, but gone before." And soon were his anticipations realised, he too died, and there they are, met on that happy shore which death never invades. O thrice happy family! You have ascended from the domestic altar to the heavenly temple, and from the throne of grace to the throne of glory. The cherubim and seraphim are around you, the spirits of just men made perfect are with you, and God overshadows you and fills you with all his fulness. For this you prayed and sought, and longed and waited. You have met in heaven, eternity is before you, you will never part, and go no more out for ever.

Commending you to God and to the word of his grace, and praying that your families may thus meet in heaven,

We remain, dear Brethren,

Yours &c.

**THE WIDOW DIRECTED TO
THE
WIDOW'S GOD.**

“LET THY WIDOWS TRUST IN ME.”

VOL. 12

X

PREFACE.

One of the errands on which the Son of God came from heaven to earth, was to bind up the broken-hearted and to comfort all that mourn: and during his sojourn upon earth, the tenderest sympathy was one of the virtues which adorned that holy nature, in which dwelt, as in its temple, "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Like their Divine Master, the ministers of the gospel ought to be sons of consolation, and to perform the functions of a comforter, as well as those of an instructor: for if pure and undefiled religion, as regards the professors of Christianity, consists, in part, of visiting the widow and fatherless in their affliction, how much more incumbent is it on its teachers, to cherish and to manifest the same tenderness of spirit towards this deeply suffering portion of the human family. A group of children gathered round a widowed mother, and sobbing out their sorrows, as she repeats to them, amidst many tears, their father's loved and honoured name, is one of those pictures of woe, on which few can look with an unmoistened eye.

Is it not strange, then, that with claims upon our sympathy, so strong and so generally acknowledged,

such mourners should have engaged no pious author to produce a separate treatise for their relief? That while the department of hortatory theology is so rich in its stores of consolation for the afflicted in general, the widow should have had no tribute of sympathy specially prepared to meet her sad case? At least I know of none. Popular treatises of inestimable value, such as Cecil's "Friendly Visit to the House of Mourning;" Grosvenor's "Mourner Comforted;" and Hill's "Faith's Estimate of Afflictive Dispensations," published by the Religious Tract Society, under the title "It is Well;" are known by thousands to their consolation, and are, of course, as appropriate to the widow as to any other of the varieties of mourners; but she needs a special message of comfort from her Lord; a voice which speaks to her case alone; a strain of consolation, which, in its descriptions and condolence, is appropriate, and exclusively so, to her. As it is the peculiarity of our sorrows which often gives them their depth and pungency; so it is the peculiarity of sympathy also which gives to this cordial for a fainting spirit, its balmy and reviving power. Affliction, like bodily disease, has numerous varieties; and comfort, like medicine, derives its efficacy from its suitableness to the case.

In Dr. Adam Thompson's "Consolations for Christian Mourners," there are two excellent sermons addressed to widows; but these constitute no exception to the statement, that there is no separate work for such mourners. May the present attempt, specially addressed to them, by one who knows by experience the value of the considerations he submits to others, who has been called in time past to weep, and is now trembling and

weeping again, be blessed by the God of all consolation, for their comfort.

The following work is written with great simplicity in sentiment and style: for it would be a mockery of woe to approach it with far-fetched subjects, recondite discussion, cold logic, or artificial rhetoric. The bruised heart requires the gentlest handling, and the troubled spirit is soothed with the simplest music. The soul has no inclination, at such times, and in such circumstances, for any thing but the "sincere milk of the word," leaving the strong meat for other and healthier seasons.

J. A. J.

March 9th, 1841.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE origin of this work can be related with greater propriety in this edition than in the former one. The mournful bereavement which I was then anticipating, has since fallen upon me, and it may now be told, that the present volume owes its existence to the suggestion of that sainted woman whom God has raised to her eternal rest. She had passed through the desolation and deep sorrows of widowhood; she had felt the need, and had experienced the power, of the consolations here offered to the riven heart; and though the season of her solitariness passed over, and, to my great felicity, she again became a wife, yet at the distance of twenty-four years, "remembering her affliction, the wormwood, and the gall," of her desolate state, she was tenderly concerned for the comfort of those who were called to drink the widow's bitter cup, and wished me to prepare a work for their consolation. By some means which I do not now exactly recollect, the execution of her wishes was delayed till her own long illness came upon her; and during some of the last months of her earthly sojourn, as much of my time as could be spared from my official

engagements was divided between the sacred and solemn fellowship of her dying chamber, and the preparation of these sheets for the press. It was one of her last earthly desires to see the work completed before she departed, and she was almost impatient at the slowness of its progress. At length, the first copy which came from the binder's hands, was carried to her upon her sick-bed, which she received with tears of joy, and after the first emotions had subsided, she looked up to God with devout thankfulness that her husband had accomplished her desires, and with fervent prayer that the book might be blessed for the consolation of that class of mourners for whom it had been written. She afterwards perused it, I believe, with great pleasure, and again and again referred with delight to the comfort she hoped it would impart to many a lorn, sad heart. Finding, as I do, a melancholy enjoyment in honouring her precious memory, I tell this secret, that others may honour it also, and join with me in blessing God for her existence. If any shall wonder how, in my then circumstances, I could trust myself with such a theme, when in depicting the sorrows of others, I was anticipating by the description my own; they may find the solution in a wish to gratify, at any cost of feeling, one whose wishes were the more sacred as the time drew nigh when they would cease to be expressed for ever. Moreover, if I were thus looking upon the dark shadow which the coming event cast before it, I was, at the same time, rendering my mind familiar with those sources of consolation, to which I was so soon to find it necessary to repair. To them I have repaired, and add my humble testimony to the love, power, and faithful-

ness of God in supporting his people under the heaviest weight of affliction: and if it be any recommendatiou of the counsels and the comforts of the following pages, I can truly say, I have tried them, and found them sufficient.

J. A. J.

Edgbaston, October. 1842.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

SYMPATHY.

A WIDOW! What a desolate name! If there be one amidst the crowd of mourners that tread the vale of tears, who above all others claims our sympathy and receives it, it is you who have laid down the endearing appellation of wife, to take up that of widow. It would be a mockery of your woe to say, "Woman, why weepest thou?" You may weep, you must, you ought. You are placed by Providence in the region of sorrow, and tears befit your condition. Let them flow, and mine shall flow with them, for if it be ever our duty to weep with those that weep, it is when the widow is before us. The death-bed scene is still fresh in your recollection; the parting look, the last embrace, are still present to your imagination. And oh! the sense of loss that presses like a dead weight upon your spirit, and converts this whole busy world around you into one vast wilderness. You have my tenderest condolence. The closest tie which bound you to earth has been severed. It seems to you as if there were nothing left for you to do upon earth but to weep. The husband's

much-loved image, if it hang not upon the wall, silent and motionless, is drawn upon the heart, for the imagination to gaze upon, and to remind you of your desolation. He whose absence but for a week or a day created an uneasiness which nothing could relieve but his return, is gone, not for a day, or a week, or a year, but, for ever. He is never to come back to gladden the heart of his wife, and to bless his household.

It has been finely observed

“That the loss of a friend, (and much more the loss of a husband,) upon whom the heart was fixed, to whom every wish and endearment tended, is a state of dreary desolation, on which the mind looks abroad impatient of itself, and finds nothing but emptiness and horror. The blameless life, the artless tenderness, the pious simplicity, the modest resignation, the patient sickness, and the quiet death, are remembered only to add value to the loss, to aggravate regret for what cannot be amended, to deepen sorrow for what cannot be recalled. Other evils, fortitude may repel, or hope may mitigate, but irreparable privation leaves nothing to exercise resolution, or flatter expectation. The dead cannot return, and nothing is left us here but languishment and grief.”*

But it is not merely the loss of such a friend you have to mourn, but probably the means of your comfortable sustenance. Your husband provided your support and that of your babes. When he died all your prospects faded. The sun of your prosperity set upon his grave. Even when an ample fortune is left, it is a poor substitute for that friend whose decease covered the earth with sackcloth, and spread a pall over every terrestrial scene; but what an aggravation of woe, what a dreariness is added to desolation, when the spectres of poverty and want, or even the dark portents of care and privation, rise from a husband's grave! Perhaps even his labour, and skill, and patient

* Dr. Thompson's *Consolations for Mourners*, p. 119.

perseverance, were but just sufficient to support the family; and what is a widow, unused perhaps to business, and untrained to hardship, to do alone?

“It is,” says Mr Bruce, “the climax of human sorrow, when the wife of youth is left to mourn the loss of an affectionate husband, at the time when his well-formed schemes were advancing to maturity; so that, in addition to the care of providing for her rising offspring, some of whom never learned to lisp the name of father, she has to struggle with difficulties, which his sagacity and perseverance might have overcome.”

Nor is it only the want of support, afflicted woman, you dread for yourself and your children, but the want of protection. You have seen enough of the world to know how selfishness prevails over benevolence, and how little disinterestedness is to be expected from that multitude, in which are to be found so many who oppress the weak, and so many more that neglect the friendless. A thousand fears of insult and injury rise in your perturbed mind, and you feel as if the tear of the widow, and the cry of the fatherless, will have little power to interest the busy, and to melt the iron heart of the unjust. Already, perhaps, you think you have received significant hints, not to be mistaken, even from the friends of your husband, that your expectations, even of counsel and advice, much more of other kinds of assistance, must be very limited. It is possible, however, that sorrow, solicitude, and dependence, may have produced a sensitiveness on this subject, which makes you more suspicious and mistrustful than you have need to be; and that after all, there is a larger portion of sympathy and generous intention than you may be led to suppose.

To the widow of the departed Christian, there is another ingredient in the cup of her sorrow, another

aggravation of the loss she has sustained, and that is, she is deprived of her own spiritual comforter and companion; and if she be a mother, of the religious instructor and guide of her children. He that was at once the king, the prophet, and the priest, of the little domestic community, is removed. How tenderly did he solve her doubts, relieve her perplexities, and comfort her in her sorrows! How sweet was it to take counsel with him on the things of another world, and to walk to the house of God in company! What sabbaths they spent, and what sacramental seasons they enjoyed, together! And then his nightly and morning sacrifice at the domestic altar; his fervent prayers and his pious breathings for his family: but that tongue is now silent in the grave: those holy hands are now no more lifted up to bless the household: that mild sceptre of paternal rule has dropped. Even he, good man, felt a dread and a trembling which sometimes almost overcame his faith and trust, as he lay upon his death-bed, and anticipated the hour when he should leave his children amidst the snares and temptations of this dangerous world. I do not wonder that you, his sad survivor, should feel your great responsibility, as you look round on the bereaved circle, and remember that those young immortals are left to your sole guidance and guardianship. Often you say, as the tears roll down your cheeks, "It is not merely, nor chiefly, the care of their bodies, nor the culture of their minds, that makes me feel my sad privation, but the interests of their souls. I could eat my bread, if it were only bread, and drink my cup of cold water, and deal out bread and water to them with tolerable composure, if I could well discharge the duty I owe to their souls, and

see them following their sainted parent to the skies: but, oh! the thought that my boys have lost a father to guide them along the slippery paths of youth, and form their character for time and eternity too; and that at a season when his instructive example and advice were most needed: this is the wormwood and gall of a widow's cup."

Afflicted woman, if sympathy be a balm for the wounds of your lacerated heart, you have it. Bad as human nature is, it is not so entirely bereft of the "whatsoever things are lovely," as not to condole with you. It is not yours to reproach, in the language of holy writ, the insensibility of a whole generation, and say, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by: come see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me." This little volume, at any rate, comes to you as a comforter and a counsellor. One individual has thought upon you; and as a minister of Him who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who restored to the widow of Nain her son, when she was following him with a heart half broken to the grave, he comes with more than human sympathy or earthly consolation. It is a balm from heaven he brings, and a divine medicine for your sick and sorrowful heart. It is Christianity, in the person of one of its ministers, that presents the cup of peace. O turn not away from it, nor refuse to be comforted. Hush then the clamour of tumultuous thoughts; calm the perturbations of your troubled spirit; for the voice of the Comforter can be heard only in the silence of submission. Yes, even your grief is susceptible of alleviation. I cannot break open the tomb to undo the work of death, and re-animate and restore the dust which lies

sleeping there: I cannot replace by your side the dear companion that has been torn from it: but I can suggest topics, which, if you can sufficiently control your feelings to ponder them, are of such a nature, so soothing and sustaining, that they will pluck the sting from your affliction, and enable you, by God's grace, to bear up with fortitude under a load, which would otherwise crush you to the earth. I am anxious at once to possess you with the idea, that you ought not to be, and need not be, inconsolable. Tenderly as I feel for you, and anxious as I am not to handle roughly the wounds which have been inflicted upon your peace, still "I must remind you that you are not authorised to indulge yourself in an unlimited liberty of grief; nor to justify such an excess, by affirming that you do well to be sorrowful even unto death. I beseech then your agitated heart to listen to the gracious words of Him of whom it is so beautifully said, "He comforteth those that ere cast down." In His name I speak to you; and I speak of that which I have tasted and felt of the Word of God. I too have been afflicted like yourself, and have known, not by observation merely, but by experience, what a desolation and blank one single death can make in the garden of earthly joys; and where in that hour of dreariness and woe, the lonely spirit may find a refuge and a home.

CHAPTER II.
SUBMISSION.

“BE still, and know that I am God.” Such is the admonition which comes to you; and which comes to you from heaven. It is God himself who has bereaved you, through whatever second causes he has inflicted the blow. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge, much less a rational and immortal creature. He has the keys of death, and never for a moment trusts them out of his hand: the door of the sepulchre is never unlocked but by himself. Though men die, and drop as unheeded by many as the fall of the autumnal leaf in the pathless desert, they die not by chance. Every instance of mortality, that for example which has reduced you to your present sorrowful condition, is a separate decision of infinite wisdom. Whether, therefore, the death of your husband was slow or sudden; at home or abroad; by accident or disease; it was appointed, and all its circumstances arranged by God. “Be still, therefore, and know that he is God; who doeth his will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of earth: nor allows any one to say to him, What doest thou?” Bow down before him with unqualified submission, and find relief in acquiescence.

But what is submission to God? It is not a stoical apathy, a state of mind that scorns to feel; a proud refusal to pay the tribute of a tear to nature's God, when he demands it. No: chastened grief is allowed, is called for. Sorrow is one of the natural affections of the soul, not to be uprooted, but cultivated. If we did not feel our losses, we should not be the better for them. Gentle and well directed grief softens our hard hearts, and prepares them for the impression of divine truth, just as showers in spring mollify the ground, and meeten it for the reception of the seed, and the process of germination. But then you must repress inordinate grief. Submission to the will of God, while it allows reasonable sorrow, forbids that which is excessive. Give not yourselves up to sorrow. All passionate distress, such as shuts out consolation, and refuses to be comforted, is high rebellion against the will of heaven. It is at once irreligious and unreasonable. It is more, it is destructive, for it is "the sorrow of the world that worketh death." Your health is now doubly precious, and your life doubly desirable, for the sake of your children. You alone have now to care for them, perhaps, to provide for them; and it is immensely important not to waste that strength and energy in consuming sorrow, which is necessary for their welfare. Excessive grief will not only unfit you for exertion, but it will incapacitate you from deriving any improvement from the stroke. The voice and lessons of God's providence will be unheeded, yea unheard, amidst the noise of your tumultuous sorrows. Restrain your feelings. Call in reason, and especially religion, to your assistance.

Submission forbids all passionate invective; all re-

bellious language; all bitter reflections on second causes; and all questionings about the wisdom, goodness, or equity of Providence. "I was dumb," said the Psalmist, "I opened not my mouth;" there is submission: "because Thou didst it;" there is the ground of it. It is said of Aaron, when both his sons were struck dead before the Lord, he "held his peace." It was not the silence of stupor, or of stubbornness, but of submission. How striking is the commendation passed upon Job, when it is said, in reference to his behaviour under his complicated losses, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." He said nothing irreverend, or rebellious against God. But it is equally incumbent upon you, in order to the performance of this duty, that you should not only suppress all murmuring and complaining language, but all thoughts and feelings of this kind. If, while the tongue is silent, the heart is full of rebellion, there is no acquiescence. Many who would be afraid or ashamed to give utterance to their feelings of insubordination, still continue to indulge them. The abstinence from murmuring and repining words, then, is not submission, unless the heart be still. We must not contend with God, nor fight against Providence within the breast, for "he searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men." Submission is that state of the soul under afflictive dispensations of Providence, which produces an acquiescence in the will of God, as just, and wise, and good. It expresses itself in some such manner as the following; "I feel and deeply feel the heavy loss I have sustained, and nature mourns and weeps; but as I am persuaded it is the Lord's doing, who has a right to do as he pleases,

and who is at the same time too wise to mistake, and too benevolent to put me to unnecessary pain, I endeavour to bow down to his will."

Such is submission; but how difficult! How hard the duty to acquiesce in an event, which has reduced you to such a state of desolation that earth seems to have lost its principal charms. Difficult, my afflicted friend, it is, but not impossible. All things are possible with God, and what you cannot do in your own strength, you can in His. Multitudes have submitted, whose loss was as great, whose prospects were as gloomy as yours. I have heard the language, I have seen the conduct, of submission in widow's houses, and have admired the grace of God, as manifested in such persons, and in such circumstances. That grace is sufficient for you. Do not make up your mind that submission is impossible for you; on the contrary, be persuaded that it may, by God's help, become your privilege, as it unquestionably is your duty, to exercise it. Pray for it. Let this be the burden of your supplication to God, but let it be presented in faith,

"O Lord, my best desires fulfil,
And help me to resign,
Life, health, and [husband,] to Thy will,
And make Thy pleasure mine."

In bringing you and others to this state of mind, God employs motives; he places certain truths and sentiments before the mind of the afflicted, and enables them to contemplate these principles with such fixed attention, as to admit their reasonableness and force, and under their soothing and powerful influence to suppress the murmur, and hush every complaint to silence. Some of these I now present to your notice.

1. Consider God's indubitable and unlimited right to take from you the dear companion of your life.

Are we not all his creatures, over whom he has an absolute and irresponsible control? Has he acted the part of a ruthless invader of your domicile, and committed an aggression, which he can as little justify, as you could resist? Is it an unauthorised spoliation? No. Painful as it is to you, it was not an unrighteous act in him. Shall he not do as he will with his own? You received your husband, if you received him with right views, rather as a loan, than an absolute gift; as a favour lent to be recalled at any time, when the donor thought proper to do so. And now he has demanded it back again. Hearken to his expostulation; "Woman, I do you no wrong, in asking for what belongs to me. Have I deceived you? Did I ever renounce my right, or promise to forego my claim; or even intimate that I would not urge it, till you had arrived at extreme old age? cBe still, and know that I am God." Do not then contend with God. Yield to his sovereign will. Submit to his disposal.

2. But this perhaps will be thought by some like vinegar to a festering wound; and it will be felt as a harsh and feeble motive to submission, to tell a mourning widow that God had a right to take from her the desire of her eyes. "Oh!" she is ready to exclaim, "Is this all you can say to me?" No; but it is the basis of every thing else: and even this is said rather to awe the rebellious thoughts, to keep in check the turbulent feelings, in order that silence and calmness being obtained, softer and sweeter accents may be listened to. Think then of his unerring wisdom. He cannot mistake. He does nothing at random, nothing in haste,

nothing in ignorance. "He is wise in heart:" and his understanding is infinite. He worketh all things after the counsel of his will. He fills every thing with the product of his all-wise mind; yes, even your bitter cup of sorrow. "Verily he is a God that hideth himself," but it is in the secret place of his infallible wisdom. "His judgments are a great deep," but it is a depth of unfathomable knowledge. There is some wise end to be answered; some object worthy of himself to be accomplished, in your bereavement. He may not, and will not perhaps, reveal it to you now, for reasons which he could justify: but if it were proper or possible for you to know it, you would exclaim, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." If you could see the wisdom of his plans, and it were then left to your choice to take back your husband from the grave, you would not dare to do it, on account of the disarrangement and disorder which you would see must ensue. Have you not sometimes taken something from your children without assigning any reason, or explaining to them what it would be improper for them to know, or impossible for them to comprehend, and required them to confide in your known prudence? Is it too much for God to expect this confidence from you? He is wise: confide in his wisdom. The moment your thoughts are rising into rebellion, or sinking into despondency, repeat the short, the simple, but the potent sentiment, "God has done it, and God is wise."

3. Nor is this all: for God is good. His name is Love. His wisdom is employed to fulfil the purposes of benevolence. He is concerned for the happiness of

his creatures. "He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He takes no pleasure in the tears and groans of his offspring, any more than earthly parents do; but like them, he often sees it necessary to call for their tears. Did you never exercise your kindness in taking from the hand of a child that which the babe would not surrender without weeping? Divine goodness, when it is clearly understood in all its schemes and motives, will be as clearly demonstrated in what it takes, as in what it gives. Add these two ideas together, infinite goodness and infinite wisdom. Apply them both to God: believe that they really belong to him, and that they were both concerned in your affliction, and then murmur if you can. Did we really believe in the doctrine of Providence, and that he who superintends its administration, unites to an arm of omnipotence, a mind of infinite knowledge, and a heart of boundless love, submission would be easy. Is the sepulchre of a husband the only place where his wisdom and love may be doubted? Are these glorious attributes dead and buried in the grave of that beloved one whom you have lost? It is nothing that you cannot understand how your present melancholy circumstances can comport with love: your children often found it as difficult to harmonise your conduct with love; but now they are arrived at manhood, they clearly comprehend it, and admire the judicious kindness with which your treatment of them was replete. The time of weeping and suffering, and with it the time of ignorance, has passed away, and now your parental character stands justified before them. So shall it be with you; when you have reached your maturity in heaven, you will see the goodness of God which was contained even in these painful dispensations

of Providence, under which you now so bitterly suffer. Yes, God is good; do not doubt it. Every attribute of God's nature is a motive to submission; every view we can take of that nature, and our relations to him, is a reason why we should acquiesce in what he does. It is only when out of sight of him, that we can indulge in rebellious murmuring, and refractory resistance to his will; the moment we come back into his awful presence, and realise him as near, we feel subdued.

4. But the foundation of this state of mind is laid, not only in considering what God is, but what we are. Murmuring and complaining have their origin in ignorance or forgetfulness of our sinful condition. None can truly submit to affliction which they do not feel they have deserved. The heroine of what has been called one of the purest of our tragedies, a widow, is made to say, in the bitterness and pressure of her[^] griefs, "Gracious heaven, what have I done, to merit such afflictions?" As long as you have such an opinion of yourself, there is, there can be, no submission. The very idea that we do not deserve it, is rebellion against the will of heaven, and will inevitably lead to the most unholy and unchastised sorrow. It is only when we enter into the words of the Psalmist that we shall give up our murmurings and repinings, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." How meekly does uhe prophet submit to the chastening hand of God, under the subduing power of this one thought, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." "Wherefore should a man complain, a living man for the punishment of his sins." Oh, sufferer, take this view of your case, and consider yourself a sinner. Call

to recollection what sin is, an infinite evil, and deserving of an infinite punishment; an evil that might have long since consigned you to the abodes of interminable misery. Dwell upon the number, the aggravations, and the repetitions of your sins. Among other sins, perhaps, you may mention your ingratitude for, and improvement of, the mercy you have lost. You made your husband your God, inasmuch as you loved him more than God: and can you wonder that he is removed? "It is of the Lord's mercies that you are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Dare you murmur, since you have only the rod, when you might have had the curse? Does the language of complaint become those lips, which might have been pouring forth the petition for a drop of water to cool your parched tongue? I deny not the reality or the weight of your affliction: I do not insult your griefs by affirming that there is no cause for them. I admit you may justly go mourning all your days; but then I contend it is a powerful motive to submit, to consider that you might have been tormented through all eternity: and that nothing has a more powerful tendency to check the excess of sorrow, than the consideration that your sins have justly merited all you have suffered, ever will, or ever can suffer, on earth.

5. But I may also mention that one of the great ends of Providence in sending the affliction, is to bring you into a state of submission. Perhaps you have never yielded your heart to God. God spake to you in your prosperity, and you would not hear. You have tried to be independent of God. You have lived for yourself, and not for God. You have never yet taken his yoke upon you. In the days of your abundance you yielded

not your heart to him; and now he is calling you to yield to him in the time of your straits. As you would not submit to him amidst the joys of the married state, he has placed you in widowhood, and calls for submission there. "Surely she will resign herself to me now," is perhaps his declaration and expectation. How much is he set on producing this state of mind in you, when he takes such methods to accomplish it. Shall his end be defeated? Will you resist now? Will you carry on the conflict in your weeds? What, not yield now, broken, disappointed, forlorn, as you are? Will you be rebellious, not only in sight of the flowing fountain, but amidst the wreck and fragments of the broken cisterns; and contend against God, like Jonah, not only beneath the shade of the green and flourishing gourd, but before the naked stem of the blighted and withered one? Oh woman, submit to God, it is for this he has driven thee into the wilderness like Hagar of old, and mayest thou, like her, cease the conflict there, and say, "Thou God seest me. Here also have I looked after him who seeth me."

6. Among the motives to submission should be placed a due regard to your own comfort. It has been beautifully said, that the wild bird, yet untamed and unaccustomed to confinement, beats itself almost to death against the wires of its cage, while the tame prisoner quietly acquiesces, and relieves its solitude by a song: an apt illustration of the soothing influence of submission. No possible relief, but a certain and great addition to the calamity, is gained by mourning and repining. It is a vain and useless thing, as well as a sinful one. It is of itself a deep affliction, a sad discomposure of spirit, a fever of the heart, a delirium of

the soul, and is so much added to the weight of the original trouble. But resignation to the dispensations of God's providence, what a blessed anodyne is this to the soul; what a sabbath from all those sinful disturbances which discompose our spirits; it is a lower heaven; a green and sunny spot in the region of gloom and desolation: for as in the state of glory there is an unchangeable agreement between the will of the Creator and of the creature, so according to the measure wherein we conform our wills to God's, even here, we now proportionably enjoy the holiness and blessedness of that state. Daughter of sorrow, since you can no longer enjoy the pleasures of possession, seek the comfort of submission. Extract by resignation the few drops of cordial, which even your worm-wood and gall contain. Forbidden any longer to enjoy the sweetness of gratitude for the retention of the boon, open your mind to the tranquillising comfort of surrendering it to God. Mollify the wounds of your lacerated heart with the balm of acquiescence, and do not inflame them with the uncontrolled grief of a rebellious spirit. Try the effect of those few sweet words, "Father! not my will, but thine be done." They will be like the voice of Christ to the winds and waves of the stormy lake: or like heavenly music to the troubled mind. There is no relief but in unqualified submission, and there is relief in that.

7. Perhaps you are a professor of religion, and ought to find in that another and a powerful motive to this frame of mind. You profess to believe in God through Christ, and to consider Him as the author of all your trials, as well as of all your comforts; to view Him as your Father; to be assured that He loves you too well

to do you any harm; to be confident that He is making all things work together for your good. Now then let us see the blessed influence of your faith. Let us behold in you the tranquillising power of your principles. Should you sorrow as do others? Should you appear as uncontrollable in your grief as those who know not God. A day or two since I visited a widow, whose husband had been killed by being overturned in a carriage. I found her, as might be expected, deeply afflicted; but it was grief kept within due bounds by the controlling power of eminent piety, as dignified as it was deep; and there were circumstances, too, eminently calculated to produce a complicated sorrow. Her calm, though affecting distress, attracted the attention of a lady whose brother's death had been awfully sudden. "Ah," she exclaimed to my bereaved friend, "how differently did my sister-in-law act to what you have done. But your composure is the effect of religion. I see now the power of religion." Be it your study to exhibit the same power, and to draw forth the same testimony. Glorify God in the fire. Let it be your prayer that your religion may shine forth in all its lustre, and manifest itself in all its glory. Let it be one of your consolations to be enabled to do honour to the truth and grace of God in your support. Think what an effect a contrary spirit will have upon those who observe it. How many widows making a profession of religion, have by the violence of their grief astonished the observers of their conduct. It was not a scene or a season in which to utter the language of reproach, but who could help saying to themselves, (though delicacy kept them from saying so to the suf-

erer,) "Where, in all this tumult of the soul and excessive grief, is their religion? Is there no help for them in God? We expected a calmer sorrow from a Christian. She does not much commend religion to us."

8. Some of you may contrast your circumstances with those of others around you. Wrap not your weeds about you, and say, "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" Is there? Yes; and far greater. You have lost a good husband; but perhaps you have a comfortable support for yourself and your children; there goes a poor widow who has lost her support, as well as her husband. You are left with fatherless children, but they are kind and dutiful; there is a widow whose heart, bruised by her loss, is well nigh broken by the unkindness of an undutiful son. Your children are all in health; there is a widow who pours her daily tears over a crippled son, or a consumptive daughter. You are surrounded by a wide circle of sympathising friends; there is a widow, forlorn, alone, and a stranger, in this busy world. Oh! it is well sometimes to compare our sorrows with those of others. What widow that shall read these pages can speak of grief like the following?

"A poor woman, from the north of England, went with her family to seek employment in the parish of St. Mary-la-bone, London. The husband, through fatigue, was attacked with a bilious fever; the disorder soon assumed a very malignant, putrid character, of which he died. Two of the children caught the infection, and died also. The widow was reduced, with her surviving children, to the most deplorable poverty, and seemed on the point of starving. In this situation she was visited by a Christian, who observed an old Bible, with large print, lying on her table. He said, 'I perceive you can read, and have got the best of books by you.' She replied, 'O sir,

what should I have done without it? It is not my own. My eyes are, with illness, anxiety, and tears, too weak for small print: I borrowed this Bible of a neighbour. It has been food to my body as well as to my soul. I have often passed many hours without any nourishment, but I have read this blessed book till I have forgotten my hunger.' Sometime after this the poor woman died, literally worn down and exhausted with want and anxiety; but the night before she expired, the consolations of the Holy Scriptures shone in her countenance. She spoke of her dissolution with a smile of sacred triumph; enumerated her pious ancestors and acquaintance, with whom she trusted shortly to unite in joy and felicity; and seemed, as it were, to feel the saying brought to pass, which is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

Read this, and be still. Read this, and learn, that there is no weight of sorrow under which genuine faith in God's word cannot sustain you.

9. Make another comparison, I mean between your losses and trials as a woman, and your mercies and gains as a Christian. Here, say you, is the grave of my dear husband; there, I say, is the cross, the grave, the throne, of your Redeemer. Here, say you; is his vacant seat at my table, his vacant place at my side, his vacant chair at my hearth; there is God, with his smiling countenance, his heart of love, his covenant of grace, his all-sufficient resources, to fill the void. I have, say you, a weight of woe and care pressing upon my heart, like a dead unsupportable load; but you have not the burden of unpardoned sin, sinking down your soul to the bottomless pit. Here, say you, is my now gloomy house; there, I say, is the house of your God, always inhabited by his gracious presence. Here, say you, I am a forlorn creature upon earth, having lost all that rendered the world delightful; there, I tell you, is heaven glowing like a brilliant firmament over your

head, into which your departed husband has entered, and where you will soon join him in glory everlasting. Think how many widows there are, who have no covenant God to go to; no consolations of the Spirit to sustain them; no pleasure in the Bible or in prayer to soothe them. You, even you, ought to rejoice in a present Saviour and a future heaven. All the attributes of God, all the offices of Christ, all the consolations of the Spirit, all the promises of Scripture, all the blessings of grace, all the prospects of glory remain to be set over against your loss: and is not this enough?

CHAPTER III.

INSTRUCTION.

GOD is the best and only infallible teacher. "None teacheth like him." He delivers his lessons in various ways, and through different mediums. The Scriptures, of course, contain the fullest and clearest revelation of his will; but they are corroborated and illustrated by the works of nature, and the dispensations of Providence. Events are pregnant with instruction. "Hence," said the prophet, "the Lord's voice cometh unto the city: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Yes, every rod, as well as every word, has a voice; and it becomes us to listen to it. Afflicted woman, read the lessons which Providence has inscribed in daric characters on the tomb of your husband. It may be that God is saying to you, "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear; this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice." Taken up with the enjoyment of the dear objects to be found in a quiet and comfortable home, you withheld your heart from God. You neither loved, served, enjoyed, nor glorified him as the end of your existence. Your husband was your idol, the stay and prop of your mind: and now God, who is a jealous God,

and will not endure a rival, has removed the object of that supreme attachment, which ought to have been placed in him; and in language which derives additional weight and solemnity from being uttered over the sepulchre, says, "I am God, and there is none else. Thou shalt have none other God besides me; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and heart, and soul, and strength." This is his demand now, and it always was. It is not only what he says, now in the wilderness into which he has driven you, but what he said when you walked in the Eden of your earthly delight, and felt that your husband was to you as the tree of life in the midst of the garden. Now then open your ear, and hear the voice of his providence. Open your eyes, and read the lessons which, as I have said, are inscribed on that tomb, which contains all that was dearest to you on earth. Desire to learn; be willing to learn; you need to learn much from the sorrowful scenes through which you have been, and still are, called to pass. When God takes such methods to teach, surely you should be willing to learn; and it may be that it is his intention to make up to you, by spiritual instruction and consolation, if you will receive it, the loss he has called you to sustain of temporal comfort.

1. Are you not most impressively reminded of the evil of sin? What could more affectingly illustrate this, than the deep sorrow which has fallen upon you? If the magnitude of an evil may be ascertained by the calamitous nature of its effects, what must sin be, which has produced such consequences as those you have witnessed! What agonies it has inflicted, what ties it has rent asunder, what desolation it has made, what scenes

it has produced, yourself a widowed mother, those helpless, perhaps portionless babes, that gloomy house, those flowing tears, too well proclaim! And what is the cause? Sin. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Yes; death with all its consequences, are the bitter fruits of sin. Had not man sinned he had been immortal. Every instance of death is the infliction of a penalty; for "the wages of sin is death." Think what sin has robbed you of. Calculate the mischief which it has wrought in your desolate abode. What has made you a widow? Sin. What has made your children fatherless? Sin. And think of the millions who are at this moment in similar sad and melancholy circumstances. God is benevolent, and doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; and yet he is perpetually multiplying widows and orphans by the ravages of death. How evil must sin be in his sight, when he takes this method of shewing his abhorrence of it; when he has fixed this penalty to it. And then this is only the first death, a mere type and symbol of that more painful "second death," which falls upon the wicked in another world. Consider then the evil of sin. Take deep, large views of it. Recollect you are a sinner, not vicious indeed, but virtuous; not profligate, but moral; but still a sinner in the sight of God. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Oh have you thought of this? Have you been convinced of sin by the Spirit of God? Have you seen your sinfulness, as well as heard of it? Felt it, as well as known it? Many have thought of their sins, for the first time in their life, with any seriousness, in their afflictions; and have said with the poet:

"Father! I bless thy chastening; hand;
 How kind was thy chastising rod
 That fove'd my conscience to a stand,
 And brought my wandering soul to God.
 Foolish and vain I went astray,
 Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord,
 I left my guide, and lost my way,
 But now I love and keep thy word.
 'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,
 For pride is apt to rise and swell:
 'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,
 That I might learn his statutes well."

If you have thought but little of sin till now, may you begin to think upon it in your affliction. You have lost your husband, but how much greater a calamity would be the loss of your soul; and lost it must be, if you have no just sense of sin. There can be no salvation without pardon; and no pardon without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and no repentance and faith, without the knowledge of sin. Oh! what an unutterable blessing will it prove; what a cause for adoring wonder and gratitude through all time and eternity too, if this grave affliction should prove to be the means of your eternal salvation; and if the death of the dear companion of your life should be overruled for the salvation of your immortal soul. Happy will it be, if led by this event to think of the sinfulness of your heart and conduct in the sight of God, you should be brought, in the character of a true penitent, and real believer, to the foot of the cross. How will a sense of divine pardon soothe your sorrows! How will God's forgiving love comfort your soul! How sweetly will you sing, even while the tear of widowhood is glistening in your eye, and its sable dress is spread over you, "It was good for me that I was afflicted!"

2. Another lesson to be learnt by widowhood, is the vanity of the world, and its insufficiency to make us happy. "Vanity of vanity, said the preacher; all is vanity and vexation of spirit." And you have found it to be so. You have proved that the world, if not an unsatisfying, is at any rate, an uncertain portion. How joyous, till lately, were your circumstances. The purest happiness of an earthly nature is that which springs up in a comfortable home, where there is a cordial union of hearts, as well as a legal union of hands, between man and wife. The tender sympathy, the delicate affection, the minute attentions, the watchful solicitude, the ceaseless offices of conjugal love, are the sweetest ingredients in the cup of life, and contribute a thousand times more to terrestrial enjoyment, than all the possessions of wealth, and all the blandishments of rank, station, and fashion. "With the affection, and health, and company of my husband," exclaims the fond and devoted wife, "I feel nothing wanting to my comfort, and can easily dispense with many things that others consider essential to their enjoyment." Such, perhaps, my mourning reader, was once your happy lot, for such a sharer of your abode had you. Little cause had you to envy the gay or the great; as little to sigh for their access to the party or the rout. To welcome at eventide, when the heat and burden of the day were over, the good man of the house, to his own fireside and to your society, and to feel the honest pride and satisfaction of a wife that he needed no other society to make him happy, this was your nightly joy, for years that flew too fast. Perhaps you thought too much had been said about the vanity of the world, for it was a pleasant world to you, and you were ready to blame

“The Preacher,” and call him ascetic and misanthropic, and reproach him for disturbing the happiness of others by the wailings of his own disappointed heart. But, ah! you too, have at length returned an echo of that sad cry, and said in the bitterness of your spirit, “All is vanity.” Yes, the lovely vision of your domestic bliss has vanished. Death has intruded, and changed the scene. No more returns at the accustomed hour, the joy of your heart, the light of your eyes. His chair is vacant. His place at the fire-side, which knew him once, knows him no more. He is not on a journey. No: he is in the grave, and with him died the world to you. Every thing is now changed; and you too exclaim, “o, vain world, thou hast deceived me. Are all thy flattering smiles, and ample promise, come to this? In one hour I have fallen from the height of happiness, into all the depths of woe. And am I a widow? Yes, and a widow indeed.”

Such then is the world: such all it can do to make you happy. Harken to the language of God, by the prophet; “My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” There are the fragments of the broken cisterns; there the spilled water; there the memorials of fragile comfort, and disappointed hope; and there, hard by, let me add, the blessed contrast, the full and flowing fountain, sending out its never failing streams of pure and living waters. The world has deceived and forsaken you. Now turn to God. You cannot restore the broken cistern, nor gather up the wasted contents: now turn to the fountain. You have settled your heart upon the creature, and it has proved a quicksand; now

settle it on God, "the Rock of Ages." You have leaned upon an arm of flesh, and it has failed you; now trust to the arms of the Omnipotent Spirit. How many, when the first shock of their disappointment was over, and their faculties have recovered from the stunning influence of their loss, have seen the folly, as well as the sin, of trusting for happiness to mortal man, and have turned their weeping, longing, and imploring eye to the eternal God.

And even those who had been previously convinced of the vanity of the world, at least in profession, and had been taught to set their hearts on God, have perhaps forgotten too much their principles and their profession, and trusted for a larger share of their happiness than they ought to have done, to the things that are seen and temporal. Yes, you who are called the people of God, and are such I hope, even you have trusted far more to the world, to the life of your husband, and to your other possessions, for your soul's portion, than was your duty. An earthly-mindedness has crept over you, and damped the ardour of your religious affections. You have sought the day-light of your soul from the smile of a creature, instead of the light of God's countenance; and now the lesser luminary is extinguished, and you are in darkness. Still, however, the greater light remains; the Sun of Righteousness is shining in all his splendour and noon-tide glory; go forth from your gloomy and disconsolate situation into the brightness and warmth of his heart-cheering radiance, and sun yourself in the ardour of his beams.

3. What a lesson does widowhood teach of the power and value of true religion, and that in two ways. First by the influence of it, where it is possessed, in support-

ing the mind and consoling it, amidst sorrows which from any other source know not consolation's name. I appeal to devout and holy women, who have been enabled in the hour of their extremity to cast themselves, by faith prayer and submission, upon God, and to still the tumult of their thoughts and keep down the rising tide of their grief, by the potency of his grace, whether the value of piety ever rose so high in their esteem, as in that moment when they first answered to the name of widow, and felt that they could do it without fainting at the sound. Friends gathered round them in all the tenderness of sympathy, and there was balm in their words, looks, and actions; but, at the same time, each new comer seemed in other respects to open their wounds afresh, and to be a new remembrancer of the loss sustained; it was only when the mourner could get to her Bible, and to her God, in all the power of faith and prayer, that she felt she could be sustained; and then she did feel it. Astonished at her own calmness; at her tranquillity amidst such a wreck, she at first questioned whether it was indifference, stupefaction, or religion. It could not be the first, for she was as sure of her love as she was sure of her existence; nor the second, for she reasoned, reflected, and anticipated; it must therefore, she said, be the last; it must be faith, laying hold of the promise, and staying itself in darkness upon the name of God. It must be the power of God perfecting its might in weakness: the flowing in of grace into a soul, which grace had first made willing and able to receive it. How wondrous must the faith of Abraham have appeared to himself, when he came to reflect on what he had done, or rather what the grace of God had wrought in him, in his willingness to offer

up Isaac. Inferior to this, of course, but analogous to it, has been the surprise of many an afflicted widow at the submission and confidence with which she laid her husband in his sepulchre. What else could have so sustained her, bereft as she was of what gave to earth its chief interest? Let that religion still support you. What it has done, it can do. It has proved to you its reality and its power: still trust it as the anchor of your soul, sure and steadfast. If it prevented you from sinking, when the shock came first upon you, it can do the same through every future stage of your solitary journeying, and every future scene of your now unshared sorrow.

But perhaps your present situation demonstrates the excellency of religion, by another medium of proof, I mean by the want of it. You have not religion, and you have therefore literally nothing to support you. The storm has come, and you are without a shelter. The cup of wormwood and gall is put into your hand, and you have nothing with which to sweeten it. Then, when every thing else fails, turn to this one and only refuge that remains. It opens to you now. You feel that nothing else is of any avail. It is not too late. God waits to be gracious. O let me now sound in your ears the music of our Lord's comfortable words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O mark that, the heavy laden. No matter what may be the burden, whether of sin, or of care, or of sorrow, there is rest from it in Christ. If you look to him by faith to take away the burden of your sin, he will lighten every other load that presses upon your spirit. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the lost, is the Comforter of the distressed. He meets the

natural cry of misery, and goes out to wipe away the tears of sorrow, by the hand of his redeeming mercy. He came to bind up the broken-hearted, and to comfort those that mourn: but he does this in his own way. Many have come to him, led as it seemed by a mere instinctive longing after happiness, and have tried faith in the gospel as a last and almost hopeless experiment, after the failure of every other attempt to obtain consolation. And O! what an unlooked for discovery have they made; they who had found no resting-place in the world, and who had wandered through it in quest of some object, however insignificant, that might divert them from their sorrows, and for a moment at least remove the sense of that hopeless grief which lay dead upon their hearts, found now an object which the widest desires of their soul could not grasp, and of such irresistible power as to turn the current of their feelings: the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. They who had been ready to abandon life, as having no charm, and to embrace death as having no greater terror than their present affliction, now see that even in the absence of that which once threw over their existence its deepest interest, they can find something worth living for, in the pursuit of an eternal joy. While in sorrow and in desolation they went to Jesus for comfort, the Spirit, whose secret but unknown influence guided their steps, opened the eyes of their understandings to discern the path of life, and by the aid of a hope full of immortality, to rise above the ravages of death, and the spoliations of the grave. Thus while, like Mary Magdalene, they were lingering round the sepulchre, the Saviour revealed himself to them, and they dried up their tears in the presence of their Lord. May it be so

with those who shall read these pages. May you in your affliction turn to religion, that grand catholicon and panacea for the sorrows of life. You do not know, even yet, how much you will need it, in the future stages of your sad and solitary journey. The friends whom the freshness of your grief has gathered round you may forget your loss much sooner than you will; and the force of their sympathy may have spent itself long before the tide of your grief has ceased to flow. Few, very few, are the faithful friends whose tender interest is as long lived and as deep as our tribulation. Sympathy wears out long before that which calls it into existence; and then what can comfort you but religion? Venture not forward, without decided and fervent piety. Let your next step from the tomb of a husband, be to the cross of the Saviour.

Take the following instance as at once a direction and an encouragement:

In the course of my pastoral walks among my flock, I one day called upon a young widow, who had become a member of the church under my care since the death of her husband. I found her at her mangle, by which, and by letting a room or two to lodgers, she earned a scanty and precarious support for herself and child. I found her somewhat indisposed, exhausted by labour, and depressed, though not desponding, in consequence of her lodgings being unoccupied, and her work rather short. I entered into conversation with her on her necessitous and afflictive circumstances, when she expressed her strong confidence in God, and her expectation that she should be provided for. She soon reverted to her husband, who had been a consistent member of my flock. Her eulogy upon his memory was in strong

and tender language. She described him as having been one of the kindest and most indulgent of husbands, and implied, of course, that she had been a happy wife: "But," said she, "I can thank the Lord for his death, for in consequence of that sad event, I now hope to be associated with him, in the presence of Christ in heaven." The fact is, the death of her husband was the painful means, in the hands of the Spirit, of her saving conversion to God. In this you see one instance, among many, in which widowhood has been the furnace of affliction, where God has chosen some of his people, and called them to pass through the fiery trial to bring them to himself. The widow whose case I am narrating, by the piety she then obtained, and by the sweet hope of meeting her deceased husband in the laud where there shall be no more death, endured with sorrowful cheerfulness the desolation of widowhood and the rigours of poverty; and she has recently joined her husband, and realised the blessed hope of being "associated with him in the presence of Christ in heaven." For a long time she had nothing to subsist upon but the bounty of the church of which she was a member. Her deportment during her slow decline, exhibited a confidence in God so unshaken, (especially in reference to a delicate only child, which she was leaving without a relative or friend in the world to take care of it,) that many who visited her were almost ready to censure her for expressions too strong, and a hope too assured. That poor widow, out of her scanty pittance, subscribed to two objects; of her pious concern, and upon being remonstrated with by myself, for giving what she could not afford, she exclaimed, "O sir, it is not what we think we can afford to give, but what we ought to give. It is my privilege

to do something for Christ: and I should not be happy, if I were not allowed to do it." What a pattern for richer widows, and what an answer to those who tell us we oppress the poor by asking them to give their penny a week to some benevolent object! Let us all enter deeply into the spirit of this poor dying woman's remark, "It is my privilege to do anything for Christ;" and also into her experience, when she said, "I should not be happy, if I were not allowed to do this." Such a spirit would supersede the necessity of a thousand sermons, and ten thousand speeches, now delivered as appeals to rich, worldly-minded, covetous professors of religion.

What lessons does this little incident teach! What a potency and a heavenly balm are there in true religion; what present and what future advantages does it yield, when it can enable a poor widow to bow, with her fatherless child, at the grave of her departed husband, or in the dreary abode once made happy by his presence and his love, and give God thanks for his removal, because of the eternal felicity that would result to both in heaven, from their early separation upon earth! What an admonition to those who, like that poor woman, have lost pious husbands, while themselves not partakers of true experimental piety! Let them consider the reasoning which is implied in her gratitude; "Had my husband lived, I should have been content with my happiness as a wife, and have sought none from a higher source, and perhaps have lived and died a stranger to true religion. Thus after enjoying his society a few years upon earth, I should have been banished not only from his company, but from the presence of

the Lord for ever: but now since his death was sanctified for my conversion to God, I have lost him for a season, to be with him for ever in glory." O widow, whose husband has left you as hers did, in an unconverted state, let it be your desire prayer and resolution to turn your deep affliction to your soul's advantage. You have lost his life; lose not his death also. He bends to you from the skies, and with accents of faithful love, says to you, "Follow me to heaven. Let us not be separated for ever. Let faith, prayer, and submission, heal the wound of separation. O let us meet in the blessed world of life and joy." Comply with the admonition, and then you too will be able to comprehend the thanksgiving of this poor woman for the decease of a loving husband.

And now take the testimony of another widow, who related to a minister who visited her, in the following language, her sad, yet in another view of it, her happy, experience:

"My husband died, and then disease seized on my children, and they were taken one by one. In the course of a few years, I had laid those in whom my heart was bound up, in the grave. Oh! they were many, many bitter tears that I shed. The world was dark. The very voice of consolation was a pain. I could sit by the side of my friend, but could not hear him speak of my departed ones. My affliction was too deep to be shared. It seemed as if God himself had deserted me. I was alone. The places at the table and the fire-side remained; but they who filled them were gone. Oh, the loneliness, as it had been a tomb, of my chamber. How blessed was sleep! For then the dead lived again. They were all around me. My youngest child and last, sat on my knee; she leaped up in my arms, she uttered my name with infant joyousness; and that sweet tone was as if an angel had spoken to my sad soul. But the dream vanished, and the dreary morning broke, and I waked, and prayed, and I sought forgiveness, even while I uttered it, for my unholy prayer; prayed that God would

let me lie down in the grave, side by side with my children and husband.

“But better thoughts came. In my grief I remembered that though my loved ones were separated from me, the same Father, the same Infinite Love, watched over them as when they were by my fire-side. We were divided, but only for a season. And by degrees, my grief grew calmer. But since then my thoughts have been more in that world where they have gone, than in this. I do not remember less, but I look forward and upward more. I learned the worth of prayer and reliance. Would that I could express to every mourner how the sting is taken away from the grief of one, who with a true and full heart puts her trust in God. I can never again go into the gay world. The pleasures of this world are no longer pleasures to me. But I have trust, and hope, and confidence. I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know that God ever watches over his children. And in my desolation, this faith of the heart has long enabled me to feel a different kind of pleasure indeed, but a far deeper, though more sober joy, than the pleasures of this world ever gave me, even when youth, and health, and friends, all conspired to give them their keenest relish.”

“‘You have learned in your own heart,’ I said, ‘that all trials are not evils.’

“It was with eyes up-turned to heaven, and gushing over with tears, not tears of sorrow, but gratitude, and with a radiant countenance, that she answered, in a tone so mild, so rapt, as if her heart were speaking to her God, ‘It has been good for me that I have been afflicted.’”

4. What an impressive view does your affliction give you of the solemnity of death, and the necessity of being prepared for it! You have now not only heard of the awful visitor, or read of him, but you have seen him: and though his icy hand has not been laid on you, it has taken from your side the companion of your life. It is not a book, a sermon, a preacher, but death himself that has spoken to you, who as he bore away the dear object of your affection, looked back un-pityingly, and sternly said, “I shall come for you

soon." He will. Listen also to the voice of one who with milder accents than those of the last enemy, says to you, "Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Can you ever forget the scene, the dread reality, the harbingers the concomitants the consequences of dissolution, the pain, the sickness, the restlessness, the delirium, the torpor, and then the mortal stillness which ten thousand thunders could not disturb? Oh what a change is death! Is that the time, that the scene, those the circumstances, to which it is wise and safe to defer the business of religion, the concerns of the soul, the pursuit of salvation? You saw how all but insupportable were the last woes of expiring nature; or how sudden was the stroke; or how shattered was the reason; and how impossible it was then to meditate on matters which require the concentrated attention, the calm undisturbed possession of all the faculties of the soul. Learn then a lesson from that scene, never to be forgotten, and instantly to be practised, of being prepared at once, and completely, for the great change. You saw how valueless in death is every thing but salvation, and how all but impossible it is to commence the momentous concern then. Be wise, then, and consider your own end. Preparation' for death is living work. A life of faith holiness and devotion, is the only preparation for a death-bed. Be this the beneficial result, the only one the case admits of, of losing an object so dear. On his tomb devote yourself to the pursuit of salvation, as the business of life, and the only suitable meetness for death.

It is said with equal power and beauty by a well known and deservedly admired living writer,

“I consider the scene of death, as being to the interested parties, who witness it, a kind of sacrament, inconceivably solemn, at which they are summoned by the voice of heaven to pledge themselves in vows of irreversible decision. Here, then, as at the high altar of eternity, you have been called to pronounce, if I may so express it, the inviolable oath, to keep for ever in view the momentous value of life, and to aim at its worthiest use, its sublime end; to spurn with lasting disdain those foolish trifles, those frivolous vanities, which so generally wither in our sight, and consume life, as the locusts did Egypt; and to devote yourself with the ardour of passion, to attain the most divine improvement of the human soul; and, in short, to hold yourself in preparation to make that interesting transition to another life, whenever you shall be claimed by the Lord of the world.”

CHAPTER IV.
CONSOLATION.

YES! consolation. Yours, even yours, is not a case that excludes all comfort. There is a balm for the wounds of a widow's heart.

1. It may seem a strange and unlikely method of comforting you, to remind you of happiness for ever fled, and scenes of enjoyment that have vanished like a vision; but is it not a comfort to you to retrace the history of your union, and to remember that you loved and were beloved; that you lived in harmony and peace with your departed husband; that you had his confidence and his heart, and he yours; that you travelled pleasantly together in this desert world, and made the journey a delightful one while it lasted? You have nothing but holy and happy reminiscences. Is not this better than the retrospect of an ill-assorted match, and the scenes of discord and strife which such unions bring with them? His picture, his chair, his dear name, if they form the most sorrowful, yet, at the same time, they awaken the most sacred associations. His image, as it rises in the region of imagination, is no sullen spectre, cold, frowning, and perturbed, and looking upon you as if to upraid you for the past; but

it is a blessed shade, smiling, complacent, and calm, still beaming with the same affection with which it was wont to do: and you need to offer nothing in the way of apology or atonement, for the purpose of propitiating and tranquillising it. You still feel in mysterious and happy fellowship, though separated by the wide, deep gulf of the grave. Extract comfort, then, from your very tears, for love has left a drop of it even in them. You were happy, and that should prevent you being wretched now; you were his comfort on earth, and assisted him on his pilgrimage to heaven; where, perhaps, he is now thinking of you before the throne, and finding a place for your name in the song of his gratitude before the fountain of mercy.

2. Perhaps you were permitted to be with him in his mortal sickness, and to minister to his comfort, as long as he needed it, and was capable of understanding your ministrations. "I am glad I am not a king," said a dying husband, to an affectionate and devoted wife, who never left him night or day, till his' spirit forsook its clay: "for then," continued he, "I should not be waited upon by you." How tender and how soothing are the attentions of a wife at all times; but oh! what are they not in the chamber of sickness and death! Men who had set little value on the kind offices of their wives in the time of health and activity, have been glad to have them at their bed-side in the season of disease, and at the last hour: but how doubly precious are such offices in death, to those who loved their wives, and prized their attentions in life! Such, afflicted woman was, perhaps, your case. You were his constant attendant. You waited, watched, and laboured, to the uttermost of your strength, to smooth the pillow of

sickness, and the bed of death. The food and the medicine were always most welcome from your gentle hand; he forgot his pains in your presence; and it was some mitigation of your sorrows, while as his ministering angel you occupied the post of observation, darker every hour, that you saw how much you contributed to his comfort. You heard the words of love and gratitude that fell from the sufferer's lips: you saw the looks and tears which spoke what words were too weak to utter; and you taxed your energies almost beyond what nature could supply, to meet the necessities of one whose flickering lamp seemed to be kept from extinction, by your vigilance and tenderness.

Well, it is all over now. Affection has done its last, as well as its best, and its uttermost. Is it not consoling to you to think of all this? Especially if you were enabled to minister to the comfort of the soul, as well as to the body, and by the words of Scripture promises, to drive away the gloomy thoughts and disturbing fears which lighted upon his spirit as he approached the dark valley. Perhaps it was reserved for that solemn hour, for your dying husband to disclose to you the state of his soul, and to express to your more entire satisfaction than you had felt before, his sense of sin, his faith in Christ, and his hope of glory. How beautifully is this described in the life of Mrs Graham, of New York.

“He brought me, and my idol,” says that excellent woman, “out of a barren land, placed us under the breath of prayer, among a dear little society of Methodists; he laid us upon their spirits, and when the messenger, death, was sent for my beloved, the breath of prayer ascended from his bed-side, from their little meeting, and I believe from their families and closets. The God of mercy prepared their hearts to pray, and his ear to hear, and the answers did not tarry. Behold my husband prayeth; confesses sin; applies to the Saviour;

pleads for forgiveness for his sake; receives comfort; blesses God for Jesus Christ, and dies with these words upon his tongue, 'I hold fast by the Saviour.' Behold another wonder! the idolatress in an ecstasy of joy. She who never could realise a separation for one single minute during his life, now resigns her heart's treasure, with praise and thanksgiving. O the joy of that hour! Its savour remains in my heart to this moment. For five days and nights I had been little off my knees, it was my ordinary posture at his bed-side, and in all that time I had but once requested his life. The Spirit helped my infirmities with groanings that could not be uttered, leading me to pray for that which God had determined to bestow; making intercession for my husband according to the will of God."

3. And this is intimately connected with another source of consolation, I mean the consideration of the happiness of your departed sainted husband, if indeed there is satisfactory ground to believe he died in the Lord.

"How does the reflection," said Mrs Huntingdon, after she became a widow, "that our departed friends have reached the point which we must reach before we can be happy, sweeten and soothe the anguish of separation! Let us contemplate them in every supposable view, and the prospect is full of consolation. We cannot think of them as what they were, or what they are, without pleasure. They are the highly favoured of the Lord, who, having finished all that they had to do in this vale of tears, are admitted to the higher services of the upper temple. True, when we look at our loss, nature will feel."

Be it so, that you are sorrowful, it is not, as regards your husband, a sorrow without hope. You have no grief on his account. Time was when you wept for him: you saw him burdened with care; exhausted by labour; perplexed with difficulties; sometimes humbled by a sense of his imperfections; and in his closing scenes, pale with sickness, racked with pain, till the tears glistened in his eye, and the groan escaped his breast; but he will suffer no more; the days of his mourning are ended; and he is in fulness of joy in

God's presence, and surrounded with pleasures for evermore at his right hand. Strive, then, so far to rise above your grief, as to rejoice with him, though he cannot weep with you. You loved, and tried to make him happy upon earth, and smiled when you in any measure succeeded; take some comfort in the thought that God has made him happy in heaven. Think of him not as in the grave, but as in glory. Say in the language of that beautiful epitaph,

“Forgive, blest shade! the tributary tear
That mourns thy exit from a world like this;
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
And stayed thy progress to the seats of bliss.
No more confin'd to grovelling scenes of night,
No more a tenant pent in mortal clay;
Now should we rather hail thy glorious flight,
And trace thy journey to the realms of day.”

But, perhaps, in all this, I do but lacerate some widow's heart, already wounded by the fear that her husband's spirit is not in heaven. Then turn from the subject in deep and silent submission. Confide in the equity of God. Rely upon his unerring wisdom. If you cannot reflect with comfort and hope, endeavour not to reflect at all. Say, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” If this source of consolation be closed, turn to the others, and they are many.

4. Recollect that God lives. “He lives,” said the Psalmist, “and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” God lives! What a compass of thought and of consolation is there in that one expression; and akin to it is the language of Christ to the beloved apostle in the isle of Patmos, “Behold, I am alive for evermore.” Die who will, Christ lives. How often is he called in Scripture, “The Living God;”

it is one of his most frequently repeated titles; and dwelling as we do, amidst the tombs, it is one of his most comforting, as well as one of his most sublime and impressive ones, especially to those who have been called to sustain the loss of friends by death. Thus we find there is a title, an attribute, a view, and an operation of God, suited to all the varieties of our circumstances, our wants, woes, and fears. There is bounty for our wants, mercy for our sins and miseries, patience for our provocations, power for our weakness, truth for our fears, wisdom for our ignorance, immutability for our vicissitudes, and because our friends are dying, and we also are following them to the grave, he is presented to us as the living God. And as he lives, all that belongs to him lives with him. His attributes neither change nor die. Just look at one view of his nature and conduct as given by the apostle: "The God of all comfort." Beautiful representation! And akin to it is that other, "God that comforteth those that are cast down." What ideas are contained in these two aspects of God. They seem to tell us that not only is all comfort in him, and from him, and for all people who are willing to be comforted: not only that his consolations are such as by way of eminence and excellence, deserve to be called comfort almost exclusively; but also that he is in his nature all comfort to his people, and in his dealings always comforting them. His nature is one vast fountain of consolation, and his operations so many streams flowing from it. Now this God lives; lives to comfort you. Your earthly comforter is gone; but your heavenly one remains. Is there not enough in his power to protect and support you; in his wisdom to guide you; in his all-sufficiency to provide

for you; in his goodness to pity you; in his love to supply you; in his presence to cheer you? In your troubled and broken condition of mind, you need subjects of consolation which are not only sufficient in themselves, but which can be simply expressed and easily apprehended, without any long train of thought, or elaboration of argument. Here then is one, containing all comfort in one, "God lives." Seize the simple yet wondrous conception; take it home to your afflicted bosom; apply it to your forlorn and desolate spirit; repeat it to yourself; and by the power of it drive away unbelief, distrust, and all the crowd of dark, desponding thoughts, which hover like foul birds of night over the desolate heart, there to nestle, and utter their moaning voices. Learn from a little child, who seeing her widowed mother in weeds and in tears, asked the question, "Is God Almighty dead, mamma?"

5. The Lord Jesus Christ, in all his mediatorial offices, all his redeeming grace, all his tender sympathy, and all the blessings of his salvation, still remains. "Fear not," said he to John, in language already quoted, "I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell, (the unseen world) and of death." O, there is enough in these sublime words to support and comfort all the widows that are at this present moment, or ever will be, upon earth. Here, they are not only told that the Redeemer has exclusive dominion over death and the invisible world, so that none ever turns or holds the key but himself, but also that he lives in all the plenitude of his power and grace to comfort those that survive. All that there is in the incarnation and death of Christ as the Saviour of a lost

and ruined world, in his resurrection from the grave, in his ascension into heaven, and intercession at the right hand of the Father, in his universal government of the world, in the promise the purpose and the hope of his second coming, in the assurance that he is now in the midst of his church, and will never leave it, in the distant prospect of the millennial days when his glory shall cover all lands, all this remains to console the hearts of his mourning people in their sorrows upon earth; and connected with all this are the blessings that result from his mediatorial work, the pardon of all our sins, the justification of our persons, the sanctification of our nature, adoption, perseverance; in short, perfect salvation. And is there one who can think so little of these things as to find in them no adequate consolation in the hour and scene of her woe? Oh, believer, is there not enough in all this, to save you from fainting? Bereaved woman, shall your sorrows at the grave of the most affectionate husband that a wife ever had or ever lost, weigh down the cross, the atonement, the righteousness, the sympathy, the grace, of Christ? He is still the same, as to compassion, as he was when upon earth. The eyes that wept at the grave of Lazarus look on you; the bosom that groaned over the sorrows of Martha and Mary, cherishes you. He that pitied the widow of Nain, pities you. "In all your affliction he is afflicted, and the angel of his presence is with you." In all his unsearchable riches of grace, in his promises of truth, and in his invitations, he is with you, and has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Not a promise died, when your husband died; not a fruit of grace, or an earnest of glory, withered when he departed. Not a single gospel consolation lies entombed

in his sepulchre. The cup of your earthly prosperity may be emptied, but not a drop is lost from the cup of salvation. Death has deprived you of your temporal enjoyment, but your eternal salvation in Christ still remains. You are called to bear your cross, but look up, there is Christ bearing and borne by his also. In one sense your husband sleeps in the tomb of Jesus; for “we are dead and buried with him.” Wherefore comfort yourself with these thoughts.

6. God has in a most especial manner interested himself on behalf of widows, and their fatherless children. Just see how he has literally crowded the page of inspiration with declarations concerning them. He has revealed himself in a very especial manner as the widow’s God. Observe how he has fenced in their interests and protected them from injury. “Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.” “Thou shalt not take the widow’s raiment to pledge.” “Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the fatherless, and the widow.” “Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” “If ye oppress not the fatherless and the widow, then will I cause you to dwell in this place.” “Oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless.” “In this have they vexed the widow.”

Observe next the injunctions delivered not even to neglect the widow. “And the fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat, and shall be satisfied, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand, that thou doest.” “When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within

thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all the commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them."

Then dwell upon those passages in which kindness to widows is spoken of by men, or by God himself. "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." In opposition to which he gives it as the mark of the wicked; "They drive away the ass of the fatherless, and take the widow's ox for a pledge." "The Lord will establish the border of the widow." "A judge of the fatherless and widows is God in his holy habitation." "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

What widow is there who in casting her eye over such passages as these, but must be comforted in thus witnessing the deep interest God takes in her forlorn condition, when he has not only promised her what he will do himself, but commanded in every variety of form and expression all others to sympathise with her, and actually to befriend her. She may surely say:

"Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forsakes me not."

Whoever is passed over by Jehovah, the widow receives his special notice.

7. Perhaps you have still many friends left; for it is

rarely the case that a widow has none, either on her own side, or on that of her late husband. There is something in your case that calls forth sympathy. Your very dress, with silent but expressive signs, seems to say, "My husband is in his grave, pity me." Hearts not easily moved have relented, and eyes unaccustomed to weep have shed tears, at the recital of your loss. Low as human nature has sunk by our apostacy from God, it has not lost all that is kind and amiable towards our fellow-creatures, and in the exercise of this kindness, many are predisposed to be the friends of the widow. Do not refuse their friendship. Open your hearts, and let them pour in the balm of sympathy. Do not discourage them in their efforts to interest or please, nor undervalue them. The sun of your bright day has set, and it is night; but do not despise the lunar beams, nor even the twinkling of a few scattered stars: even this is better than rayless gloom. Some, I admit there are, who in losing their husband, lose almost every friend they have on earth. Let them especially think of the friend, who is all friends in one, I mean, the widow's God.

8. Is there not upon record such an assurance as this, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." The consolation, I know, is limited to a particular class of persons, "to them that love God and are called according to his purpose," and none have a right to appropriate the comfort, but those who answer to the character. To none else can good come out of evil; for none else is God preparing a happy result of all their troubles; for none else are his mighty and glorious attributes of wisdom and power weaving the dark

threads of their history into a texture of felicity, and a garment of praise. But then all are invited, and may instantly accept the invitation, to come within the comprehension of this circle of good, by coming through faith into the love of God. To those who are already there, how inexpressibly consoling, if they have faith to receive it, is the assurance, that there is good to be extracted for the widow, from her tears. Observe it is good, not ease; concealed, not apparent good; future, not present good. What an illustration of this passage of Scripture is the history of the patriarch Joseph. Sorrow upon sorrow settled on the heart of his venerable father, as one bad report of his children after another fell upon his ear, till in the agony of his spirit he exclaimed, "All these things are against me." And judging by appearances, he was right. Appearances, however, were fallacious. Jacob could not see to the end, and he who cannot should not pronounce what the end will be. All things were at the time working together for good, though it was impossible for him to conjecture in what way. Equally impossible is it for you to see, or even to imagine, nor do I pretend to foretell, in what way good can rise to you from a husband's grave. All your brightest prospects have vanished; all your springs of earthly consolation are dried up; your support and that of your children, is cut off; in such an event reason can see nothing but unmixed evil for the present, and portents of woe for the future; and it really seems like a mockery of your woe to tell you, it will work for your good. But is it not promised? If so, it must be fulfilled, though in a way unknown to us. Suppose any one had gone to the venerable patriarch when he was weeping, first for Joseph, and then for Benjamin,

and uttered this astonishing language in his hearing, "All is working for your good;" would he not have looked up, and with a reproving voice, said, "Do you come to mock me?" Yet he lived to see that it was so. If God says it is good, it must be so, for He can make it good. It may not be good for your temporal comfort, but it may be for your eternal welfare; and if not for yours, it may be for your children's; if not for theirs, it may have been for your husband's. You may never see how it is for good in this world. Many go all their lives without having the mystic characters of the event deciphered, and the secret working of God's love laid open; they die in ignorance of his plans, though not of his purposes. So it may be with you. The right side of the embroidery may never be turned to you here, and looking only at the tangled threads and dark colours of the back, all now appears confusion; but when the front view shall be seen, and the design of the Divine artist, and all the meaning of the piece shall be pointed out, and the colouring shall be shown in the light of heaven, with what adoring wonder, delight, and gratitude will you exclaim, as the whole bursts upon your sight, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. All things have worked together for my good."

9. Recollect the admonition of the apostle; "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 rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that use the world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." Time is short. Solemn expres-

sion; the death of the worldling's joy, but the solace of the Christian's sorrows. Widow, you cannot weep long, even though you go weeping to your grave. The days of your mourning are numbered, and must end soon. The vale of tears is not interminable. You are passing through it; and will soon pass out of it. Be patient, the coming of the Lord draws nigh. Eternity is at hand, through the everlasting ages of which you will weep no more, for God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people. In hell sinners weep for ever; in heaven saints never weep.

10. And what felicity awaits you on that blessed shore on which your departed husband stands looking back wonderingly on the dark waters of the river he has passed, and beckoning you away to the realms of immortality! You will soon follow him to the regions of which it is said, "there will be no more death." Heaven is a world of life, eternal life, never to be interrupted by the entrance, or even the fear of death: and this is before you. Those who are united by the bonds of christian as well as conjugal love, do not lose one another in the dark valley, never to meet in the world of immortals. They drop the fleshly bond in the grave, and all that appertained to it, but not the spiritual tie that makes them one in Christ. United in the honours and felicities of that blessed world, where all are blessed perfectly, and for ever, you will receive together the answer of those prayers you presented upon earth; realize the anticipations you indulged while travelling across the desert of mortality; trace together the providential events of your earthly history; learn why you were united, and why separated; see the wisdom and goodness of those events, which once appeared

so dark, and drew so many tears from your eyes; indulge in reminiscences, all of which will furnish new occasions of wonder, new motives to praise, and new sources of delight; point one another to the vista of everlasting ages opening before you, through which an endless succession of joys are advancing to meet you; and then, filled with pure, unearthly love for each other, fall down before the throne of the Lamb, and feel every other affection absorbed in supreme adoring love to him. Such a scene is before you; and if it be, then bear your sorrows, afflicted woman, for in what felicities are they to issue, and how soon!

But, perhaps, I should help to comfort the mourner, if, in addition to the gracious promises and directions which are specially appropriate to the case of widows, and which have been already presented to your notice, I lay before you a selection of passages of Scripture, which are applicable to all persons in trouble. What words may be expected to have such power over the sorrowful heart as those of God? Many of these have been already quoted, but there may be an advantage in bringing them all together in one view before the mind.

GOD'S END IN AFFLICTING US.

For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

GOD'S JUSTICE AND FAITHFULNESS IN OUR TRIALS.

Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee.

He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.

I know, O Lord, that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

GOD'S LOVE IN AFFLICTING US.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father doth the son in whom he delighteth.

For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

GOD A COMFORTER.

The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.

God that comforteth those that are cast down.

GOD A REFUGE.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH ITS IN THE DEEPEST
TRIBULATION.

When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

GOD'S EYE UPON HIS PEOPLE IN SORROW.

He knoweth the way that I take, when he has tried me I shall come forth as gold.

GOD CANNOT FORGET HIS PEOPLE.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

TRUST IN GOD ENJOINED, ENCOURAGED, AND
EXEMPLIFIED.

And they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee, for thou hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

And now, Lord, what wait I for, my hope is in thee.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

CONSOLATORY ASSURANCES.

Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Therefore take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

In all their afflictions He is afflicted.

In that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

THE SHORT DURATION OF OUR TRIALS.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations.

But this I say, the time is short, let those that weep be as though they wept not.

The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us.

Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO CAST OURSELVES AND OUR
BURDENS UPON THE LORD.

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

DIRECTIONS AND EXAMPLES HOW TO BEHAVE IN TROUBLE.

And Aaron held his peace.

It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?

Surely it is meet to say unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it.

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Let patience have her perfect work.

BENEFICIAL RESULT OF AFFLICTIONS.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted: before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.

We glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

END OF ALL OUR AFFLICTIONS.

These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his

temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more: neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Daughter of sorrow, these are the words of God: and they are tried words. Millions now in glory, and myriads more on the way to it, have tried them in the dark hour of their affliction, and have found them a cordial to their fainting spirits. "Unless thy word had supported me," they have each said, "I had perished in my affliction." That word did support them, and though the torrent was roaring and rushing furiously, kept them buoyant upon its surface, when they otherwise must have sunk. A single text has in some instances saved the despairing soul from destruction. Read these selected promises; what variety of representation, what kindness and compassion of sentiment, what tenderness of language, what beauty in the figures, what force in the allusions, what appropriateness in the epithets, what comprehension in the descriptions! Whose case is omitted? Whose circumstances are untouched? Whose sorrows are unnoticed? Remember, I say again, this is the consolation of God. It is Jehovah coming to you, and saying to you, "Woman, why weepest thou? Is not all this enough to comfort you? Close not thine heart against such consolations as these. Be still, and know that I am God."

CHAPTER V.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

PERHAPS, as I have already supposed, in addition to the deep affliction of your being left a widow, you are also left in circumstances every way calculated to aggravate the heavy woe. To lose your husband is of itself a cup of sorrow not requiring in order to fill it to overflowing and embitter it with wormwood, to have a young dependent family, and no provision for their support, or their settlement in the world. Oh! for a woman who never knew care or solicitude, to be plunged into all the anxieties of business, all the fear of destitution; for such an one, unskilled in trade, unused to labour, to have her own maintenance, and that of her children, to earn! To sit day after day, amidst her little fatherless circle, and witness their unconsciousness of their loss; to hear them ask why she weeps; to have her heart lacerated by their questions about their father; to sit in silent solitary grief, when their voices are all hushed at night, except the cry that issues from the cradle; to be followed to a sleepless pillow, and be kept waking through the live-long night, by recollections of departed joys, and fears of future want! Ah, my afflicted friend, I pity you. May God support and comfort you.

Permit me to whisper in your ear, and direct to your troubled spirit, the passage I have already quoted. "Let thy widows trust in me; for a judge of the fatherless and the widow, is God in his holy habitation." Do consider who it is that says this. It is the omnipotent, all-sufficient God. It is he who has afflicted you who says this. He authorizes, he invites, he enjoins your confidence. But what do I mean by confidence? An expectation that he will provide for you; an expectation, which if it does not bring to you strong consolation, is sufficient, at any rate, to control the violence of your grief, to check the hopelessness of your sorrows, and save you from despair: an expectation which will prevent all your energies from being paralysed, and keep you from sitting down amidst your helpless little family, and abandoning all for lost: an expectation which will lead you to say, "I do not see how or whence help is to come, but I believe it will come. I am utterly at a loss to conceive how I shall be able to work my way, or provide for these fatherless children, but God has encouraged me to confide in Him, and he is omnipotent. I know not where to look for friends, but the hearts of all men are in His hands, and he can turn some to acts of kindness towards me." This is confidence; this is trust in God. Is it necessary for me here to mention the grounds of trust? They are at hand in great number and force.

1. Dwell upon the innumerable exhortations to this duty, as appertaining to all states of sorrow and difficulty, which are to be found in the Word of God. Scarcely one word occurs more frequently in the Old Testament than the word, "trust;" nor one in the New, more frequently than "faith." They stand intimately

related; for indeed, if not perfectly identical in meaning, they are nearly so. Trust in the God of Providence means faith in Him; and faith in Christ means trust in Him. How sweetly does one sacred writer after another catch up the word, "trust," and roll it in innumerable echoes along the whole line of revelation! How repeatedly does the sound come from the lips of God himself, "trust in me!" How often do we hear the troubled and destitute saint reply, "In Thee do I put my trust!" How often do the inspired penmen, after disclosing the glories of the divine character, and the infinite attributes of Jehovah, finish their description by such an admonition as this, "Put your trust in the Lord!" Dwell on the power of God, cannot he sustain you and your children? In casting yourselves on his boundless sufficiency, his infinite and inexhaustible resources, you do not obtrude or presume upon Him; he invites, yea commands your confidence. You do not lay down your burden on him unauthorised; he stretches out his arm and says, "Roll thy burden here, and I will sustain it." He asks, he promises to take care of you. Trust him then. But you have nothing, you think, but his bare promise. Not a friend to whom you can look; not an indication to point out in what way even his assistance is to come. Then you have the more need, and I was almost going to add, the more warrant to trust in him. Then is the time for faith in God's word, when you have nothing to look for from man: then is the time to trust in the promise, when you have nothing else but the promise to trust to. It is not possible to conceive of one act of the human mind that more honours God, or more pleases him, than that simple trust which is exercised in the

absence of every thing else as a ground of confidence, but the word of God. A widow, with a circle of dependent little children, with no present provision, and no assured prospect of it, who yet exercises confidence in God, and believes she shall in some way or other be taken care of, is in a state of mind, certainly as acceptable to God, as any in which a human being can be found, and perhaps even more so.

2. Meditate much upon the special promises and gracious intimations which are made in Scripture in reference to your own particular case. Go over the passages which I have quoted: turn back to them: read them repeatedly, till you are enabled to feel their full force. They are God's own words to widows: the language of the divine and infinite Comforter to the most afflicted class in all the school of sorrow; and ought they not to be received as such, with all the faith and trust that are due to an infallible Being? Can he have invited the widow's saddened heart to words of consolation, only to mock its sadness? Can he have attracted her confidence by language specially addressed to her, only to leave her forsaken and abandoned? This would not be human, much less divine, mercy. Difficult then as it may be, and must be, to trust in God amidst broken cisterns, failing springs, exhausted resources, and with no prospect, or any indication as big as a man's hand of the coming blessing on the distant horizon, endeavour, dejected woman, to do so. Like Hagar in the wilderness, you may be near the deliverer, when you know it not. An invisible comforter is at hand, and the provider may be coming, though unseen. Trust, O trust, and be not afraid. Endeavour to hush thy fears to rest, under the music and charm of that

one word, "Trust in the Lord, so shalt thou dwell in the laud, and verily thou shalt be fed."

3. Another encouragement to trust, is the testimony of those who have observed the ways of Providence, and the care which it has exercised over widows. It has grown into a kind of current adage, "That whosoever may seem to be overlooked by Providence, God takes especial care of widows and orphans." Who has not heard this expression, and who has not seen its verification in instances that have come under his own observation? Who could not mention the names of some whom he has seen extraordinarily provided for in their necessitous and seemingly helpless, hopeless widowhood? It has so often been my lot to see this gracious interposition of Providence, that I scarcely ever despond over the case of a widow; and the more necessitous and hopeless, so far as human succour is concerned, the more confident do I feel of Divine interference. So true it is, that he who removes the arm of flesh that sustained the wife, lends his own arm of spirit and power to sustain the widow. "Your Maker is your husband," says the prophet; an expression which represents Jehovah as taking under his care all the widows in existence.

4. Perhaps your own experience may come in advantageously to encourage your confidence. You have been supported hitherto. You sustained the shock of separation, which, when anticipated, you thought must crush your frame. You have, perhaps, got through the first difficulties of your afflicted condition: you have not been suffered to sink yet. Remember God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He grows neither tired of helping, nor unwilling to help. He that has

carried you through the first season of your widowhood, can, with equal ease, sustain you through any succeeding one.

5. Direct your attention to the language of Christ. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And this is but a repetition of a similar sentiment; "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." Does he take care of ravens and sparrows, and will he not take care of you? Will he feed his birds, and starve his babes? Think of the millions of millions of the animal world, that rise every morning dependent for their sustenance upon the omnipresent and all-sufficient feeder of his creatures; yet how few of them ever perish for want! This consideration may not, perhaps, have struck you before, but it is one which our Lord suggested for the comfort of his disciples; and one, therefore, which with great propriety and force, may be submitted to you.

6. Consider how all creatures, rational and irrational, are under the direction and control of God. "He has prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." All orders of beings, from the highest seraph in glory down to the meanest reptile that crawls in the dust, are his servants, and can be made to do his will, execute his plans, and fulfil the purposes of his benevolence towards his people. All hearts are at his disposal, and he can make even the covetous liberal, the hard-hearted sympathetic, and the hostile friendly. In a thousand instances he has made men act contrary to their nature, and brought as it

were waters of mercy out of the rocky heart, to refresh the weary and faint. Help has often come from quarters whence it was to be least expected: and instruments have been employed, which to the eye of reason were of all the most unlikely.

The following fact, extracted from an American religious newspaper, is an illustration of this:

“It was a cold and bleak evening, in a most severe winter. The snow, driven by the furious north wind, was piled into broad and deep banks along our streets. Few dared or were willing to venture abroad. It was a night which the poor will not soon forget.

“In a most miserable and shattered tenement, somewhat remote from any other habitation, there then resided an aged widow, all alone, and yet not alone. During the weary day, in her excessive weakness, she had been unable to step beyond her door-stone, or to communicate her wants to any friend. Her last morsel of bread had been long since consumed, and none heeded her destitution. She sat at evening by her small fire, half famished with hunger, from exhaustion unable to sleep, preparing to meet the dreadful fate from which she knew not how she should be spared. She had prayed that morning in full faith, ‘Give me this day my daily bread,’ but the shadows of evening had descended upon her, and her faithful prayer had not been answered. While such thoughts were passing through her weary mind, she heard the door suddenly open, and as suddenly shut again, and found deposited in her entry, by an unknown hand, a basket crowded with all those articles of comfortable food which had all the sweetness of manna to her. What were her feelings on that night, God only knows! but they were such as arise up to Him, the great deliverer and provider, from ten thousand hearts every day—Many days elapsed before the widow learnt through what messenger God had sent to her that timely aid. It was at the impulse of a little child, who on that dismal night, seated at the cheerful fire-side of her home, was led to express the generous wish, that that poor widow, whom she had sometimes visited, could have some of her numerous comforts and good cheer. The parents followed out the benevolent suggestion; and a servant was soon deputed to her mean abode with a plentiful supply.

“What a beautiful glimpse of the chain of causes, all fastened at

the throne of God! An angel, with noiseless wing, came down, and stirred the peaceful breast of a pure-hearted child, and with no pomp or circumstance of the outward miracle, the widow's prayer was answered."

Of course when I recommend confidence in God, it is implied that all suitable exertions be made to obtain the means of support. If you allow grief, despondency, and indolence, to paralyse your efforts, you have no encouragement to trust in God. His grace will be exercised in connection with the employment of all those energies which yet remain: and every destitute widow, instead of sitting down to indulge in hopeless sorrow, should, in humble dependence on divine grace, immediately apply herself in such way as her talents and her circumstances allow, to some occupation, for the support of herself and her children.

CHAPTER VI.**BENEFITS OF AFFLICTION.**

IT may not be amiss to introduce here a few of the benefits which afflictions in general are intended and calculated to produce. God does not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men. He takes no delight in seeing our tears, or hearing our groans; but he does take delight in doing us good, making us holy, restoring us to his own image, and fitting us to dwell in his own presence. He treats us as the sculptor does the marble which from a rough unsightly mass he intends to carve into a splendid statue, a glorious work of art. Every application of the chisel, every blow of the mallet, is to strike off some bit of the stone, which must be removed to bring out the figure in perfection. In our case, how much is necessary to be struck off from our corrupt nature before we can be brought into that form and beauty which it is the intention of the Divine artificer we should bear, as it is his plan to mould us into his own image. How much of pride and vanity, of carnality and worldly-mindedness, of self-sufficiency and independence, of creature love and earthly dependence, must be displaced by one blow of the mallet and application of the chisel after another, before the beauties of holiness, humility, meekness, and heavenly-mind-

edness, and all the graceful proportions and features of the Divine nature can be exhibited in us.

Various authors have represented the benefits derived from affliction. How does it quicken devotion! Our prayers are too often only said in prosperity, now they are prayed; then they do but drop, now they are poured out and flow like a stream, or rise like a cloud of incense, in almost uninterrupted exercise, till our thoughts and feelings seem to follow without intermission in one continued prayer. Ah! how many can look back to the place of affliction, and say, "There it was my soul poured out many prayers to the Lord. I had grown negligent of the duty, and careless in its performance; but then I prayed indeed; then I had communion with God; then I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears." Nearness to God is the happiness of the renewed soul. Affliction is but one of God's servants to bring us into his presence and the enjoyment of this privilege. God delights to hear from us often, as the kind parent loves to hear from his child when at a distance from home. Affliction comes and knocks at the door, enters into our habitation, asks us if we have not forgotten our Father, and expresses a willingness to conduct us to him. Many have found in trial, the lost spirit of prayer, and have experienced in that one benefit more than a compensation for all they have suffered. Many a woman has been recalled, as a widow, to the closet of devotion, which as a wife, she had forsaken.

Affliction discloses, mortifies, and prevents sin. It is a season of remembrance. The sin of Joseph's brethren was forgotten till they were in prison; then it came to their recollection, and they exclaimed, "We are verily

guilty concerning our brother.” The poor widow of Zarephath, when her child lay dead in the house, thus addressed the prophet, “What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?” Perhaps at that moment, the guilt of all her past life, for which she had not sufficiently humbled herself before God, came before her perturbed mind. Sin appears but small, and presses but lightly on the conscience in the days of prosperity, but its awful form seems terrific in the night season of trial. Our sorrows look then as the shadows of our sins, and address us as with a kind of spectral voice. We go back through our lives; we follow ourselves through every scene; we look at our conduct with an inquisitive and jealous eye; we examine our motives, and weigh our spirits; and oh what humbling disclosures are the result! Many have gained more self-knowledge by a month’s training in the school of sorrow, than by all their previous life. As it discloses sin, so it mortifies it. As wise and salutary discipline weakens evil habits and strengthens the moral virtues; as the frosts of winter kill in fallow ground the noxious insects and the rank and poisonous weeds; as the knife prunes the tree of its dead and superfluous branches; and as the fire purifies the precious metals, so that they lose nothing by its action, but their dross; so trials purge the soul of its corruptions, by weakening the love of sin, giving experimental proof of its malignity, awakening strenuous efforts to resist its influence, and teaching the necessity of renewed acts of faith in the atoning blood of the Saviour, and dependence on the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. “Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he pruneth it that it may bear more fruit.”

“By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.”

When Mr Cecil was walking in the Botanical Gardens of Oxford, his attention was arrested by a fine pomegranate tree, cut almost through the stem near the root. On asking the gardener the reason of this, “Sir,” said he, “this tree used to shoot so strong, that it bore nothing but leaves. I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit.” The reply afforded this inquisitive student a general practical lesson, which was of considerable use to him in after life, when severely exercised by personal and domestic afflictions. Alas! in many cases, it is not enough that the useless branches of the tree be lopped off, but the stock itself must be cut, and cut nearly through, before it can become extensively fruitful. And sometimes the finer the tree, and the more luxuriant its growth, the deeper must be the incision.*

Nor is affliction without its benefit in preventing sin. We never know how near we are to danger. We are like blind men wandering near the edge of a precipice, the mouth of a well, or the margin of a deep pit; and God by a severe wrench, it may be, and a violent jerk that puts us to some pain, and gives us a severe shock, plucks us from the ruin that we saw not. O, what hair-breadth escapes from destruction, effected perhaps by some distressing visitation, shall we in eternity be made to understand that we experienced on earth! We now often stand amazed at some sore trial; we cannot conjecture why it was sent; we see no purpose it was to serve, no end it was to accomplish; but

* See “Sympathy,” by the Rev. John Bruce.

there was an omniscient eye that saw what we did not and could not see, and he sent forth this event to pluck our feet from the net which had been spread for them. How we shall adore God in heaven for those preventing mercies that came in the form of some dark and inexplicable event, but which filled us at the time with lamentation and woe! O woman, even thy husband's grave was to prevent perhaps a calamity still deeper and heavier than his death.

Affliction tends to exercise, improve, and quicken our graces. In the present state these are all imperfect, and our conformity to the divine purity is only like the sun in a cloud; our imperfections envelope and obscure our excellences: wherefore God sends the stormy wind of his providential and painful visitations to sweep away the clouds and cause the hidden luminary to shine forth. How is faith tried, revealed, and strengthened by tribulation! Abraham had not known the strength of his faith, had he not been called to sacrifice Isaac; nor Peter his, had he not been called by Christ to tread the waves. How many have gone with a weak and faltering belief to the river-side, and yet when there, have had their confidence in God so strengthened, that they plunged into the flood, and have emerged, wondering at the grace which carried them in safety through. Resignation has kept pace with their call for it. There are some graces, which, like the stars, can be seen only in the dark, and this is one of them. As they came to the trial, these afflicted ones saw that their only hope was in submission, and they sent one piercing cry to heaven, "Lord save, or I perish. Help me to bow down with unresisting acquiescence." It was given them; and they kissed the rod,

exclaiming, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Their trust and confidence have equalled their faith and submission. At one time they trembled at the shaking of a leaf; to their surprise they now find they can brave storms, or face lions: then it did not seem as if they could trust God for any thing, now they can confide every thing to him. They have been taught lessons of affiance, which in seasons of unmolested ease, seemed as much beyond their comprehension as their attainment. "Tribulation worketh patience," and if it does not accomplish this in perfection, it produces it in large measures. Oh what a blessing is patience. It is beautifully said by Bishop Hopkins,

"If God confirms and augments thy patience under sufferings, sufferings are mercies: afflictions are favours. He blesseth thee by chastisements, and crowneth thee with glory, even while he seems to crown thee with thorns. A perfect patience stoops to the heaviest burdens, and carries them as long as God shall please, without murmuring and repining; and if that be to the grave, it knows that what is now a load, shall then be found to be a treasure. A Christian doth but carry his own wealth, his crown, and his sceptre; which though here they be burdensome, shall hereafter be eternally glorious."

The following is an extract from a letter of Oberlin, to a lady who had suffered many bereavements:

"I have before me two stones, which are in imitation of precious stones. They are both perfectly alike in colour, they are both of the same water, clear, pure, and clean: yet there is a marked difference between them, as to their lustre and brilliancy. One has a dazzling brightness, while the other is dull, so that the eye passes over it, and derives no pleasure from the sight. What can the reason of this difference be? It is this; the one is cut but in few facets; the other has ten times as many. These facets are produced by a very violent operation. It is requisite to cut, to smooth, and polish. Had these stones been endued with life, so as to have been capable of feeling what they underwent, the one which has received eighty facets would have thought itself very unhappy, and would have envied the fate of

the other, which, having received but eight, has undergone but a tenth part of its sufferings. Nevertheless, the operation being over, it is done for ever: the difference between the two stones always remains strongly marked. That which has suffered but little, is entirely eclipsed by the other, which alone is held in estimation, and attracts attention. May this not serve to explain the saying of our Saviour, whose words always bear some reference to eternity: 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted:' blessed whether we contemplate them apart, or in comparison with those who have not passed through so many trials. O that we were always able to cast ourselves into his arms, like little children, to draw near him like helpless lambs, and ever to ask of him patience, resignation, and entire surrender to his will, faith, trust, and a heartfelt obedience to the commands which he gives to those who are willing to be his disciples! "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

How does affliction tend to wean us from the world, and to fix our affections on things above! We are all too worldly. We gravitate to earth. We have not attained to that conquest of the world by faith, which it is our duty to seek, and would be our privilege to obtain. Our feet stick in the mire, and we do not soar aloft on the wings of faith and hope, into the regions above us, as we ought. We are as moles, when we should be as eagles: mere earthly men, when we should be as the angels of God. With such a revelation as we possess of the eternal world; with such a rent as is made in the clouds of mortality by the discoveries of the New Testament; and such a vista as is opened into the realms of immortality, how easy a thing ought it to be to overcome the world! With the holy mount so near, and so accessible to our faith, how is it that we grovel as we do here? How is it that heaven is opening to present its sights to our eyes, and its sounds to our ears, and that we will neither look at the one, nor listen to the other? "A Christian ought to be," says Lady Powerscourt, "not one who looks up from earth to heaven, but

one who looks down from heaven to earth." Yet the multitude do neither. Instead of dwelling in heaven, they do not visit it: instead of abiding in it, in the state of their affections, they do not look at it. Hence the need, and the benefit too, of afflictions. They cover the earth with the shades of night, the pall of darkness, so that if there be any light at all, it must come from the firmament. How differently things look when seen from the chamber of sickness, or the grave of a friend! Honour, wealth, and pleasure, lose their charms then, and present no beauty that we should desire them. We seem to regard the world as an impostor that has deceived us, and turn from it with disgust. The loss of a friend, and especially such a friend as a husband, does more to prove the truth of Solomon's description of the vanity of every thing beneath the sun, than all the sermons we have ever heard, and all the volumes we have ever read.

Such are a few of the benefits to be derived, and which by many have been derived from affliction.

"Take care, Christian," said the late Mr Cecil, "whatever you meet with in your way, that you forget not your Father! When the proud and wealthy rush by in triumph, while you are poor and in sorrow, listen and hear your Father saying to you, 'My son, had I loved them, I should have corrected them too. I give them up to the way of their own hearts; but to my children, if I give sorrow, it is that I may lead them to a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.'"

The excellent Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, one of the best men of modern times, does but give the testimony of all God's chosen and tried people, where in his diary he says,

"I find afflictions to be good for me. I have ever found them so. They are happy means in the hands of the Holy Spirit to mortify my corruptions, to subdue my pride, my passion, my inordinate love to the creature. They soften my hard heart, bringing me on my knees, exercise and increase faith, love, humility, and self-denial. They make me poor in spirit, and nothing in my own eyes. Welcome the cross! Welcome deep adversity! Welcome stripping Providences."

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

NAOMI, RUTH, AND ORPAH.

THE fulness and appropriateness of Scripture are as delightful as they are wonderful. In that precious volume is to be found something suited to every character, case, and vicissitude of life. Promises, precepts, and prospects of every variety, present themselves to all who are desirous of being directed, sanctified, and comforted. But if any one should think there is nothing which meets the specialities of her case, it cannot be the widow. This form of human woe is found in very diversified circumstances in the Word of God. And to them I now direct the attention of the reader.

The first example which I present is the little group of widows, consisting of Naomi, and her two daughters-in-law. The Book of Ruth, where this touching story is to be found, was written probably by Samuel, as an introduction to the historical portion of Scripture which immediately follows it; or it may be regarded as a beautiful episode of the inspired narrative, containing

the account of a family, which as it stands in the line of David's ancestry, and therefore in that of the Messiah, is for this reason as important as its short annals are tender and interesting.

We are informed by the sacred writer of this book, that a famine having arisen in the land of Judea, Elimelech, a Jew of some note among his countrymen, fled with his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, into the land of Moab, to which the scarcity had not extended. How far he was justified in such a step, by which he left all the public ordinances of true religion, to sojourn in a land of idolaters, we cannot decide. If, indeed, he had no other means of preserving his life, it would be wrong to condemn him; but if it was only with a view to obtain a comfortable subsistence more easily cheaply and abundantly than he could do in Judea, he was to be censured; and some have considered the afflictions which befel him in the land of Moab, as an expression of the Divine displeasure for his resorting to it. Let us never for temporal give up our spiritual advantages; for worldly ease and prosperity purchased at the expense of religion are dearly bought; and let us also be cautious how we pretend to interpret the acts of Providence, and declare any event to be a mark of the Divine displeasure, which is only one of the common occurrences of life.

One false step is often productive of a long train of consequences, extending far beyond the individual by whom the error is committed, and involving others in danger or distress; and this is especially true in the case of a parent. Elimelech, as I have already said, had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, who having arrived at manhood, and being removed from all intercourse with

Jewish females, married two of the women of the idolatrous land in which they dwelt. This being contrary to the Mosaic law, which forbade the Jews to intermarry with strangers, was unquestionably wrong. But what could their father expect who had exposed them to the peril? Religious parents should neither form associations, nor contract friendships, with gay worldly people, nor select a residence for the sake of their society; for by doing this they are almost sure to unite their children in marriage with the ungodly.

The family was now settled in Moab, and Judea seemed, if not forgotten, yet forsaken. Alas! how soon and how suddenly was the domestic circle in this case, as in many others, invaded and broken up, and all the gay visions of earthly bliss dissipated, like the images of a dream. If the famine followed not this household across the Jordan, death did; for Elimelech, who sought sustenance for them, found a grave far from the sepulchre of his fathers for himself. Who feels not for Naomi? There she is, a widow and a stranger in a strange land, distant from the house of her God, the means of grace, the ministers of religion, the communion of the faithful; and surrounded only by heathens, and their abominable idolatries! Still her sons are with her, and also their wives, who had, it seems, embraced the religion of their husbands. Here, then was a little circle around her of relatives, worshippers of the true God, who endeavoured to heal the sorrows of her heart, and wipe away the tears from her eyes. But her cup of sorrow was now to be filled to the brim, for first one son followed his father to the grave, and then the other. Oh, widows, think of her situation, bereft by this thrice inflicted blow, of every relative by blood who was at

hand, and left in a land of idols with two widowed daughters-in-law, and they of pagan origin!

Observe now the conduct of this forlorn and desolate woman. Did she look round on her gloomy solitude, and faint at the dreary prospect? No: she was evidently a woman of strong mind, and of stronger faith. She had not, perhaps, consented, but only submitted, to removal from the Holy Land. She felt in her extremity, that though far from the house and people of God, she was not far from his presence; and convinced of his all-mightiness, as well as of his all-sufficiency, she turned to his promise for comfort, and leaned upon his power for support. Recollecting her situation, she collected her thoughts, and they led her to Judea. Moab was now a land of none but melancholy associations, containing as it did, besides the wickedness of its inhabitants, the sepulchre of her husband and of her two sons. We wonder not that she thought of her native country, and determined to return. One only attraction made her linger. How could she quit and dwell so far from that grave which contained so much that was still precious to affection, and to memory! This one feeling overcome, she prepared for her sorrowful journey homewards. She had become endeared to Ruth and Orpah, who resolved not to quit her, and chose rather to abandon their own relatives, than the mother of their departed husbands. The three widows set forth together, a melancholy group. Thinking it right to put their sincerity to the test, Naomi addressed them in an early stage of the journey, in language, the pathos of which will be felt by every childless widow to the end of time. Orpah yielded to her entreaties, embraced her and returned: but no per-

suasions could induce Ruth, the chosen of the Lord, to separate from her; and she expressed the resolution of her piety and affection in language of exquisite simplicity, beauty, and tenderness; "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Such love was not to be refused, nor such a purpose to be shaken; and they travelled on together towards the land of Judea.

On their approach to Bethlehem, the city of Naomi, a fine testimony was afforded to this pious Jewess, of the estimation in which she was held by her neighbours and friends, when the whole city went forth to meet her, and to welcome her back. The very language of their congratulation, however gratifying to her heart, as it was in one respect, pierced it as with a barbed arrow, by reminding her, in the very repetition of her name which signifies happy, of the altered circumstances in which she returned to them. "Is this Naomi?" they exclaimed; "Is this she whom we knew so rich, so prosperous, so happy, as the wife of Elimelech? How changed, how broken, how desolate! Thy widow's weeds tell us what has become of thy husband: but where are thy two sons, and who is this younger widow that accompanies thee?" "Alas, alas," she replies, "it is Naomi's self, but not now answering to her name: Jehovah in his righteous judgments has deprived me of every thing that entitled me to the blissful designation that once belonged to me, as a joyful wife, and happy mother; call me Marah, a name more be-

fitting me as a poor childless widow." Amidst all she acknowledged the hand of God in her bereavements, and while she gave utterance to her sorrows, did not darken the tale with the language of complaint. Four times, in the compass of her short reply, did she trace up her losses to the divine hand. "The Lord hath afflicted me," was her declaration. How much is included in that expression!

Naomi gave not herself up to the indulgence of indolent and consuming grief, but immediately employed her thoughts in providing for the faithful and devoted Ruth, whose steadfast attachment to God and herself had been so convincingly manifested. Her conduct in this business was that not of an artful and scheming woman, busy and dexterous in contrivances for bringing about an advantageous marriage for her daughter-in-law; but of one who was well skilled in the provisions of the code of Moses, and who knew that if a man died without issue, the next of kin unmarried should marry his widow, and raise up children to preserve and transmit his patrimonial inheritance- in the direct line. All her conduct, in bringing about the union of Ruth with Boaz, however different from the habits, and opposed to the feelings of modern times, was directed with strict regard to the Jewish law.

Three different classes of widows may be instructed by this narrative.

1. Those who are called to this sorrowful condition in a strange land: such sometimes occur; and such I have known, of whose sorrows I have been the distressed and sympathising spectator. I shall not soon forget the melancholy scene I witnessed when an American lady in my own vicinity was deprived of her husband

by death, and left with five small children three thousand miles from any relative she had on earth. Her husband occupied a spacious house, and extensive grounds, every room and every tree of which, as her eye rolled listlessly round on what had once pleased her, reminded her of her utter and gloomy solitude. Others there are who are like her, and for whom I cherish a sympathy which no language can express. Your case, as a widow, even if surrounded by all the scenes and dear relations of home in your native land, is sad enough; but to be away from all those; to wear your sad costume, and pour forth your tears, among those who have no tie to you, and no interest in you, but what your sorrows create, and what common humanity inclines them to yield to the stranger in distress; this is affliction, and is to be a "widow indeed." Let me, however, remind you of topics that have, or ought to have, power to soothe even your lone heart. Recollect that God is every where. Like wretched Hagar in the wilderness, you may lift your eye to heaven, and say, "Thou God seest me." Yes, God with all his infinite attributes of power, wisdom, and love, is with you. Between you and earthly friends, continents may lie, and oceans roll, but all places are equally occupied by your divine friend, and are equally near to your heavenly home. Even though when you were required to surrender your husband you had been alone in the midst of an African wilderness, or an American forest, or an Asiatic heathen city, though you had been called yourself to dig his grave, and lay him there, God could have sustained you, for he is omnipotent and all-sufficient. Lean upon his arm; yea, trust him, (though it seem in your case to be a kind of experiment,

a sort of proof to test him,) and try under how weighty a load of care and grief he can support you. If it seem to you the uttermost exhibition of his strength that you are inviting him to, he will accept, with wondrous condescension, the invitation, and come in the plenitude of his power and grace to your help. Only believe that God can and will sustain you, and you will be sustained. The power of God is not weakened by your distance from the scenes of your nativity, the circle of your friends, or the comforts of your home.

2. In the conduct and character of Orpah, we find a type of those young widows, who having been brought to a profession of religion during the life of a pious husband, relapse at his death into their former worldly-mindedness, and indifference to spiritual subjects. This, unfortunately, is not an uncommon case. A female marries a pious man, and through his example and persuasions her mind is impressed with the great concern of salvation, and she becomes a professor of religion; renounces the world; conforms to the orders and observances of domestic worship; accompanies her husband to the house of God and the sacramental table, and seems in earnest about eternal salvation. In the course of Providence, her husband and spiritual guide is removed by death. During the first months of her widowhood, while her grief is fresh and deep, she still keeps up an attendance on all her religious duties, and repairs to them as almost her only comfort. But as the pungency of sorrow abates, she becomes less and less dependent on religion for her comfort. The world smiles on her, and she begins to return its smiles. She insensibly loses her interest in religion, and feels a reviving love for occupations and amusements, which during the life

of her husband she had seemed to abjure; till at length her heart, after a little hesitation, goes back to the world and its idols. It is a melancholy occurrence where the loss of the husband is followed by the loss of the soul, and the wife parts from him in the dark valley of the shadow of death never again to meet him; no, not in heaven. He left her with the hope of meeting her at the right hand of the Judge, and impressed his last kiss upon her cheek in the pleasing anticipation of embracing her as a glorified spirit in the world of glory; but she will not be there, for she has forsaken God, and returned to the world. What bitter emotions will the remembrance of his holy love, and faithful care of her spiritual interest, furnish in that dark world to which her spirit will be consigned! O woman, once wife of the pious, go not back. Let not the piety happily commenced amidst the joys of connubial life, be dispersed by the sorrows of your widowed state! Let the seeds of religion sown in your soul by a husband's hand, be watered by his widow's tears, and watched by her vigilant and assiduous care. Would you be separated from him in eternity, and by a gulf so wide and so impassable as that which divides hell from heaven? O, pray, and seek, and labour, that his death may be the means of perpetuating the faith which his life commenced. Keep up the recollection of his example, his prayers, his solicitude for your spiritual welfare. Let his blest shade, wearing his smile of piety and look of love, and with his finger pointing you to the skies, be ever before you, as your guardian spirit ministering to your salvation. If you have children, you never can forget with what holy anxiety he endeavoured to train them up for God and heaven. His prayers for their salvation

still sound in your ears: the tears he shed over their interests still drop before your eyes; his last charge, (as he consigned them into your hands on his dying bed,) to bring them up in wisdom's ways, yet thrills through your soul. O! and shall these consecrated pledges of your affection; these living monuments of his dear self; these offerings made so solemnly to God, be carried back by you to the world? Will you undo all that you saw him do with such pious labour? Will you take from the altar of God those whom he had conducted to it, and offer them at the shrine of Mammon?

3. But turn to Ruth, and see there a female brought by her marriage to the knowledge and worship, of the true God, and still retaining in her widowhood her devotedness to him. I again refer you to that exquisite burst of filial love, and genuine piety, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." No; she would not go back to her country and to her gods, but determined to go into Judea, and serve the God of Chilion, her husband; and she did. Happy woman, and rich was her reward! What can so gently soothe the sorrows of widowhood, so mollify its wounds, so raise its fallen hopes, and sweeten its bitter cup, as retaining the power of that religion, which sanctified and strengthened the marriage bond. True it is, that when a wife has found in her husband the instrument of her conversion, and many have done so, it seems an additional aggravation to her loss to be thus deprived of her earthly companion and heavenly guide; but when she holds fast the faith that she learnt from him, she is by that means prepared to

bow with submission to the loss, and to feel her solitude more tolerable. How sacred and how tender are her recollections, if she retains her stedfastness! Nothing but what was pleasant in the past recurs to her mind. No remorse of conscience smites her, as it must do the widow who departs from the religion she had professed in her marriage state. She never in her dreams or in her waking hours sees her husband's frowning image looking with reproachful eye upon her. Maintaining with unbroken consistency her profession, she is still soothed and comforted by the holy assiduities of those of her pious friends whom his religion brought around her, and whom her own now retains. Her heart is dead to the world, and no distance of time from his decease seems to revive it. In communion with God, that God to whom he led her, and whom they so frequently approached together, she finds her consolation. The seasons of their joint devotion still please and edify her in recollection. The books they read together are re-perused; the place which he occupied in the sanctuary and in the scene of domestic piety, still present him to her memory, and stimulate her devotion; the spot where they kneeled and poured out together their cares and joys in prayer and thanksgiving to God, rekindles from time to time the flame of piety in her soul.

Then her children, if she has any, are still the objects of her solicitude and care. She feels a sweet and sacred obligation upon her conscience, to carry on that system of education which she commenced under the direction and with the help of her most dear husband. She knows it to be at once her duty and her privilege to train up for God those whom she had so

often heard him commend with such earnestness to their Heavenly Father. Often as she talks of their sainted parent, till her tears and sobs almost choke her utterance, she reminds them that if they follow his faith and patience, they will soon all meet in the presence of Christ, to part no more.

Widow of a departed Christian, forsake not then the God of your husband, and your own God too: follow him in his piety, and follow him to glory, and let it be the solace of your widowhood to remember, that

“The saints on earth and all the dead
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living Head,
And of his grace partake.”

And in order to cleave to your husband's God, cleave to his pious relatives. Imitate Ruth in this. It may be that, like her, you have been called out of a circle in which true piety had neither place nor countenance. Your own relatives are of the earth, earthly, and holding lax views and sentiments with regard to religion they are likely, if much associated with, to divert your thoughts, and turn the current of your affections away from things unseen and eternal, to things seen and temporal. They will, perhaps, wish to recover you back to your former indifference to those important matters, and propose means to recreate your spirits very alien from all your present convictions and tastes. It will be their especial effort, probably, to draw you out of the circle of your husband's religious friends, and bring you back to the gay circle you have left. Such efforts must be judiciously and kindly, but at the same time firmly, resisted. Without alienating yourself from your own worldly friends, you must not allow yourself to be sepa-

rated from his pious ones. In their society you will find, not only the most precious and sacred consolations, but the most likely means to establish you in the faith and hope of the gospel, and to perpetuate your enjoyment of its rich privileges.

This is important on account of your children also. You are desirous of bringing them up in the fear of God and the love of Christ, according to the plan and design of their departed father; and to accomplish this, it is necessary to keep them as much as possible from such associations as would defeat your hopes, and to place them in the way of others whose example and influence will conduce to their accomplishment. Character is formed in a great measure by imitation, and if we place the young and susceptible mind in the way of such examples as are altogether worldly, even though they may not be vicious, we are exposing them to great hazard and are putting in jeopardy their eternal salvation.

CHAPTER II.

**THE WIDOW OF
ZAREPHATH.***Addressed to Destitute Widows.*

THE prophet Elijah, after having been miraculously fed, during a long famine, by ravens at the brook Cherith, found it necessary to quit his retreat in consequence of the failure of the stream which had hitherto supplied him with water. There is a mysterious sovereignty running through all the ways of God, extending also to his miraculous operations. He works no more wonders, and gives no more signs, than the exigency of the case needs. He that sent flesh by a bird of prey, could have caused the brook still to resist the exhausting power of the drought, or have brought water out of the stones which lay in its dry bed: but he did not see fit to do so. When the brook fails, however, God has a Zarephath for his servant; and a widow, instead of ravens, shall now feed him; for all creatures are equally God's servants, and he is never at a loss for instruments either of power to destroy his enemies, or of love to succour and help his friends: what he does not find he can make; and here, therefore, is a firm ground of our confidence in him. "They that know his name will put their trust in him." "Arise," said God to the prophet,

“get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee there.” Every thing in the injunction must have been confounding to reason. “What! go to Zarephath, a city out of the boundaries of the land of promise, the native country of Jezebel, my bitterest foe! Go to such a distance in a time of famine! What am I to do, and how am I to be fed on my long and toilsome journey? And when I shall have arrived there, am I to be dependent on a woman, and she a widow?” Did Elijah reason, and question, and cavil thus? Nothing of the sort, for what is difficult to reason, is easy to faith. God had commanded, and his commands imply promises. It was enough, “Go, for God sends thee;” and he went, nothing doubting, nothing asking, nothing fearing.

Arrived at the vicinity of the place about eventide, and looking round, of course, for the female hand that was at once to guide him to a home, and feed him too, Elijah saw a poor woman gathering a few sticks, which the long drought had scattered in abundance. Her occupation, as well as her appearance, proclaimed her poverty. He saw no one else; “Can that be my benefactress?” we can fancy him asking himself. Remembering, however, the ravens who had been his purveyors for a whole year, he knew that help could come to him by the hand of an instrument as feeble. An impression, such as those who had been accustomed to receive revelations from God well understood, assured him that his deliverer was before him. “Fetch me,” said he, “a little water in a vessel that I may drink.” Such a request was asking for more than gold. Yet awed by the prophet’s appearance, and influenced by the prophet’s God,

she set out immediately in quest of the precious liquid, but was stopped to hear another request: "Bring me a morsel of bread in thy hand." This second request drew from the poor woman one of the most affecting statements that even poverty's self ever made: "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." Alas! poor mother, thy condition is sad indeed; thou art, in thine own apprehension, about to make thy last meal, with thy fatherless child, and then with him to yield yourselves to death. It was time for the prophet to visit this widow, to whom he was evidently sent, more on her account than his own. How little could she have imagined when she uttered that sorrowful confession of destitution, that help was at hand, and a rich supply at her very door. How opportunely does God provide succours for our distresses. It is his glory to begin to help, when hope seems to end, and to send assistance in his own way, when ours all fail, that our relief may be so much the more welcome and precious by how much the less it is expected; and thus be to his own praise, as much as it is for our comfort. Elijah, full of prophetic impulse, as well as urged by hunger, said to her, "Fear not; go, and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and afterwards make for thee and for thy son: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." What answer to this would he have received from many, yea, from all who were not as full of faith

as this poor widow? She might have said, "Charity begins at home. My child has claims upon me, and I have a right to my own provisions, which it is impossible to forget or forego for any one; and I am surprised at a request which would take the last morsel from us both, to feed a stranger." And I do not hesitate to say, that her compliance with the injunction can be justified only on the ground of her faith in the promise. That she did believe the promise is evident; and equally so, that this faith was the gift of God to her soul. This was faith, and faith of no ordinary strength; it made her willing "to spend upon one she had never seen before, a part of the little she had, in hope of more; to part with the means of present support, which she saw, in confidence of future supplies, which she could not see: and thus oppose her senses and her reason to exercise her belief in God's word."* She went and did according to the saying of Elijah. And now, I ask, was she deceived by the failure, or rewarded by the fulfilment, of the promise? When did one word that God has spoken fall to the ground? Thus stands the record: "She and her son did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah?"

"Behold then," says the author of "Elijah the Tishbite," "this man of God cheerfully sitting down in her solitary cottage. Surely 'the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous:' for 'the right hand of the Lord,' on their behalf, 'doeth valiantly.' They rejoice together, not only on account of temporal blessings, but much more on account of those which are spiritual. Israel had lost Elijah, and a poor widow in a heathen land has found him. Thus often does it fare with a people, who though they have been privileged with the most faithful preaching of the gospel, will not turn unto the Lord, with all their heart, and walk uprightly before

* See the Contemplations of Bishop Hall.

him. They are cursed with a famine of the Word of God; the children's bread is taken from them, and imparted to others whom they account no better than dogs, who however 'will receive it,' and are languishing for it. Indeed our Lord himself thus applies this part of sacred history to the case of the people of Nazareth, who refused to receive his ministry: 'I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land: but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.' Here then the prophet dwells quite happily under the widow's roof. All distress has disappeared. The meal is not diminished in the barrel, nor fails the oil in the cruise, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. Neither does their spiritual sustenance fail. Well might this poor widow rejoice in the privilege of sitting daily at the feet of the man of God, for instruction in divine things! Can we doubt for a moment that the prophet most gladly opened his mouth in divine wisdom, to impart it to the soul of the simple, believing sister? Can we doubt that they prayed together, that they read together out of Moses and the prophets, that they conversed together of the day of Christ, which Abraham saw with gladness? And would they not, think you, occasionally raise a spiritual song to the honour of their Lord and Saviour? How swiftly and how pleasantly must the hours have passed with them; and well might the angels of God have rejoiced, as no doubt they did, over this little church in the wilderness! Behold here, then, my brethren, the bright egress and happy termination of a path, which commenced in such thick darkness! Only let the children of God implicitly follow his guidance, and he will assuredly conduct them to a glorious end."

The trials of this poor widow, however, consisted not of her poverty alone. The child miraculously snatched from the jaws of famine, was still mortal, as the event proved, for he sickened and died. In her behaviour under this new trial, we see that her faith as a believer was sadly mixed with her infirmity as a woman; and that it did not shine with the same lustre in this new trial, as it did in the former one. What poor changeable creatures we are, and how insufficient is past grace for present duties and afflictions! Perhaps we are sometimes as apt to presume upon past experience, as we are, at

other seasons, to forget it. "What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" This was the language of ignorance and passion, which we should hardly have expected from one who had seen the miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil; and shows how sorrow is apt to becloud the judgment and to exasperate the feelings; and, at the same time, how affliction is apt to revive the recollections of past and even pardoned sin. Elijah, with a touching gentleness, which instructs us how to bear with the petulant complaints of deep grief, bore with her expostulations, and restored the child to life, and to the arms of his joyful and grateful mother. Her faith and confidence, a little shaken by the trial, returned with her son's life, and she lived, with him, to praise and glorify God.

And now let those to whom this beautiful narrative is especially applicable, take it to themselves, and apply it to their own sad and sorrowful hearts. And who are they? The widows that are left in circumstances of deep poverty, who have only a handful of meal, as it were, in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse; and who after eating this last supply, are preparing to resign themselves to want or death. Afflicted woman, my heart bleeds for you. The provider for the comfort of yourself and your children is gone: the hand of the diligent that once made you, if not rich, yet comfortable, has forgotten its cunning, and it is your bitter lot to see the little which he left you, continually consuming, without your knowing, or even being able to conjecture, from whence the empty barrel is to be replenished. It is for such as you to remember the words of Jehovah, "And let thy widows trust in me." You have no other trust, and none are so much encouraged to trust in God, as

they whose sole confidence is in him. Then, above all times, is the time to look up with hope to God, when we have no other to look up to. What promises are upon record for your consolation. Having already laid them before you, I will only refer to a few of them. How sweet is the language of the 34th and 37th Psalms. Turn to your Bible, and read those comforting portions of Holy Scripture. Then how cheering to the believer is the prophet's assurance, "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given; his water shall be sure." Can any thing be more encouraging than the apostle's application to the individual believer, of the promise made to Joshua? "So that we may boldly say," we Christians, yes, every one of us individually, "The Lord is my helper." Be content with such things as ye have then, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The force of this passage in the original exceeds the power of translation: it contains five negative particles within the compass of these few words; so that, literally rendered, it would be, "No, I will not leave thee; no, no, I will not forsake thee." It is one of the most emphatical and beautiful examples of the force of a negative declaration, in all the scripture. God seems to start back with dread and abhorrence at the thought of forsaking his people. Trust him. Not that I mean to insinuate that you are authorised to expect miraculous supplies. Your garments will not be rendered undecaying, like those of the Israelites in the wilderness, nor your provisions inexhaustible, like those of the widow before us; but the God of providence can find you means and instruments of assistance, as effectual as if the laws of nature were suspended in your behalf. All hearts are in his hands; all events are at his disposal;

all contingencies are in his knowledge and under his direction. What is wanting on your part is faith. Only believe: and perhaps you are really shut up to this; you can scarcely do any thing else.

Not that I mean to discourage effort. On this subject I have dwelt in a former part of the volume: you must, in proper season and manner, exert yourself in your own support and that of your children; but what I mean is, that when after every disposition, and fixed determination, and collected energy to do this, you do not see through what channel and to what object your efforts are to be directed; you are to believe that God will, in ways unknown and unthought of by you, afford you his assistance. This is faith in your case. In ten thousand times ten thousand instances, as I have already remarked, he has helped dependent widows as effectually without a miracle, as he did the woman of Zarephath by one. The barrel of meal and cruse of oil have been replenished as truly, though not as mysteriously, as in the case before us. And why is this case recorded, but to encourage you to trust in God? It was a miracle it is true, and like other miracles had the high design of confirming the revelation of God by his prophet; but it was a miracle of supply to one in want, intended visibly to typify and illustrate God's ordinary providence in supplying the necessities of his people, and to encourage through all ages, the exercise of pious confidence in him. Read it with this view of it; and when, from time to time, your last supply is exhausted, read it again and again, to raise the hope of a future communication from him, who hears the young ravens when they cry. You do not know when or how it will come, but believe that it will come. O what a God-honouring grace is faith! And as it honours Him, so

He delights to honour it. All things are possible and all things are promised, to him that believes. As no miracle could be wrought, in the time when these wondrous operations were common, without faith in the subject of it; so now, in cases of providential interposition, no manifestation of God's power and grace is to be looked for, but in answer to faith. I would not encourage enthusiasm, but I believe that God says to his dependent and destitute people, "Be it unto you, according to your faith." Do not, then, look only to see the barrel of meal gradually sinking lower and lower, but look up unto God who can replenish it; and with much in the former to generate doubt and fear, feel also that there is as much in the latter to encourage faith and hope.

But there is another lesson to be learnt by the conduct of the widow of Sarepta, and that is, not to let your own grief and comparative destitution, steel your hearts against the wants of others, and close your hands to their necessities. She shared with Elijah the last meal she was preparing for herself and her son. Grief is apt to make us selfish, and limited circumstances to produce an indisposedness to communicate. Take heed against such a state of mind as this. Exhaust not all your tears upon yourself. There are many as destitute as you are, perhaps some far more so. You are prepared by experience to sympathise with them, and will find in sympathy a relief for your own sorrows. Nothing tends more to relieve that overwhelming sense of wretchedness with which the heart of the sufferer is sometimes oppressed, than a generous pity for a fellow weeper.

CHAPTER III.

**THE WIDOW OF ONE OF
THE SONS OF THE
PROPHETS.**

Addressed to destitute Widows of Ministers.

BY the sons of the prophets we are to understand those who were collected into a kind of colleges, where persons, called of God to the prophetic office, were trained for their future duties, under the superintendance of inspired men. Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and probably some others, were appointed to this high and responsible station. Among the disciples of these great teachers were some married men. One of these, the Scripture tells us, died, leaving a widow involved in debt contracted by her husband, and with two children to support. She was sued for payment, and as the law allowed a claim for personal service, in default of any other means of discharging the debt, a claim which extended, according to the interpretation of the Jews, to a man's children, the creditors were about to seize her two sons. When denied mercy by them, she applied in her extremity to Elisha, with the hope, probably, of obtaining his interposition with the chief creditor, or with some other persons able to befriend her. She reminds the prophet of the godly character of her husband; of his own acquaintance with him;

and of his knowledge of the truth of her testimony to his blameless conduct. From this it seems fair to conclude, that his debts had not been contracted by prodigality, luxury, or imprudence. Elisha listened to the widow's tale of woe, and then by an impulse from God, relieved her wants by the performance of a miracle. Still it was a miracle that required some exertion on her part after the means of supply were provided. Enquiry being made what articles of value or support she had left in the house, it was found that all which poverty had left her, was a small pot of oil, which, as is well known, was then used both for food and as an unguent. This she was directed to produce, and, at the same time, to go and borrow all the vessels which she could well get together in a short time, and in a small room. These having been procured, she was directed to pour out the oil into them. She complied with the orders, and the oil continued to flow and to fill the vessels, till there was enough, upon its being sold, to pay her husband's debts, and save her sons from servitude.

Here again was an instance of faith. She knew the word of the prophet was the word of God, and she believed it, confidently expecting the relief which she needed. Elisha, it is true, had not in so many words promised to grant a supply of oil, but she understood his command to borrow the vessels in this light, and therefore collected them, both large and numerous ones. And the oil continued flowing as long as she had any vessels to receive it, and had her faith been greater, her supply had been raised in proportion to it. We are never straitened in God, in his power or grace, but in ourselves. It is our faith that stops or fails, and not

his promise. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. And if this pot of oil was not exhausted as long as there were vessels to receive it, shall we fear lest the "golden oil" (of divine grace) which flows from the very root and fatness of the good olive tree, should fail, as long as there are any lamps to be supplied from it? How well and deservedly is faith called precious! How many has it sanctified, comforted, and saved! Why the prophet relieved her in this way we know not, except it were to bring out her faith, her industry, and her honesty, all in one view, and in beautiful harmony. Certain it is that all these were exhibited; her faith in receiving the promise; her industry in collecting and selling the oil; and her honesty in paying the debts with the produce.

"Your fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever?" "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you." Yes, the word is immortal, but the preacher of it is mortal. Ministers die like other men. Life works in their hearers, but death in them. They not only die in their work, but often by it. They sink to the grave worn out by labour, and usually leave their widows and children ill-provided with the riches of this world. Here and there an individual attains, by the bounty of Providence, to comparative wealth, but these are the exceptions: the general rule of ministerial circumstances is, if not poverty, an approach to it. To them it is given to say, with the great apostle of the Gentiles, "poor, yet making many rich." Blessed with talents, which in

other occupations would be sufficient to procure competence, if not wealth, they give themselves, in most cases, wholly to the things of the Lord. The consequence of this is, that with the most rigid economy, they can with difficulty provide for their own support, and are unable to amass property. Considering their acquirements, mental capacities, and rank in life, they are the worst paid public functionaries in existence. But they look not for their reward from men, or upon earth. They serve a Master infinitely rich, and infinitely generous, and amidst much ingratitude and injustice from their flocks, they can leave their services and their reward with him. It is vain, however, to deny that it costs them many an anxious hour, when breaking down under their exertions, to contemplate the moment of their removal from this world. Not that they have any thing to fear for themselves; for them it will be better to depart and to be with Christ. They are going to rest from all their labours, and all their cares; but the prospect of leaving a widow and fatherless children, to the generosity of a congregation which was never over liberal while they lived, and is likely soon to forget them in affection for their successor, requires strong confidence indeed to suppress the fear, and even the groan, of painful anxiety.

The dying fears, the last he will ever know, of the good man, oftentimes prove but too prophetic, as you, his forlorn and desolate widow, too well know. You are indeed to be pitied. He who, in relation to you, united the husband and the pastor, is removed; he whose love in your own house was your solace as a wife, and whose sermons in the house of God were your comfort as a Christian, is gone for ever. You are the centre of that grief the wide circle of which embraces the congregation.

It is pain enough to see the pulpit occupied by another, which he once and so long filled; and to hear another voice than his sound forth the message of life: but other woes aggravate this heavy one. They loved him and valued his ministry perhaps, while he lived, and it seemed as if he had prepared for himself an imperishable monument in every heart, and would be long and gratefully remembered by those on whose hallowed recollections he had strong claims; and who, it might have been expected, would love to demonstrate and perpetuate their gratitude, in sympathy for his widow, and beneficence to his children. But you have proved how little reliance is to be placed upon posthumous affection. You were prepared, or ought to have been, to witness a transfer of that respect and affection which had been cherished for the former pastor, to his successor; it is right and proper it should be so; and you ought to rejoice and feel thankful that the church, for which your husband laboured so hard, prayed so fervently, and which pressed so heavily on his spirit in his last and suffering hours, is so comfortably settled with one to follow in his footsteps, and to carry on his usefulness: but you were not prepared, (how could you be?) to see him so soon forgotten, and to hear comparisons unkindly made, and indelicately conveyed to you, between him and his successor, and to his disparagement. You were not prepared, (how could you be?) to find his widow neglected, his children forsaken: to feel so soon that you were left, though surrounded with numerous friends that once were competitors for your friendship, to mourn apart and unpitied. You were not prepared to learn how much of former attention was paid you for your husband's sake, and how soon, when he was removed,

you would find this out. Nor is this the last or the lowest step in the descending scale of your sorrows. When your husband died, the means of your support died with him, and you with your children are now cast upon Providence for support. You expected a little more generous and practical sympathy from the church in whose spiritual welfare your husband wore out his strength; and are bitterly disappointed that all those professions of attachment, which it was your privilege, at one time, to hear so profusely lavished on him, have ended in results, so far as you are concerned, so miserably disproportionate.

Should all this be the case with any whose sorrowful eyes shall read these pages, I recommend to them the consideration that, provided their faith and trust be equal to the emergency, the less they receive from man, the more they may expect from God. Bear this heavy trial with meekness and a quiet spirit. Do not show resentment, and endeavour to feel none. Bring no accusation and utter no complaint, much less reviling. Silent and patient submission is most likely to draw attention to your circumstances. Many a widow in your situation has injured her own cause by reproachful reflections upon the people of her late husband's charge. A modest, but not servile appeal, laid in confidence before some of your friends, on behalf of his necessitous children, may be properly made, and ought to be attended to; and in order to engage those friends, take care that your children be well trained. It must be confessed, that in many instances, the want of interest and sympathy for the widow and children of a minister of religion, is to be traced, not so much to the absence of kind feeling on the part of the people, as to

her want of good sense and good temper, and their destitution of good training and good conduct. If she be unreasonable in her expectations, and petulant and disrespectful in the event of their not being fulfilled; or if the children be rude, refractory, and unlovely, through defective parental restraint; it requires much stronger generosity or affection, than is usually met with even among professing Christians, to overcome so much that is repulsive, and to be kind to the living solely for the sake of the dead. Amidst the deficiencies or the scantiness of human sympathy, look for it from a source where it never fails. God observes your situation, and beholds you as the relic of one whom he delighted to honour. You can go to Him with boldness and say, "Thy servant is dead who feared thee; look in pity on those whom he has left in poverty and difficulty." If such a plea prevailed with the prophet, will it not with God? He is no debtor to you, or to your late husband; but he is a generous master to his servants, and rewards them in a way of grace, in a manner that is often surprising. If he takes care of widows and fatherless children in general, how confidently may those who belonged to his own servants expect his kind interposition? Go then with humble boldness to the Lord Jesus, carry your children in the arms of your faith, place them in his presence, and say with all reverence and humility, but with all confidence, "Behold the children of thy departed servant." Remember that more is expected from you than from others. The widow of a minister should be an example to all widows. Colonel Hutchinson, when taking leave of his wife, admonished her not to forget her standing, and to mourn as a woman of no ordinary character. How suitable is this to the widow

of a teacher of religion; and how much does it become her to shew, by the manner in which she bears his death, how well she had profited by the instructions of his life. His sermons on submission to the will of God, should all appear embodied in her meek and pious resignation.

If there are sources of pain peculiar to the widow of a minister, there are also sources of comfort. The memory of such a man is blessed. You were the companion of one who wore out life, not in amassing wealth, but in winning souls to God: not in enriching himself with filthy lucre, but in conferring upon others imperishable wealth. Look back upon his holy and useful career. Call to recollection his labours for Christ; his trials and discouragements; his joys and successes. Think how he served his master, and how his master honoured him; with what untiring zeal, amidst what self-denial, and with what result, he pursued his holy calling. Dwell upon his blameless character, his spotless reputation, and the esteem in which he was held by the churches of Christ. Remember how often he prayed rather to die than be permitted to live and sin. He was faithful unto death, and laid down his office only with his life. None blush for him, but all weep for themselves, before his monument. Even the tongue of slander is silent at that hallowed spot, and dares not utter in whisper a single insinuation. O, this is balm to a widow's heart. And then look at the fruits of his ministry. Some have preceded him to glory, and are his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ; while others are following him on, to add new gems to his diadem, and new delights to him that is to wear it. Dwell not only on what he was, and what he is, but on

what you were to him: how you aided him in his ministry; not indeed by writing or preaching his sermons, but by sustaining the noble heart which dictated all his labours, and by the impulses and energies of which all were sustained. Call to recollection how he reposed in your faithful bosom his cares of office, and asked your counsels amidst its intricacies; how, when he came home agitated and perplexed, you calmed the perturbations of his spirit; how, when discouraged, you cheered him; how you suggested to him subjects for his pulpit ministrations, which had occurred to you in your own meditations, and which thus became the means in his lips of saving souls from death; how you aided him in his visitations and ministrations to the sick, the poor and distressed; and how by your earnest prayers, you brought down upon his labours the dew of heaven; and how you were, by all these means, a help-meet for him in his embassy to this revolted world. Those efforts, it is sadly true, were all put an end to by his death, but to have made them is a precious remembrance. Such recollections fall not to the lot of ordinary women, and ought to be a balm for your wounded heart.

If you are happy amidst the people to whom your husband ministered, remain where you are; remain still within the chapel where he laboured, and near the grave where he sleeps: if they love his memory, and are kind to you and your children for your own sakes, as well as for his, where can you be more happy on earth than in the scene of his living exertions, and in the vicinity of his tomb? Where will his precious name be so frequently and respectfully mentioned, and where will sympathy with you be so fully felt and so tenderly expressed as among the people of his charge? But let wisdom

and circumspection characterise your conduct. A minister's widow has sometimes aided not a little to disquiet the mind of his successor, and to trouble the circle of his friends. Excite no suspicions, awaken no jealousies, institute no comparisons. Do not wish for influence; be not the centre of a party; attempt not to guide the opinions of others, and avoid all private interference and meddling with church affairs. The importance of this is in exact proportion to the esteem in which you are held. There are few women so weak, as to have no power to do mischief, for it is surprising and grievous to find what insignificant abilities, when combined with restlessness and a meddling propensity, may be a source of annoyance, and a cause of disquiet, especially in small communities. In some cases where, for instance, there may not be the best understanding, nor much good feeling, between the widow and the flock; or where a part of that flock may happen to be attached to her, and not equally attached to the new pastor and his wife; prudence and propriety combine to make it her duty, if not prevented by circumstances, to retire. It is a deep blot on the christian reputation of any minister's widow to remain in a church, only to be a nucleus of dissatisfaction and discontent, and to aid in disturbing, perhaps dividing, the society, the peace of which was the one great object of her husband's life.

After all, however, it must be confessed, that where the widow and family of a minister meet with neglect from the congregation in which he laboured, (and some such cases do occur, both in the Church of England, and amongst Dissenters), the fault is, in many cases, to be traced up to a want of generosity on the part of the people.

CHAPTER IV.

**THE WIDOW CASTING HER
TWO MITES INTO THE
TREASURY.***Addressed to Poor Widows.*

THIS treasury, I suppose, was a large chest fixed near the entrance to the temple, and divided into different compartments, for receiving the offerings of the people. These were appropriated to the purposes for which the donors presented them; part for the repairs of the building, part for the expenses of public worship, and part, perhaps, for the relief of the poor. The chest was well placed. Piety and liberality should be always associated. Piety should stimulate charity: charity should be the fruit of piety. On one occasion, Christ placed himself opposite this treasury to watch the offerings of the people. The affluent passed on and deposited their wealth; for "they cast in much." This was to their credit; yet they who possess much, should give much. God expects it, yea, demands it. "With the richer worshippers came one who united in her circumstances the double affliction of poverty and widowhood. She of course, will offer nothing. She needs to receive, rather than to impart. All she has to bestow, it may be presumed, is her good wishes. But, no; her hand is not empty. She drops two mites, a farthing. Perhaps

the smallness of the sum excited a smile of contempt from some proud rich man, as he followed her, and magnified by contrast the amount of his own contribution. But there was another eye that watched the widow's offering, and another mind that drew a contrast. And Christ called his disciples unto him and said, "Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury." Yes, there is the scale on which the Saviour estimates the amount of our contributions to the cause of religion and humanity; not merely by the sum given but by its proportion to the wealth possessed. A mite from one is vastly, incalculably more, than a pound from another. Much and little are relative terms. That would be munificence in one, which would be niggardliness in another. No commendation was pronounced on the gifts of the wealthy; for they had, perhaps, after all, given little compared with what they retained; but this widow's offering has immortalised her. She gave all she had. I do not stay to inquire about the prudence of her contribution, whether it was proper to bestow her last farthing; doubtless there were some circumstances in her case which justified the act, and with which the Saviour was acquainted. She had, perhaps, no needy children, whose wants should have reminded her that charity begins at home: perhaps it was a thank-offering for some special mercy received; some gracious support in one of those troubles, which widows, and especially poor widows, only know. At any rate, the gift and its principle attracted the notice, and drew forth the eulogy of the Saviour. It was but a farthing, but that farthing was as much a manifestation of her disposition, as David's almost countless amount of gold was of his.

Our Lord Jesus Christ still holds his seat opposite the treasury of the temple, and watches from his throne in heaven, the offerings of those who give to the cause of religion and humanity. His celestial glory has diminished nothing of his condescending regard to the beneficence of his people. It should be our aim in all the good we do, to approve ourselves to his all-seeing eye, both by the purity of our motives, and the amount of our donations. Alas! what are we the better for the notice of those perishing and impotent eyes which can only view the outside of our actions: or for that word of applause which vanishes on the lips of the speaker! Thine eye, O Lord, is piercing and retributive. As to see thee, is perfect happiness, so to be seen of thee, is true contentment and glory.

It may be fairly inferred from this passage, that the Lord Jesus, while he beholds with favour the gifts of all, receives with especial acceptance the offerings of the poor widow. It is often the sorrow of such, in this age of christian missions, that they cannot share in the glorious undertaking of converting the world to Christ. In happier times, when the candle of the Lord shone in their tabernacle, and the light of prosperity irradiated their path, they too had something to give, and delighted to give it, to pour the blessings of salvation on this dark earth: but now they feel shut out from this feast of benevolence, and denied all fellowship in the great work of evangelising the nations: for they have nothing to give. Nothing? "Nothing," you reply, "worth my giving, or any society's receiving!" Is that the language of pride, despondency, or parsimony? Can you not, then, stoop to give a penny, after you have had the privilege of giving a pound? Do you blush to

offer copper, after the silver and gold that have glittered in your hand, as you approached the treasury? O woman, cast away that feeling, contribute your two mites, and if given "with a glad heart and free," that little offering will draw upon it a more benignant smile from the Lord of all, than ever he bestowed upon your costlier gifts in the days of your prosperity. If you are ashamed to give it, he is not ashamed to receive it, nor backward to reward it. Ashamed of your little! Why it is relatively more than the hundreds of the rich. It is all self-denial, and sacrifice, and generous zeal.

"In the obscurity of retirement, amid the squalid poverty and the revolting privations of a cottage, it has often been my lot to witness scenes of magnanimity and self-denial, as much beyond the belief as the practice of the great; a heroism borrowing no support either from the gaze of the many, or the admiration of the few, yet flourishing amidst ruins, and on the confines of the grave; a spectacle as stupendous in the moral world, as the falls of the Missouri in the natural; and like that mighty cataract, doomed to display its grandeur only where there are no eyes to apprehend its magnificence."

Yes, there is an eye that looks on both, but with more admiration on the little offering of benevolence that drops unheeded and unheard by man, into the box at a collection, than on the river that falls with the roar of thunder into its mighty basin. Think of aged widows sacrificing the sugar of their tea, and poor men giving up the small portion of their beverage at dinner, to save a mite or two for the missionary cause. O how little are the offerings of the rich, though the announcement of their hundreds from the platform makes the building to shake with applause, compared with the penny of such self-denying friends to the cause as these, but whose contributions find

their way in silence to the mighty aggregate of funds! Ashamed, my friends! Your mites are the richest trophies of our cause; and if it were possible to divide the results of our success, and apportion so much usefulness to each particular contribution of property, we should find, perhaps, the richest allotment assigned to the widow's farthing.

Is there a less worthy motive that holds back your slender offering? Is there a feeling of grudging, a reasoning in this strain; "Surely they cannot take the poor widow's penny for the cause of missions." Certainly not, unless she feels it to be one of poverty's deepest woes to have nothing to give to such an object, and would esteem herself unhappy if her little contribution were despised. Have you nothing then to give for widows poorer than yourself? "Poorer than myself," you exclaim, in a tone of indignant surprise, "who can be poorer than I am?" I answer, the Pagan woman, left forlorn and desolate, without a Bible, a Sabbath, or a minister, to direct her to the widow's God: and there are millions of such. You have the Gospel, which abolishes death, and brings life and immortality to light. You can look beyond the grave, and see the orb of celestial day rising in majesty before the eye of christian hope, and gilding with his glorious effulgence the dark clouds which collect over the valley of the shadow of death. You hear voices of joy, and sounds of life, floating like heavenly music, over the still chambers of mortality. In pity, then, to those who gaze on the sepulchre in silent despair, give a little, even of your little, to send them the Gospel, which keeps you from sorrowing as others who have no hope. Have com-

passion on the widows that sit down by the grave of a husband, who has gone away in the darkness of paganism, or who still, in some parts of India, are doomed to mingle their ashes with his, in that funeral pile, the flame of which is kindled by the hand of their first-born son. Is there not, then, a widow far more wretched than yourself, for whom the scant penny of poverty, or the two mites of all but absolute destitution should be consecrated to God?

CHAPTER V.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.*Addressed to Widows on the loss of Children.*

THE mercy of Christ, as it never wanted objects in this sorrowful world, so it never wearied in relieving them. One day he healed the servant of the centurion, upon being earnestly solicited to do it, to show what efficacy there is in the prayer of faith; the next, without being asked, he restored to life the son of a widow, in order to demonstrate his sovereignty in the bestowment of his favours. One act of beneficence seemed only to make him more ready and more willing to perform another; in this also he is an example to his people, who are not to satisfy themselves with any measure of good works.

But let us attend to the present instance of his miraculous kindness. As he drew near to a small town called Nain, a funeral procession was coming out at the gate, and was slowly moving towards the place of sepulture, which, with the Jews, was always without the walls of their cities. It was not accidental that the Saviour came up just at that time, but it was ordered for the glory of God. Here was a spectacle to move a harder heart than that of Christ. The victim of death was, in

this instance, a young man cut off in the flower of his age, and on that account, a loss to society, but a still heavier loss to that venerable form, which, with the attire of a widow, as well as the low moans of a bereaved mother, is following the corpse to its last home. It is a short, but simply touching narrative which the historian gives: "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." When the scripture would convey the most impressive idea of the depth of human sorrow, it uses this form of speech, "As one that is in bitterness for an only son." There it is before us, in that forlorn widow. It is afflictive to see a loving couple following an only child to the grave; but then they consider, as with tearful eyes they look upon each other, that there might have been a grief still harder to be borne than even this. "Thank God," they exclaim, "we are spared to each other;" and thus they find, even at the opening grave of an only child, a supporting thought in the presence of each other. But this is a case in which there is no one to share the grief, and support the fainting heart of a sorrowful woman: her husband is already in the grave, and her son, her only son, is about to be laid on the coffin of his father. At this juncture the Son of God drew nigh. The widow's sorrows touched his heart; and he said to her, "Woman, weep not." O, if she was not too much absorbed in grief to heed him, what must she have thought of such an injunction: "Who has cause to weep if it is not I? If tears are ever in season, they are now. Stranger, cease to taunt me with such an exhortation, unless you can restore to my widowed arms the child that lies sleeping there in death." She knew not who it was that spoke to her, but she shall soon

know to her unutterable joy. As the Lord of life and death he arrests the coffin, and frees the prisoner: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." That is the voice that shall one day burst every tomb, call up our vanished bodies from those elements into which they are resolved, and raise them out of their beds of dust, to glory, honour, and immortality. The grave shall restore all it receives, whether that grave be in the sea, in the dry land, in the forest, the wilderness, or in the crowded cemetery. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God shall raise the dead?" It is no harder for the Almighty word, which gave being unto all things, to say, "Let them be restored," than "Let them be made." The sleeping youth obeyed the mandate, rose upon the bier, cast off his grave clothes, descended, and threw himself into the arms of his astonished, enraptured, and overwhelmed mother. Blessed type of that wondrous scene just alluded to, when at the sound of the last trumpet this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. I attempt not, for who could succeed in the effort, to pourtray the mother's joy, and her renewed intercourse with her lost child: all she could find composure enough to say, was, "Rejoice with me, for this my son was dead, and is alive again!"

I now turn to those who are appointed to bear like sorrows, without the hope of her relief; I mean those widows, and such there are, who have been called to part from an only child. Forlorn indeed is your situation; desolate your house; bereaved your heart of its last earthly hope. Not to sympathise with you, not to concede the greatness of your calamity, would be

the most cruel insensibility, such as I pray God to preserve me from.

But stop, is all dead? Your husband is dead, your parents are dead, your children are dead; but is not Christ alive; is not the Bible alive? Has the tomb swallowed up all? No. Be this your exultation, "He lives, and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." True, you cannot expect that the power of Christ will be exerted, at least till the resurrection, to call your only child from the grave: but the same heart that pitied the widow of Nain, pities you. Jesus sees you as certainly, and compassionates you as tenderly, as he did her, although his compassion may not be exerted in precisely the same manner.

Perhaps that only son was the last thing that stood between you and the Saviour to detain your heart from him. You had not been wearied from the world till he was taken. You still sought your happiness on earth. Your whole soul was bound up in that child. You had no supreme love for God and Christ, while he lived: and as there was a purpose of eternal mercy to be fulfilled by the death of your child, it pleased God to remove him. You would not come to Christ while that obstacle was in the way, and therefore God displaced it: now the way to the cross is all clear. The Saviour has come to the widow, not indeed to raise her son, but to save her soul: not to say to him, "Arise, young man;" but to say to you, "Arise, and be saved." If by the loss of your only son you should gain the salvation of your immortal soul, you will find a present solace for your sorrows, and an eternal source of gratitude that they were sent.

But what are you to do without him? Let God answer that question: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Your child was your comforter. Be it so: but is there not a Divine Comforter who frequently reserves his choicest consolations for the most disconsolate seasons. Your son was your support. This, I admit, is trying to faith and confidence in God. For a dependent widow, to lose the only child on whom she leaned for support, seems the last extremity of human destitution. It is in such extremities God loves to put forth his power. He often brings us into a very wilderness, to show us his own all-sufficiency. He strips us of our last comfort, and then says to us, "Now trust in me for every thing."

There are other considerations which should induce submission even to your melancholy lot. Heavy trials are sometimes sent to prevent still heavier ones. There are calamities worse than death; whether it be our own death, or the death of our nearest friends. It is better to die in honour, than to live in sin and disgrace. How many widows are there whose only sons are breaking their mothers' hearts by their misconduct? Is not many a mother at this moment exclaiming thus, in her solitude, "O my child, would God the grave had covered thee, whilst thou wert yet in reputation and comparative innocence! Alas! that thou shouldest have lived to disgrace thyself, and bring down thy widowed mother's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave!"

I remember to have read or heard somewhere the following anecdote. A widowed mother had an only son who, while yet a youth, was seized with an alarming illness. Her heart was in the greatest tumult of

grief at the prospect of his removal. She sent for her minister to pray for her child's recovery. It was his preservation from death that was to be the subject of the minister's petitions, rather than the mother's submission to the will of God. Like a faithful pastor, he begged her to control her excessive grief and solicitude, and resign her son to God's disposal; but to no avail; it seemed as if she neither could nor would give him up. Prayer was to pluck him from the borders of the grave, whether God were willing to spare him or not. Her son lived: the mother, with ecstatic joy, received him back, as from the borders of the tomb. He grew to adult age; but it was to die in circumstances ten thousand times more afflictive to the mother's heart, than his earlier removal would have been. As he came to manhood he turned out profligate, extravagant, dishonest. His crimes became capital; he was detected, tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged; and seven years from the day when that minister prayed for his life, he had to visit this wretched mother, to be with her and comfort her, if indeed her heart could receive consolation, on the day of his execution. O, widow! is there not a heavier calamity than the death in ordinary circumstances of an only son? I would not for a moment suggest that it is probable your son would have come to this, but it is possible; or if not to this, yet to something that would have embittered all your future days. Would not this distressed woman look with envy upon others, whose children had died in honour and reputation, and think their affliction not worthy of the name, compared with hers? Would she not look back with deep compunction upon her own

rebellious grief and unwillingness to give up her child at the will of God?

Before I close this chapter, I would suggest that as the death of an only child removes from your widowed heart the last hope or object of a terrestrial nature, that seemed to give interest to earth, or occupation upon it; you should look for objects of another kind, even such as are spiritual, heavenly, and divine. Seek, then, not only for a richer enjoyment of personal religion, as the chief source of consolation, but cherish a warmer zeal for its diffusion, as the best and happiest occupation that can employ your faculties or your time. Now that God has taken from you your son, adopt the cause of his Son. Consecrate yourself afresh to the interests of evangelical piety. What have you now to do on earth; what is left for you to do; what can you find to do, but diffuse by your property if you possess much, and by your personal labours if you are in health, the benefits of the gospel, the blessings of salvation, to those who are destitute of them? Live now, wholly for God, and the salvation of the human race. Soften the weight of your cross by making known the glory of the cross of Christ. Instead of retiring into seclusion, to nourish woe, to leave your sorrow to prey upon your heart, or to let life fret itself away amidst the indolence of grief, rouse your spirit to holy action. Let your loss be the gain of others, by your employing your leisure for their benefit. Freed from every tie that bound your soul to personal or relative objects, feel at liberty for doing good to others. Active benevolence is the best balm for such wounds as yours. Allow yourself no leisure for dark and melancholy thoughts to collect, or for busy

memory to torment you with distressing recollections. Your departed child wants not your property, give it to God; nor your time, nor your solicitude, give them to God. In pitying the sorrows of others, you will find a sweet solace for your own. Occupy your lone heart, and hours as lonely as your heart, with schemes of mercy, and purposes of beneficence. If your affliction shall lead to such a result, you may then say of active benevolence, that it is one of "The best reliefs that mourners have, and makes their sorrows blest."

CHAPTER VI.

ANNA THE PROPHETESS.*Addressed to Aged Widows.*

THE Holy Spirit of God, while he has passed over in silence the names of mighty kings and potentates, with all their civil and military achievements, their battles and their victories, has written the life, and pronounced the eulogy, of a poor and pious aged widow, of whom the world knew little and cared less, to preserve her memory to the end of time, and to show how grateful to him such a kind of life is. Anna was one among the few who, in a dark degenerate age, preserved the light of true piety from being quite extinct, and waited for the consolation of Israel. Having lost her husband, after a short union of seven years, she continued a widow ever afterwards; and was eighty-four years of age at the time of our Lord's birth. Gifted with the spirit of prophecy, she delivered the messages of God to the few who were disposed to receive them, and spake of Him that was to come, who should bring deliverance for his people. Her abode was in one of the dwellings which surrounded the temple, and her sole employment, devotion. She had long been dead to the world, and the world to her; and with her heart in heaven, she had neither interest nor hope upon earth. It was her

privilege, as it was good old Simeon's, before she closed her eyes on things terrestrial, to see Him of whom the prophets spake. Having uttered her gratitude that the light had not departed from her eyes till she had seen the Lord, she confessed him before others, and commended him to their regards. Happy saint, to see this new-born Saviour as the star of thy evening; thou hast lived to good purpose in thus having thy existence prolonged, to welcome to our world, him who came to be its Redeemer: and now what can induce a wish to remain longer from thy Father's house? Thou mayest be willing to lay down thy tabernacle and thy widowhood, and go to that world where thou shalt flourish in the vigour of immortal youth.

And now, leaving Anna, I turn to the aged widow, who has little to do but to wait and watch for the coming of her Lord. Mother in Israel, I address you with sentiments of reverent respect, while I call upon you to indulge the reflections, and perform the duties, appropriate to your circumstances. Your age, connected with your widowhood, renders you an object of deep interest. You have outlived, not only the husband, but the friends of your youth. As regards those who started with you in life, you are alone in the world; and you sometimes feel a sadness come over you, because there are none who can talk with you of the scenes of your childhood and youth, which are as a tale written only in your memory. Spend the evening of your days in adoring the God that has kept you thus long, and in admiring the varied displays of his attributes, and the rich and seasonable communications of his grace, which it has been your privilege to enjoy. From what dangers he has rescued you, amidst what temptations he has

succoured you, through what difficulties he has Conducted you, under what trials he has supported you, and what mercies he has showered upon you, during a widowhood of thirty, forty, or fifty years! How much of his power, wisdom, patience, faithfulness, and love, have you seen in all these varied scenes, through which you have been called to pass! Let it be the employment and delight of your soul, in the long evening of your life, to retrace, with gratitude and admiration, the wondrous course and journey of your existence. When by infirmity of body, you are shut out from the public ordinances of religion, and the communion of the saints; when through failing sight you can no longer read the word of God, and you can only think upon its contents, dwell upon the past with thanksgiving and love. When you became a widow, perhaps early in life, you trembled, and asked, "How am I to be sustained?" and lo! there you are, a widow of threescore years and ten, or fourscore, acknowledging to the glory of God, that he has never left you nor forsaken you.

And now, during the remainder of your days, and of your widowhood, withdraw your regards from this world, and prepare for that glory on the verge of which you are now living. Almost every tie to earth is cut, or hangs loose about your heart. To you heaven has been accumulating its treasures and multiplying its attractions for many years, and earth has been growing poorer and poorer, till one should suppose it has scarcely any thing left to make you, as you retire from it, cast one lingering longing look behind. Let it be seen that you are dwelling on the border land, waiting and longing to pass over. Let it not distress you, if you cannot be so

vigorous in the service of God, as you once were. Do not be cast down, if you cannot hear with the same attention; pray with the same fixedness of thought and fervour of emotion; or that you cannot remember with the same power and accuracy, as you once did. It is the decay of nature, rather than the decline of grace; and your divine Lord will make the same kind excuse for you, which he once did for his slumbering disciples, and say, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Be it your aim, in a peculiar sense, to live by faith. You must have been long since weaned, or ought to have been, from trusting merely to feelings and frames of mind. With you they must have far less of liveliness than they once had, and you must be brought to a simpler and firmer reliance upon the faithfulness and unchangeableness of God. You must rest upon the simple promise, and rely upon the pure and unmixed word. Aged saint, believe, believe: hold on to the end by faith. By faith lay hold of God's strength, to support your faltering steps, and sustain you to the end.

Be as cheerful as you can, for the smiles of an aged Christian, happy in the Lord, are as beautiful as the oblique rays of the setting sun of an autumnal day. Yes, though an aged widow, apparently forlorn and desolate, send forth notes of cheerful praise. Like good old Anna who, when she came in and saw the Lord, gave thanks, and spake of Christ to those around, do you so. Encourage the younger widows to put their trust in God. Tell them how he has appeared for you. Bear testimony for him, and remind them he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Let it appear to all who come round you, that though God sees fit to detain you upon earth, your affections

have gone on before you into heaven; that your heart is dead, though your body lives; that though you are willing to wait all the days of your appointed time, till your change comes, that still the coming of the change will be a joyful moment. It is an unseemly sight, to behold an aged widow clinging to earth, even when one should think its attractions are all gone; and loving the world, when its charms are all faded, and it is but the skeleton of what it was.

But, at the same time, let there be no impatience to be gone. Your husband is dead; perhaps your children also; and there be few in whom your heart takes a deep interest. You can see no reason why you should linger and loiter another hour in the world which is one vast sepulchre, where all that was dear to you lies buried; and why, therefore, should such a tomb be your dwelling place? Just because it is God's will to keep you here. Let there be no peevish wishes after death, no querulous complaints of life. It may be you are dependent, and are afraid you are a burden to your friends, and this adds to your impatience to be gone; but strive against it. God loves his children too well to keep them one moment longer from his house and home above, than is best for his glory and their happiness.

The Third Part contains the extracts from the letter addressed by John Howe to Rachel Lady Russell, upon her husband's execution, and the letter written by Christopher Love to his wife on the day before his execution, and the letter of hers to which it was an answer; also letters by Mrs Huntingdon, of Boston, U.S., the Viscountess Powerscourt, and Mrs Lewis, widow of Michael Lewis, Missionary in Demarara, and John Newton's account of his wife's death, and the following remarks.

And now, in conclusion, what can I add for your instruction or comfort, except it be a few words on that blessed, though mysterious union, which exists between Christ and his believing people. Looking sorrowfully, as you now do, on the broken bonds of that close and tender union, which was once the source of your chief earthly happiness, and the dissolution of which has left you a lonely pilgrim in this world's great wilderness, comfort yourself with the thought that if joined unto the Lord by faith, and made one spirit with him, there is at least one union, which even death cannot dissolve, and one tie which nothing can weaken or rupture. How tender and how beautiful is the representation which sets forth Christ as the husband of his church! You can feel this now, as you never felt it before. He not only loves you with an affection to which even that of your husband was cold, but will ever live to manifest his affection. Death has severed you from your earthly husband, but it can never take from you this heavenly

bridegroom. Standing at the grave of all that was most dear to you on earth, and reading in mournful silence, and with many tears, that simple record of mortality upon his tomb, which contains the history and the date of your sorrows, take up the triumphant exultation of the apostle, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Nor is this the language of vain boasting, but of well-founded confidence. No, nothing shall burst the bond which unites the redeemed soul to its redeeming Saviour. This Divine Head will hold in close, vital, and inseparable union, every member that is incorporated into him by faith. And as you cannot be severed by death from Christ, so neither is your departed husband, if he were a true believer. The righteous sleep in Jesus. In death they are still one with him. The spirit has been disunited from its mortal and corruptible body, but not from its immortal and incorruptible Head. All the rights and privileges which belong to believers, in virtue of their union with Christ, remain with them in and after death undiminished, unimpaired. Dead they are, but they are dead in Christ: they are as much comprehended in his covenant; summed up in him as their Head; represented by him as their Advocate; as they possibly could be while here on earth. Whatever is meant by their being in Christ is meant of them now they are dead, and shall be made good to them at his appearance. Wherefore you are one with him you

have lost still: you meet in Christ's spiritual body, and are bound by a mystical tie in the same sacred fellowship.

What is to follow? The heavenly bridegroom will take home his bride to his mansions of glory, which he is gone to prepare for the object of his love. How tender, yet how sacred and how solemn is the adjuration of the apostle, where he says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." There is now a scattering, but then there is to be a gathering. His chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified church, now severed from each other, though still united in him, will be then collected into his presence, and gathered round his throne; not one of its members will be missing, but the spiritual body will be complete with its Divine Head. Mortality will be swallowed up of life. Heaven will be a region of vitality; a living world, a world of life. The widow's God will be there, but not the widow, as a widow. Her tears will be wiped away; her loss will be repaired; her sorrows will be turned into joy, for she will be associated again with the companion of her pilgrimage; not indeed in the bonds of a fleshly union, but in the ties of a spiritual fellowship: for they will be as the angels of God, and will dwell together for ever in that glorious state, of which it is said, there shall be no more death.

**PREFACE TO THE WIDOWER'S COUNSELLOR AND
COMFORTER.**

BY THE REV. NATHANIEL ROWTON.

EXPERIENCE, if it be not absolutely essential to sympathy, imparts to it both tenderness and power. He who has endured the same kind of trial as we have passed through, is the man whose words of comfort most readily gain our ear, control our sorrows, and tranquilize our perturbed heart: he not only knows our sorrows, but knows at the same time our temptations, and can tell us how he has borne the one and vanquished the other. Many may speculate and conjecture, but he can testify. Hence the wisdom and grace of God in the scheme of our redemption, as manifested in giving us a Saviour of whom it can be said, "He knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same." The Scriptures not unfrequently refer to this. Paul said, "In that He himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour those that are tempted:" "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." This is written for our comfort, and who does not feel its power? It is a blessed consolation to know, not only that the Captain of our salvation will bring us safely to glory at last, but that,

with a sympathy made intelligent, tender, and appropriate by experience, he cheers and comforts us along the thorny path that leads to it.

What is true of the Master is no less true of the servants; they also must suffer, in order to comfort: "Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." This was said of apostles, but it is equally applicable to the ordinary ministers of the Gospel. Their office confers no exemption from the calamities of human life; it is not expedient that it should; for if it did, how could they act the part of the "Counsellor and the Comforter?" Teachers they might be, but sympathizing friends, in any high degree, they could not be.

The amiable and excellent author of this volume wants not this qualification for the office he has undertaken in its production. He has uncovered his head and wept at the grave of one of the best of wives, and returned in sorrow to the tabernacle of which the light has been put out; and speaks in these pages of what he has known, and tasted, and felt, both of suffering and consolation. What he has written comes not only from his mind and his pen, but also from his heart. The friend to whom he has applied for this Preface has twice drunk of the same bitter cup; and is ready, as he now writes, to use the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, where he says, "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me." It is a trial that must be felt to be known; and none can speak or write of it appropriately, but those who have passed

through it. It may, perhaps be conceded, without any depreciation of his affliction or his loss, that the widower is less an object of pity than the widow, for in addition to the hardier constitution of his soul, he is by his occupations more called away from the scene of his desolation, and is not left, like the bereaved of the other sex, to sit and muse alone upon the happy past, the joyless present, and the gloomy future. Nor is this all, it is within his power, and at his choice more readily, to rekindle the extinguished lamp of connubial happiness. Still, however, after these abatements are made, there is enough of deep affliction left, in the case of every widower who was a happy husband, to point him out as an object entitled to our tender commiseration. It is not only for his own sake that he weeps; not only for the loss of that dear companion of his pilgrimage, who comforted him when sad, and counselled him when perplexed; who, by the music of her voice uttering words of wisdom, and the benignity of her smile darting looks of affection, dissipated his fears, hushed the cares of his troubled breast, and healed the wounds of his lacerated heart; it is not only that she, his ministering angel, is torn from his side, but that this blessed woman was the mother of his children, and has been removed from them. To hear the cries of helpless infancy, or the sobbings of childhood's sorrows; to witness the wastings of disease that need maternal care, or the waywardness of obstinacy which no less needs maternal restraint; to see boys wanting a mother's softening influence, and girls still more sadly needing a mother's guiding counsels, and to know that she who once so wisely, so tenderly, and so efficiently presided over all this scene of domestic sorrow, necessity, and dependence, is in her grave, is the

grief that wrings the heart of the widower, as he returns at nightfall from his labours to his desolate home, and there needs the voice of consolation and the tenderness of sympathy which is sent forth in this instructive volume. Here the mourner is told to what source to turn for comfort, to whose ear to carry the tale of his griefs, and by whose felt presence to fill up the vacuum made in his lot by the death of a wife. Here he is called to look up and behold religion descending like a seraph from the God of all consolation, and bearing in her hand a balm for his wounds, a cordial for his fainting heart.

Comfort, however, much as it is needed, is not the only thing which the widower wants, but counsel; and the writer of the following pages has done wisely in offering this also. The death of a wife must, of course, place a man not only in a new situation of sorrow, but of temptation and of danger. He is exposed both to sin and folly. Home having lost its chief attraction, and acquired for him new cares and anxieties, with diminished means to meet and relieve them, he is tempted to escape from them into the company of his friends, and thus leave his children almost exclusively to the care of servants; or, what is still worse, to seek consolation in places and from sources which imperil all his moral, or at any rate his domestic, excellences. It requires the aid of divine grace, sought and obtained by faith and earnest prayer, united with great resolution and firmness, to be still more at home, when that which gave it the strongest charm has vanished: and yet this is the duty of every widower who is left with a family. He should consider that his children, deprived by God of a mother's care, are more than ever dependent upon

his. Nor is this the only danger, others of a still more serious kind await him. What falls have I witnessed in the course of a forty years' ministry, of not only members, but pastors of Christian Churches, who stood fair and well as long as they were husbands, but who were overtaken by successful temptation when they became widowers! Did propriety allow, I could confirm and illustrate this by some very affecting and impressive cases. May the counsels on this subject in the following chapters produce their right impression, and induce, in all who are brought by Providence into such circumstances, habits of caution, vigilance, and prayer!

But there is not only sin to be avoided, as the author has very clearly shown, but folly; not only vice, but imprudence. A Christian is not to behave himself unseemly, but is to follow whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, as well as whatsoever things are pure. Is it seemly to unite age with youth, the master with the servant, elegance with vulgarity, education with ignorance? "How unnatural, how indecent," says Mr Jay, "is it to see an old man surrounded with infants whom he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious is it, to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity, so as to perplex strangers to determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother!" Suitableness ought always to be regarded as one of the main things to be observed in the marriage union, suitableness in age, in rank, in taste, in habits, and especially in religion; it is, indeed, the chief requisite to the duty and respectability of married life, and the chief ingredient in the cup of connubial happiness.

Yet what mistakes are not unfrequently made by

widowers in entering into a second connection; and that not only by those who are young, but by those also who have passed the meridian of life, and even by those who have arrived at old age. The setting sun of many a Christian is, in reference to this, contemplated through the dim haze of imprudence, even when its lustre is not entirely quenched in dark clouds of immorality; and the man, once venerable and respectable, has made himself ridiculous, although he did not become vicious. When the first wife has left a family, justice to her memory and to her children requires that her successor be chosen with a regard to their comfort, as well as to the taste of the widower himself. It is a shameful sight to see a man utterly forgetful of the interests of his children, and choosing a second wife, who is either incompetent or indisposed to act the part of a mother to the offspring of the first. Where there are no children, a widower is, of course, much more at liberty to follow exclusively his own taste, than when there are. I knew one man who sacrificed his own inclination entirely to the welfare of his family, and married a person much older than he was, for the purpose of obtaining a mother for his children, rather than a wife for himself. This was in the highest degree generous, but at the same time too great a risk to run in an opposite direction; but surely even this is more commendable than the utter disregard to the comfort of the household which many exhibit in their second marriages. And what is the result? Misery to all parties. How revolting is it to see a man introducing to his daughters as his wife a woman far younger perhaps than themselves; and, of course, driving them from beneath their

father's roof, in order to make room for this young idol of an old man's folly!

Something is also due to the memory of a first wife, in waiting a respectful time before a second is taken. It is discreditable to a man to rush with unseemly haste from the obsequies of one to the nuptials of the other.

I know that there is no canon in the book of God or man on this subject, but there is one in the usages of society, and in the sense of propriety, which affection and decorum should alike observe. He who, before the hillock is verdant, or the stone is engraven, which covers the ashes of one wife, is looking round for another, leads us to suspect that his fidelity as a husband was always in jeopardy, and that he owes it to accident rather than to principle, that the transfer of his affections was a post-mortem and not an ante-mortem affair.

It is quite unnecessary for me to confirm the statements of the author, that he applied to me, before he commenced his work, to ascertain if I had any intention to write a treatise for the widower, as I had done for the widow, a manifestation of delicate respect and deference for which I thus publicly return him my thanks; but for this labour, however, I could not command time; nor did I then perceive how I could keep the topics of consolation for the two treatises sufficiently distinct, or make them separately appropriate: in this, however, my respected friend has succeeded, and, at the same time, has added much in the way of instruction and advice which is eminently and almost exclusively adapted to the class for whose benefit he has written.

It has been my precious reward to know that if, by my little volume, I have not caused "the widow's heart to sing for joy," for this can hardly be expected in her deep sorrows; I have been honoured to be the instrument of moderating her grief, and pouring into her wounded heart the balm of consolation. A similar reward, I doubt not, awaits the author of this work: and it is my earnest prayer, that though he is somewhat advanced in life, many years may yet be granted to him, at once to exemplify in his own case the comfort and the counsel which he holds forth to others, as well as to enjoy, in the acknowledgment of their gratitude, the reward of his labours.

J. A. JAMES.

JUNE 19, 1846.

END OF THE TWELFTH VOLUME.