THE ETHICS OF NONCONFORMITY
AND
WORKINGS OF WILLINGHOOD

BY EDWARD MIALL.

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i

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ii

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iii

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iv

v

PREFACE.

NONCONFORMITY and WILLINGHOOD are opposite phases of one principle—like the obverse and reverse of the same medal. The first is the proper response of the

heart to man's authority in matters of religion—the last, to the authority of God. A clear recognition and a cordial appreciation of revealed truth lie at the basis of both. It occurred to the Writer, that as preparation for that grave contest which is impending—that which must settle the relation of the civil magistrate to the Church—it might prove both timely and useful to call attention to what this fealty to Divine truth implies, and to the practical modes in which it will display itself. He is anxious that they who enlist themselves in behalf of "religious freedom" should understand perfectly what it is they do—and that they may "so fight, not as one that beateth the air"—so that in this, as in other instances, "wisdom may be justified of her children." To aid in nurturing that manliness and integrity of spirit requisite to the pursuit of the emancipation of Chris-

tianity from State-bondage, was the primary design aimed at in the following essays. They appeared originally in the *Nonconformist* Newspaper—the first series in the autumn of 1844, and the last in that of 1846. They are now offered to the public, in compliance with reiterated requests, in a separate volume—and if they should succeed to any extent in enlarging or elevating the views of those who combat for perfect "liberty of conscience," the Writer will endure with undisturbed equanimity the censure which his defects may, justly or unjustly, be thought to deserve. The object he had in view is a noble one—-and he has taken pains to compass it. Even should he altogether fail, it will be some solace to him to know that with a worthy end before him "he has done what he could."

11, Tufnell Park, Holloway,
Dec. 26,1847.

CONTENTS.

ETHICS OF NONCONFORMITY.

WORKINGS OF WILLINGHOOD.

1

ETHICS OF NONCONFORMITY.

2

3

ETHICS OF NONCONFORMITY.

PROEM.

UNDER the above heading, we propose to lay before our readers a series of papers illustrative of the peculiar moral obligations which grow out of the profession of dissent. The Houses of Parliament have risen—a long recess is before us—it seems unlikely that any new ecclesiastical topics, striking enough to claim comment, will be thrown up on the surface of events, so long as the shooting season lasts—the Anti-state-church Conference is a matter of history—the Association to which it gave birth is, through its Executive Committee, quietly and steadily pursuing its great object—the Dissenters' Chapels bill is passed, and the spasm of excitement which its progress through the legislature produced is over—Tahiti cannot be written about for ever. May we not fairly calculate upon an interval of comparative calm? Cannot we improve it? Let us try.

The dissenting world, just now, is grievously at odds with itself, not upon its doctrines but upon its duties. Opinion is divided respecting the proper means to a right end. Nonconforming society is separating into three distinct classes, which we take the liberty of designating as "the movement party"—"the quietists"—and "the chapel-goers." It will fall in with the primary

4

design of this preliminary paper, to mention the prominent characteristics of each section. Having done so,

our readers will discern more clearly the object aimed at in the proposed articles on the "ethics of nonconformity."

"The chapel-goers" constitute by far the largest class of the three. They are dissenters by position and by accident. They attend divine service at the meeting-house —they contribute, and sometimes largely, towards the maintenance and extension of Christian institutions— many of them are members of nonconforming churches— but they are as ignorant, and therefore as careless, of the distinctive principles of dissent, as though no such principles existed. This their want of enlightenment is rather their misfortune than their crime. They have no idea that the difference between the State system, and that with which they are connected, involves aught more important than a difference in the respective modes of worship, or discipline. They have never been otherwise instructed, and all inducement to inquire for themselves has been wanting. They pay ecclesiastical demands with as much cheerfulness as they do the Queen's taxes. They have a kind of instinctive reverence for the clergyman, and if, perchance, he be more liberal than his system, they proclaim his merits in every circle they frequent. Many of them make a point of being at their parish church on Christmas days and Good Fridays, as a sort of practical disclaimer of all bigotry. They admire the devotional beauty and sublimity of the prayer-book. They half suspect the validity of marriage, unless the marriage be solemnized in a church. They deem it a peculiar hardship if, at the burial of their dead, clerical consistency demurs to the reading of the service. They are often conscientious men—generally but slightly educated —invariably ignorant that their profession imposes upon

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5

them any distinctive obligations. Could they persuade themselves that their personal edification would be as fully promoted in the church as in the chapel, not a scruple has place in their minds which would prevent them, even for a moment, from going over from the one to the other

—they would have to step over no barrier of conviction.

The section of "quietists" is somewhat more difficult of description. It includes many ministers of standing, a few literary men, a large number of well-to-do deacons, and the usual staff of dependents and hangers-on. Respectability is their *Madonna.* They are not ignorant of their principles—in judgment they admire them—as a matter of sentiment they love them—as imposing practical obligations they wince under them. Peace is their motto —but it is worn only in connexion with the anti-state-church controversy—and is observed with more scrupulosity towards opponents than towards too forward allies. Duty they believe to consist in "sitting still"—dignity, in remaining quietly on the defensive. They eschew noise with great vociferation, and are then most violent when condemning violence. This class affects some acquaintance with modern statesmanship—bows, with the air of good breeding, to aristocracy—is franticly loyal—and ahrinta with extreme sensitiveness from associating its opinions with conduct which might expose it to sneers in high quarters. They serve truth as some men serve their wives—keep her safe at home and praise her beauty before strangers. They seem a little ashamed of being seen to walk arm in arm with her in the open street —and they say, and doubtless they think, that it would only expose her to insult In other departments, these gentlemen are, for the most part, worthy, amiable, and sensible men—it is only in relation to their own dis-

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6

tinctive principles that they are to be noted for acting an inconsistent part. Their conduct in this respect is dictated by motives which, although to their own consciences perfectly disinterested, are nevertheless traceable by others to some peculiarity in the relationships they sustain, or in the circumstances by which they are environed—it is an exception to the rule by which they are ordinarily governed.

"The movement party" need not detain us long. They are of recent date—and, so far as we are yet able to judge, sound in heart. It may be that they are wanting in that wisdom which nothing but experience can give—but they have as yet committed no egregious blunder. Their special object is to hold up nonconforming principles to the light of day, and to act out the theory they profess to have received. In a word, they are high dissenters—men whose opinions are not the dress they wear, but a part of their very selves, and cherished accordingly.

We have occasionally addressed ourselves to each of these classes, with what effect we are, of course, unable to tell. It has, however, occurred to us that admonitions, whether of the argumentative or hortatory kind, cast in a mould which partakes more or less of a personal and party character, lose much of their effect. There is a certain impatience in the minds of most men at having their stature measured, at least within public view, and at being told, even by the most courteous implication, that they are below the mark. Set lectures are commonly pushed aside as impertinent, however just.

But if, out of the very profession and principles of dissent, we can educe a code of ethics—if, irrespectively of time, place, circumstance, and other accidents, we can build up, out of the materials furnished to our hands by received opinions, a system of moral obligation—if we

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7

can succeed in showing that the duties of nonconformity grow out of its truths, and that they are to each other as the seed to the flower—if we can, not by ingenuity on the rack, but by easy common sense, discover the practical moral of our avowed creed, and, by simply following where reason leads the way, arrive at conclusions applicable alike to all—if, in short, by mere generalization and induction, we can resolve some of those laws which should govern conduct, and which, like the laws of nature, are never infringed upon without burying a sting in the trespasser—we think we may render a not unimportant service.

This, then, is our object in the proposed series of papers. We can imagine each of the classes we have attempted to describe reading our "ethics" without irritation. With the present introductory article we shall drop all allusions to party. Our aim will be to connect together by reasoning conducted upon well-understood principles, a specific system of practical duty with a specific system of theoretical truth. We wish to show how the one dovetails with the other. To this kind of philosophical analysis no man can object—there are few, perhaps, who will not take some interest in it, were it merely a matter of intellectual pastime. If, by such means, we can keep the eye of conscience sufficiently fixed upon a true theory of morals—dissenting morals—we may hope, in process of time, to affect the heart The frequent contemplation of beauty begets a taste for it; and familiar converse with the *beau ideal* of obligation will either lift a man up to the standard of his opinions, or cause him to renounce his opinions altogether.

8

THE RENUNCIATION.

LOUDLY as we vaunt, at times, our intelligence—proudly as we assert our moral freedom—it is amazing to how great an extent we are the blind agents of a superior will, and how, as mere mechanical instruments, we are, in a course of unconscious and unreasoning activity, developing results and working out great mental problems, the reach and application of which we have never glanced at, even from afar. At best, we are but servants; and the significance of our several actions, and all the consequences wrapped up in them, are usually as profound a secret to ourselves as are the contents of a sealed letter to him who bears it from his master's hand to its appointed destination. What a wondrous and astounding revelation would that be, were some friendly spirit to withdraw, for a moment, the slide of our own ignorance, and bid us look at the uncovered mechanism, the intellectual and spiritual clock-work, of this our world! Could we but

comprehend the one great design of its Author, and trace the relation of part to part, and observe the portion of work done by every lever, chain, wheel, cog, there and then in motion—could we distinctly mark our own position in the intricate and complicated, assemblage of moral forces, and discern the real significance of every act of ours, and follow it, in its long series of consequences, as it tells upon surrounding minds—originating, impelling, checking, or modifying, the several movements of each—in short, could we, with the eye of Him who made us, see all that is comprised in "what we are" and in "what we

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9

are doing," what a strangely different estimate should we form of duty, and how much larger and more elevated would be our system of "ethics."

We are blind agents for the most part—but our dimness of vision results not altogether from the structural limitation of our faculties. We are ourselves to blame to a much higher degree than we are wont to suspect The thick film which overcasts the eye of our mind, and shuts us in to intellectual darkness, is none of the original arrangement of nature—it is a superinduction from indolence—a concretion produced by the excessive indulgence of the sensual class of appetites and tastes. Proper habits of thought, and regularity of mental discipline, do much to render our sight clear and penetrating. Were we to look oftener, we should discover more. Not wholly need we be uncognisant of the significance of our own actions—no invincible necessity precludes us from gaining, if not complete, yet large views of our special position and its several bearings. And as the attainment is possible, so, in order to the satisfactoriness of our present inquiry, it is indispensable. Until we know what we *are,* as dissenters, we cannot ascertain with precision what, as such, we should *do*. Dissent is a sort of primordial act—an act which, whether observed or not, totally changes a man's moral orbit. And it is imperatively requisite that we should look

upon it in its essential simplicity and dignity of meaning, before we attempt to illustrate its peculiar obligations.

There is the greater necessity for taking this preliminary step forasmuch as few, very few, have cast the thing into the crucible of thought to disengage it from the rubbish by which it is accidentally environed. Dissent passes with most men as a very trivial act—inherently and irremediably vulgar-—unsuited to any but small minds—

10

having in it nothing of the lofty, the generous, the magnanimous, or the good. And it may be true enough that, viewed in connexion with the motives which originate it, and with the modes in which it is expressed, it is far oftener associated with meanness than a lover of his kind could wish. But the act itself, apart from all which may have led to or may follow it—the thing done, irrespectively of the doer—is, in our Judgment, one of the very noblest, grandest, most full-meaninged, most illustrious positions which it is possible for the human mind to take. It may be taken by thoughtlessness—it may be taken unworthily—hypocrites may take it, and so may fools—nevertheless it is a right glorious elevation on which for man to stand—and if, perchance, he knows not where he is, so much the worse for him, but it remains unaltered.

What, then, is dissent? What is it, viewed *per se?* It is a formal, practical renunciation of intellectual and moral servitude—the act wherein one stands up in the presence of opposing authority and calmly declares, "I am a man." It is mind asserting its native claim to independence, and, whilst it reverently bows before the throne of the Supreme, and pays its homage there, expressing its determination to acknowledge no usurper. It is a stern protest against the pride and the presumption which would set up for themselves a dominion where none but God can rule—a blow struck for the dignity of human nature—a maintenance of the common rights made over to us as heirs of immortality. It looks royal and ecclesiastical imperiousness in the face and says, "This mind is not for you—nor, at your demand, are its pre-

rogatives to be ceded, or its convictions tampered with. It sees in you no essential superiority—it owes you no responsibility. Born free, it will surrender its high birthright to no empty assumptions. Go elsewhere with

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11

your decrees—your threats and bribes—this mind is not for you "but for truth only!" This is dissent—thus much it signifies—nothing less than this is folded up in the act.

Nothing less—but such as it is, it may be seen in a yet more advantageous light. This simple "No," which dissent utters, see, now, to what and to whom it is addressed. The idol renounced—the spirit at whose shrine you are bidden to bow the knee—the power which lays upon you its haughty mandate in that word, "Conform"—is no every-day pretender. It pleads a high prescription in its favour. It is encompassed by this world's respectability. Nobles are, to a man, its votaries—honour and wealth its portion. Literature owns its sway—learning acknowledges and enforces its claims—wit commonly sides with it—and, until very recently, public opinion followed it, and shouted to the skies on its behalf, "Live—live for ever!" If no longer armed with the power of life and death, it is scarcely the less formidable. Still it speaks with all the full-toned authoritativeness with which this world's partiality can clothe it—and whatever there is among men which can add gravity to a command, or give brilliancy to a temptation, is cast into the scale with that one word, "conform." Dissent is a renunciation of it all. It is a quiet negative given to the whole court of obsequious myrmidons. Prescription, respectability, learning, wealth, rank, wit, power, public opinion—it turns from the open-mouthed clamour of all, and, kneeling at the feet of Truth, says, "I pay my allegiance here." What higher, what more becoming, what more magnanimous position can human nature take?

The deep meaning and significance of the act indicated by the term dissent, it were well if all who practise it would strive to understand—well were it if, by frequent

12
reflection and self-communion, men did but partially penetrate the mystery of what it is they do, when they profess themselves dissenters. They occupy high ground, if they did but know it. Theirs is a glorious vocation if they did but appreciate it. But, assuredly, this knowledge and appreciation both of what they are, and of what they are doing, must lay at the very foundation of "the ethics of nonconformity." Our peculiar obligations spring out of our peculiar position, derive all thenforce from it, owe all their congruity to it. "Ought" is but one modification of the verb "to be"—duty, an inference from what we are.

THE BETROTHAL.

"I DISSENT." "For what reason?" "Because the system of doctrine and discipline which claims my conformity is not, according to my judgment, true." Thus much is proclaimed in die very profession of dissent —is proclaimed aloud—proclaimed by act—proclaimed to all the world. Reader! Have you ever pondered the weighty significance of that profession? If never, then step for a moment into your closet of reflection, sit down and converse with the subject as one anxious to hear it out, and peradventure, when you come forth, you will be a graver and more resolute man than heretofore you have been.

We shall suppose you thus engaged. In fancy we will overhear the discourse borne in upon your soul by the voice of truth. It might run after this fashion:—"Is it so, then, that you have set at nought the demand of civil power, of ecclesiastical authority, of this world's wisdom, respect, custom, and honour, simply forasmuch as that demand is, in your view, incompatible with the claims of truth? Have you, by appearing in society as a dissenter, and as a dissenter on this, the only tenable, ground, publicly announced yourself as one bound to follow truth

where you can clearly track her footsteps, although in doing so you must needs trample upon all human injunctions? Is this your profession? If not, it is empty delusive, false. If it be, then I, Truth, claim the fulfilment of that pledge. You are betrothed to me, and have become mine by your own act. You have given the world

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14

an assurance that to me alone your allegiance is due—that your intelligence, honesty, responsibility, choice, have all united in placing you at my disposal—that you cannot, ought not, will not, upon any consideration given, prove recreant to your obligations and attachment to truth. This you have done, directly or by implication, in taking upon you the name of dissenter. Go, now, fulfil your vows."

There is nothing strained in this, as a more familiar case will show. Imagine some part of Ireland occupied by the French, and, in the name of Louis Philippe, a proclamation issued, commanding a subsidy for his invading troops. Here and there, it may be, an inhabitant demurs, and pleads his loyalty as the ground of his refusal to obey. His loyalty! Mark how much is involved in that plea! It distinctly recognises the right of the British monarch to allegiance. It announces, not in terms merely, but in act, that the force of that rule of conduct which loyalty prescribes is felt by the recusant —that it is such as to overbear in him the antagonism of the most urgent expediency—that his choice is determined solely by oughtness—that his disobedience in the one case is but a modification of a principle of obedience to which he has solemnly committed himself in the other —in short, that he has already chosen at whose feet to lay down his powers, and that by that choice he will abide.

Betrothed to truth! 'Tis a dignified relationship into which for man to enter, and one which, entails a responsibility commensurate with the honour which it confers. It is the giving away of mind, with all its high capabilities, its glorious attributes, its faith, hope, love, never to be reclaimed. It is a solemn contract made binding

to eternity. We pledge all the powers of our intelligence to inquire—all the discrimination of our judgment to

15

weigh—all the authority of our conscience to command —all the energies of our will to obey—in the service of our soul's divinity. It is implied that the surrender of ourselves is complete, unreserved, final—that for her sake we are to live and love, to think, and speak, and do—that our whole personal history, in its prose and in its poetry, in the gentle flow of every-day life, and in the rush and the swell of great and trying occasions, in private and in public, to the eyes of men and to the eye of God, is henceforth to be but one continuous and ever-varied development of our affection for truth.

We dissent, professedly as we have said, because that which asks our conformity is not true. In so doing, we become the liegemen of truth as such. The mere system of opinions, or of faith, from which we withhold, or to which we yield, our assent in this matter, is not the object about which our choice is finally occupied. We may take it to-day—we may see occasion to lay it aside to-morrow—but we tell the world that, both in taking it and in laying it aside, we are prompted by a supreme regard to the same authority. Our betrothal is not to a form, nor a system, nor a name, nor a sect. Through all these we look as through a window, and they are as nothing to us, unless as they may give us a glimpse of her to whom we have plighted our troth. It is, consequently, to truth for her own sake, irrespectively of the dress which she may wear, or the habitation in which we may make her acquaintance, that we swear our fealty. That which we renounce, we declare that we renounce because it is not true—that which we obey, because it is true—it is by truth, as such, we profess to be governed. The simple maiden, apart from all consideration of the dowry she may bring us, is ours. We take her, and her only, "for better, for worse"—and we resign to her, and to her

16

exclusively, our whole being, bodily, mental, and moral.

Oh! were the power given to us, with what zeal and exulting joy would we go up and down the dissenting world proclaiming this doctrine—unfolding to the now hesitating, trembling, crestless, and out-of-countenance sects, the glory of their position, the dignity of their relationship, the largeness of their profession, and the exalted character of their duties! Surely, they little know their mission, or they would have accomplished it ere now. Could we but show them their own stature in the glass of their public profession—could we everywhere but set the dissenter, *as he is,* to gaze upon a portraiture of himself *as he is pledged to be*—could we but awaken in him a just sense of the comely, and the generous, and the good, which are essential characteristics of ideal nonconformity, and which, by a sort of photogenic process, ought to be transferred from the mind's eye to the heart—then were it easy indeed, and pleasant withal, to discourse of duty, for it would but be whispering into the ear of love the modes and opportunities for its manifestation. Here there is a wide scope for a disinterested ambition—a field for cultivation, which would return, for the labour bestowed upon it, a full harvest of fragrant flowers and richly-flavoured fruits. "We could find it within us to covet the best qualifications of the orator, were it only that we might go amongst the depressed and dispirited, the slaving and the despised, and rouse their noblest aspirations, and fill them with new and swelling thoughts, by discovering to them the secret of what they are, where they are, in relation to the rest of the world, and what may reasonably be expected from them. It is in vain to preach ethics to menial minds. Love is the foundation of all morals worthy of the name—and "perfect love casteth out fear." Love,

17

however, is but a sense of the perfect adaptedness, if we may so express it, of somewhat without us, to all that is

within. Dissenters have pledged themselves to truth. Could they but see her beauty, and be made thoroughly cognisant of the sacredness of that troth which they have plighted to her, they would be such a race of men as the world has not yet seen—and never, amid all the scenes through which they might be called to pass—never, under the influence even of the most specious and alluring temptations, would they forget the obligations imposed upon them by their "betrothal."

UNDER ARMS.

WHEN the Founder of Christianity introduced into the world that dispensation which we regard as the only embodiment of spiritual truth, he clearly foresaw, and has distinctly foretold, the commotions which it would everywhere excite. Prospectively alluding to these, he declared that he was come to earth, not to bring peace, but "a sword." His words have been verified. His true followers have been "everywhere spoken against," and described as men "who turn the world upside down." The real "leaven" is sure to excite fermentation—and the subjects of truth must lay their account to be evermore at war.

We cannot but think this view of things is, in the present day, almost wholly lost sight of. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you," is one of those commutations, it would seem, whose force has been impaired by age. In the moral, as well as in the social world, these are "the piping times of peace." According to the theory which is especially popular with dissenters, we are to be witnesses only when men will "hear"—when they "forbear" we are enjoined to be silent. The doctrine is a remarkably comfortable one—one by the aid of which we may contrive to get through the world without the disagreeable necessity of having the countenance ploughed up with wrinkles. To be reputed as a man of moderation, singularly discreet, amiable, and courteous—to be well

spoken of by all parties, in return for a word of commendation judiciously administered to all—to be known for

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19

earnest attachment to nothing, save to that kind of neutrality which shrinks from the ill-will of any—to be quiet when action would expose to reproach, and active when activity would secure general praise—to speak nothing which by possibility may give offence—to do nothing which might create an unpleasant stir—to tread the very ground with the measured step of affected meekness, and smile upon everything, and shake hands with everybody, and utter every sentence in a tone of fond endearment and familiarity—all this may suit some men's natural tastes, but we are apt to suspect that this is not precisely the vocation nor the bearing of the betrothed to truth.

It may startle some, but we give it as our deliberate judgment, that the first duty of a nonconformist, occupying the high position we have assigned to him, is to be "under arms." Let him not dream of peace. In a world crammed full of errors, many of them morally pernicious to a most deplorable extent—-in which conventional falsehoods pass current in all circles—the greater proportion of whose inhabitants are laboriously practising delusion upon themselves and others—where hypocrisy is as common as masked faces at a carnival—and where all, with an extremely insignificant exception, are pursuing self under some guise of virtue—it is impossible to stand up a sincere and courageous servant of truth, without having all classes at your throat. You might as well expect to drive a ploughshare through a wasps' nest in open day, and not be stung, as to be truthful without giving offence. There needs nothing whatever of a blustering air, or a moody brow, or a coarse tongue, or a forward presumption, to provoke people to rise up in arms against you. You have but to speak of things as they are, to estimate them at their proper value, to thrust at error because it is error, and to treat sin as sin wherever you meet with it—all of

20

which you are bound to do by your profession as a dissenter—and you may bid farewell to that comfortable life, which some men identify with christian peace.

"Offences must needs come," then at least when men faithfully deliver themselves of the truth that is in them. This is a settled thing—and equally settled is it that the offence will be deep, virulent, and active, just in proportion to the greatness, vitality, and energy of the truth which excites it. It follows that to suppress truth with a view to avoid offence, is merely transferring to other shoulders the responsibility which we are too cowardly to take upon ourselves. We have no license to ground our arms and stand at ease. We can plead no warrant for winking at delusion. We have never received permission to chat affably with falsehood. We ought to be iconoclasts—image-breakers, wherever we go. Some men must do the work—or the world will never be rid of error. And whenever it is done, as done it must be, a dust will be raised about the ears of those who perform it. But that which a man knows, he is, by the very fact that he knows it, laid under obligation to communicate. It is the primary duty of a nonconformist, consequently, to preach his principles whatever may come of it. The stir which he will make by doing so is to be- no part of his consideration. He may be told that he will be always in hot water. Well, he was born to be in hot water, and he must make the best of it. What business had he to profess dissent, if he had not previously made up his mind to hot water? He live at peace with all men! It may be, it ought to be, in his heart to do so. The ill-will must not be on his part—the malice must not be his—he must be no party to the enmities he may provoke; but assuredly, unless he is also at peace with all systems of delusion and of falsehood, the men

21

who profit by them, or who cling to them, will not be at peace with him.

For our parts, we are free to confess that we like to hear a man well spoken against. It is a presumption in his favour. It proves that he is doing some work, and work of a kind which society does not like. Now, society is especially fond of its knick-knackeries and gew-gaws; and, when a man wields truth with a vigorous arm, he is sure to disturb some of them. Then bursts forth an outcry which rings through every circle of hollowness—"Oh! the violence, the hot-headedness, the sour-temperedness, the arrogance, the all-conceivable and inconceivable badness of that man!" Well, if he be a true man, and working for truth, he will just go on heedless of the buzz. Then, possibly, bickerings about him among those who had previously agreed in condemning him will follow. Party will range itself against party, and house be divided against house. He will regret it, but he is not responsible for it. He must go on, leaving these things to adjust themselves. By the time this man has finished his career he will have done something for the world; and, if his name should live to future generations, which, however, is no part of his bargain, the common gratitude of mankind will be considered his due. Such has been the history of all the heroes for truth's sake; and such will be an epitome of the history of every soldier who girds on armour in this moral warfare. He ought to be calumny-proof, for he will have enough of it before he has done.

What, then, is the law binding upon the dissenter as such? Simply this. That as he has professed his adherence to truth for truth's sake, and has renounced an error, although gilded with worldly attractions, and authorized by worldly power, because, in his opinion, it is an error, he takes, by so doing, his sword and spurs, and vouches

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himself to be a faithful knight in the service of that mistress to whom he has sworn allegiance. It is his special vocation to drive falsehood out of the earth—to give it no quarter—to fall upon it wherever he meets with it—and to make his whole life tell in the advancement of right principles all the world over. He is, of

course, to exercise his wisdom as to the likeliest mode of doing this; but he must do it at all events. He will not irritate where irritation can be avoided, but he will not consider it consistent with his duty to let error live in order that peace may be maintained. In short, he will set his face as a flint towards one object, and steadily pursue it, undistracted by the clamours of professed friends, and undaunted by the opposition of open foes.

23

WALKING ERECT.

THERE are two kinds of self-respect—the spurious and the true. The first results from a comparison of ourselves with other men, notes only that wherein we differ from them, and rejoices in the distinction. The second springs from a sober estimate of our whole being, considered in its essential nature—sees in it the exquisite workmanship of a divine hand—reads written upon it in legible characters a lofty design—and trembles to desecrate it by applying it to ignoble uses, or by selling it to an ignominious bondage. The one, according to the particular modification of temper through which it shows itself to the world, we call conceit, or vanity, or pride—the other is genuine and legitimate self-appreciation. This insulates us from our kind—dries up our sympathies—values self only in its accidents. That binds us to our race, and sees in man, whatever may be his debasement, something to care for, to revere, to love. The one does homage to self for its own sake—the other, for the sake of its Author and its end. That which constitutes individuality is the idol of the first—that which dignifies the entire family of man, the object of veneration to the last. "I am" so and so, is the channel in which the thoughts run in the first case—"Man is" so and so, in the second. "See what I am become," is the natural language of conceit—"Behold what God has made us," of true self-respect.

24

We know of no state of mind more likely to body itself forth in a mean and contemptible servility than an indifferency to, or an under-valuation of, our generic worth. Look for a moment on that combination of faculties, susceptibilities, passions, capabilities, which go to make up man! What a beautiful intertwining in his nature of that which connects him with time, and that which allies him with eternity! How evidently is the animal in his composition intended to be a porch only to the spiritual! With what conscious dissatisfaction do his affections light upon, for a little season, and play with, sensible objects; and how restlessly do they ever and anon spring upward into the indefinite expanse above them, and take sweeping circuits in search of somewhat worthy of themselves—of everlasting companionship! Those busy thoughts within—with what impatience do they flutter against the bounds of present knowledge, as if, like the caged bird, confined within too narrow a sphere, and prevented only by existing barriers from taking wing into infinitude! How deeply can we love, and with what delicious self-resignation make ourselves over to the object of our devotion! Everything within us points forwards. All the characteristics of our present being are those only of early infancy. Upon all our faculties there is the stamp of immortality. We are but in our germ; and how that germ will unfold itself, into what glorious forms it may expand, what novel and lovely reflections of the uncreated light it may hereafter give back—we may dimly conjecture from what we are. If we cannot read the whole mystery of our design, thus much at least we may discover—that the design is a pre-eminently grand one. Whatever we are, we were not made for little purposes, nor have we been charged with an unimportant

25

mission. And does it, we ask, become, any mortal of our race to be blind to all this, or, seeing it, to walk

about this world in a spirit of flunkeyism, which will wear any livery, and stoop to any and every show of obsequiousness, which another human will may insolently prescribe to it?

Upon this, the substantial material of manhood, truth, by various processes, and with more or less distinctness, imprints her own high mandate—kisses the willing soul, and sends it forth upon a mission on her behalf—whispers her will, and looks for frank and cheerful compliance. And he, whatever may be his station among his fellow-men, who looks within himself, not with a view to note wherein he differs from those around him, and thus to gratify his passion for pre-eminence, but that he may survey the record which truth has left there, and weigh its import, and leisurely estimate the essential dignity which the employment of such powers in such a service necessarily confers—he who remembers that he is a man, and is honestly conscious that he has sworn allegiance to truth—which as a sincere Nonconformist he must have done—he, moreover, who reflects that upon his fidelity in the discharge of his obligations, moral consequences may be poised which will reach indefinitely through all the ages of time, and go towards determining the future destinies of the world—such an one may well esteem himself placed, both by nature and by position, far enough above the reach of deserved contempt.

To walk erect, then, is peculiarly incumbent upon nonconformists; a stooping, cringing, trembling, carriage, does dishonour to themselves as men, and reflects disgrace upon their profession as witnesses for the truth. They, of all men, ought to avoid every appearance of

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26

practical equivocation. It becomes them especially to look their fellows in the face—not impudently, nor obtrusively, but calmly, and without fear. That meanness which would conceal what they are—which tacitly surrenders principle at the demand of this world's minions—which sneaks about in every strange circle

into which chance may throw it, with the air of entire unacquaintance with dissent—which blushes and looks confused when its connexion with it is detected —which crawls, and whines, and licks the dust, at the feet of conventional distinction—that meanness ill beseems all who rank themselves with nonconformists. Their vocation, if rightly appreciated, would teach them higher things than that, and induce them to prize themselves and their profession at a much higher rate. Are they not men? And are not the common attributes of manhood infinitely superior to those distinctions which claim for those possessing them subservient homage? Have they not kissed the hand of truth? and can mortal be admitted to greater honour? Of whom, then, are they to stand in fear? What eye need they shun? Where, on this globe, should they hesitate to stand up, avow themselves) and testify to the deep and solemn moment of their principles? Oh! it is a piteous sight to look upon—is a dissenter without self-respect—an anomalous and humiliating spectacle! One cannot help asking, when one sees him veiling to the vulgar pretensions of a worldly imperiousness, addressing it in tones of adulation, and with cowering crest soliciting some petty favour at its hands—one cannot help asking, why that man does not conform? So far as the interests of truth are concerned, it were better that he should— for he does but misrepresent his calling.

27

We are far from wishing dissent, in these realms, to put on a swaggering air, or, at the corner of every street, to blow a trumpet in its own praise. Where self-respect is felt, it shows itself in deeds, not words. But there is a true manliness which we could earnestly desire were more characteristic of it—a manliness which, in the pursuit of a great object, scorns to stand shivering upon the edge of every brook of public opinion, lest, in crossing it, it should wet its feet—which calmly plans important enterprises as none too high for its attempts,

and which faces difficulties with a fixedness of purpose which seems to say, "Why should we give way?" That neglect of its appropriate work lest the world should stare and call it madness—that setting about it as though it were a sorry business at best, and one which, in the doing of it, takes the gilt off all pretensions to respectability—that incessant apologizing for being where we are, and for acting, when we act at all, in harmony with our profession—that sensitive horror at being reputed enthusiasts, the invariable reproach with which earnestness is branded—that all but universal hankering after conventional *status* and honours, whereby the distance between us and the world may be as much as possible concealed—all this denotes the absence of self-respect, and marks out nonconformity for a contempt it does not merit. We must be genteel, forsooth—we, who have enlisted as the soldiers of truth—we must trouble ourselves, in our march, to pull up our shirt collars to the fashionable mark, and never appear abroad without kid gloves on our hands! Truly the puerile anxieties which display themselves amongst us now-a-days would be laughable in a waiting gentlewoman; but in men—in men, too, having on hand a most important mission—they betray such an utter misap-

28

preciation of what is due to themselves and their vocation, as, unless we had witnessed it, we should have pronounced to be impossible.

Let us hope that the rising generation of nonconformists will learn to walk erect.

29

FOLLOWING THE LEADER.

A SLEEPING babe is one of the most beautiful and touching pictures upon which the eye of man can rest. Less immediately striking, perhaps, but instinct with a nobler moral, is the artless and unsuspecting reliance of childhood upon parental guidance and protection. In

the earliest spring-time of the affections—ere yet the budding hopes have been nipped by disappointment—when every scene is fresh and verdant, bright with the beams of a sunny heart—before experience has cast its dark shadow over the sanguine spirit—with what a simple, loving faith does our being build for itself a nest under the eaves of the only home it has yet known—how naturally does it wing its way thither from all that affrights it, and how securely does it sit there, and peer forth smilingly, upon the blackest, grimmest danger which walks the earth! Within reach of a father, what child sees peril? Led by a mother's hand, when does the suspicion ever cross his mind that his path will terminate in sorrow? Oh! the sweet confidence with which, in this relationship, helplessness throws itself into the arms of authority, and is satisfied—obeys, without thinking to ask what good will come of it—follows, without caring whither—absolves itself from all anxieties touching the future—and merrily sings itself to sleep. 'Tis most affecting! And when, at length, prying observation has discovered cracks and flaws where it looked not for them, and the painful certainty has crept into the soul, that not wholly, not unreservedly, may our

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30

trust lean even upon parental wisdom, affection and power—we are conscious that our mistake consisted in, not the unhesitancy and fulness of our reliance, but in the misplacing of it, through ignorance, upon what is mutable and frail. The disposition itself never becomes classed by us amongst the improprieties of life. We may pity its misfortunes, but we can never cease to render to its nature the homage of our praise.

This child-like faith, has it not, then, its proper object? Is this the only thing, bora of God, destined to wander endlessly without a mate? Are all its early exercises, and early mistakes, designed to terminate in its own extinction? If so, why was it inseparably associated with our being, and why are all men made to love what, upon this negative hypothesis, can never bring to them

aught but disappointment? No, no! It is not so. Truth is its appointed consort; and it becomes every votary of truth to take care that "what God has joined together, none shall put asunder."

Trust—simple, unsuspecting, unwavering, affectionate trust—this is the one pledge of fealty which truth requires of all her followers. It matters nothing what may be the incidents pertaining to a principle—if that principle be once ascertained to be an embodiment of truth, then must it be followed wherever it may lead you. Its external aspect may be singular—its features rough—its voice forbidding—its track may lie over the most unpromising and difficult country—but it were treason in a nonconformist, of all men, to doubt the prudence of accompanying it whithersoever it would. Immortal, it cannot die—immutable, it can neither deceive nor betray. What it is now, it always has been—ever will be. Like the magnetic needle, equally trustworthy to him who threads his way through trackless forests, and to him who

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31

commits his frail hark to the stormy deep. Here, doubt is unreason—and the' obedience which asks no explanation of its orders is the highest wisdom. But, alack! we are unconsciously dealing too freely with an abstraction, and, in the pursuit of our own thoughts, have stayed too long already in the regions of the transcendental. Let us come down to a more practical exposition of our meaning.

Plainly, then, we have no sympathy—nor, with our views, can we have—with that dissent which trembles for its own existence, and sees, in the difficulties by which it is environed, a sufficient argument for silence and inaction. Its professors believe, or assume to believe, that its principles came from heaven, and will return thither. The exhibition of them, therefore, whilst it may bring inconvenience to us, and provoke the stoning to death of our conventionalities, cannot be held, consistently, at least, to expose the truth to wrong. With that weapon which knowledge has put into our

hands, why should we forbear to smite a hoary-headed falsehood? Have we no faith? Is human cunning, directing what combination soever of human power, able to outmatch the energy of an immortal principle? Can chance destroy it, or neglect starve it into helplessness? Is not its final triumph as secure as the throne of Omnipotence? If these questions admit of but one answer, what practical moral do they enforce? Simply this—"Believe!"—and, if this be the obligation laid upon nonconformists, how egregiously must some of them have erred in respect of the path of duty!

"Believe!" Aye! in the intrinsic sufficiency of that which claims to be divine! Add not to it! Seek not to enhance its charms, distrustful of their power to win respect! Dress it not up in garish attractions! Never

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32

suppose that it is dependent upon your scheming, or that it can derive importance from your diplomatic management of it. It can live, it can hew its way, it can establish for itself an undisputed dominion, without any aid whatever from the little tricks by which men are apt to tickle their own vanity under cover of their desire to serve truth with success. Bits of titular ostentation, picked up in every quarter of the world, and stuck as a feather to the name which caps the advocate of nonconformity—official vestments, the outward *insignia* of an inward pretence which seems impatient lest naked principles should enjoy all the honours—clever approximations to a worldly dexterity in handling topics not quite in harmony with the general taste—smart contrivances, meant to skulk round to an object by tortuous bye-ways, whose ultimate direction few can make out—pomp, puffery, pretence, and every practice which grows on the soil of quackdom—all and every of these and such as these, proclaim our lurking distrust in the energies of truth.

"Believe." Heed not the whispers of the half-convinced, who, more alive to their own ease, than the final triumph of any principles, however great, seek to persuade you that the broaching of truth will do more harm

than good. There is an infidelity in the counsel which betrays its origin. Never fear that what is essentially divine can ultimately work mischief in this world of ours, nor that the precious seed which you scatter upon the waters can be wholly lost. Exercise implicit faith in the vitality of whatever is intrinsically right. Speak what is in you, in wisdom and in love. Deliver your message, eareless of the nods, and winks, and underhand signs of those whom the tenor of it may place in a false position. Consider yourself responsible but for one thing—to tell to others the story which has engaged your own faith.

33

Settle it within your mind as indisputable, that truth is equal to any emergency, and will prove more than a match for any tactics, even the cleverest which human wit can devise.

As nonconformists, you have deliberately and by public profession chosen truth as your leader. See to it that you follow her, wherever she may conduct you—not merely as a matter of duty, but as an exercise of enlightened and unflinching trust.

34

EYES ABOUT YOU.

THE truthful, trustful heart, the best inheritance of a genuine nonconformist, has a class of trials peculiar to itself. It not only meets temptations in its course through life, but the very sound of its footsteps awakens temptations. Guileless and confiding womanhood does not attract towards itself specious and decently-clad villany, more surely than does a sincere and believing nature, those semblances of truth which court the mind but to betray it He who betroths himself to truth will have to elbow his way through a crowd of pretensions, every one of them taking the name of his mistress, and every one of them, as it is able, detaining and appealing to him, and saying, sometimes in the bold tone of authority, sometimes in bland and insinuating whispers,

"Come! be mine!" There are in the moral world not a few "gay deceivers"—right principles, which, in the hands of practised man-catchers, are caged, and made to warble their own sweet notes, to decoy the unwary within range of ingeniously hidden nets—maxims which have the sound of wisdom to recommend them, but which, when thoroughly tested, turn out to be spurious metal—schemes of pretended usefulness, simple, straightforward, and bearing extant on them the stamp of sincerity, which craft has devised for the pleasing of selfishness—systems, which, by the aid of some conspicuous ornament known to belong to truth—a head-dress of charity, for example, a veil of modesty, or a boddice of simplicity—lead the way into all the dirty bye-paths of equivocation and fraud.

35

And to these influences, and such as these, earnest faith will, especially in its prime, be ever and anon laid open, insomuch that nothing but the most vigilant caution will preserve it from mistake.

In truth, a piteous sight to look upon, is the ardent devotion of a true and conscientious heart to a hollow and unscrupulous imposture. One cannot see a confiding nature look up affectionately into the face of designing falsehood, and return its caresses, and welcome the intimations of its will, and "carry logs," if need be, to do it service, and unsuspectingly, and therefore uncomplainingly, overlook its harshness, and even stoop to humiliations which cannot but be painful—one cannot see this, even in but a single instance, without being tempted to ask, with more of petulance than becomes our ignorance, "Why is the trustful heart permitted thus unhappily to err?" But when we have reason to suspect that very, very much of the self-resigning fidelity which can be found in our midst, is the capital upon which duplicity trades, and that what is meant to be an offering to truth, is carried off by the priests and placemen of a lifelike but yet lifeless pretence, there is ground enough, not indeed to question the wisdom of the economy which allows of such results, but to doubt whether there be not some

prevalent habit amongst us which requires instant correction, and whether these terrible mistakes be not the only means whereby correction can be morally insured.

Perhaps, we may be allowed to suggest that there is a wide difference between taking on trust and trusting on what we finally take. The first is the bad form of that virtue which is comprehended in the last It is the laziness of a noble nature. It is a good intention throwing itself away to save itself the trouble and the pain of saying "No." It is kissing a stranger, because the kiss

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36

reminds you of charity. It is walking arm-in-arm through the street, with you know not who, but, for anything that you do know, a bad character, because you are told to be kind to all men. Nothing is more dangerous —nothing so likely to breed mischief.

He who would trust implicitly, must inquire conscientiously. True faith should rest on sound knowledge.

All the acts and exercises of nonconformity, in order to be consistent, must be intelligent Every step taken, should be determined by a correct acquaintance with the "what" and the "wherefore." We must be bold enough to imagine that prevailing opinion may be sometimes wrong, and that inquiry may be far from useless, even after profession has unrolled before our eyes a well-subscribed testimonial to the validity of its claims. On the other hand, a really good thing may stand at the door of our judgment, asking admittance, dressed in the rags of a very bad name. Still, we are not absolved from the duty of active and careful investigation. Unless that which appeals to us wears a decided and not-to-be-mistaken aspect of idiotcy, or immorality, which is sometimes the case, it becomes us to question it, and listen to its reply, that we may satisfy ourselves, upon something better than hearsay evidence, as to whether it is, or is not, such as it professes to be.

It will be seen from the foregoing premises, that we hold an inquiring, or more fitly, perhaps, a blind, deference to the authority of great names, to be incompatible

with the service of truth. A high reputation does not guarantee infallibility, and even a diploma may occasionally, *very* occasionally, be mistrusted. When men are resolved upon following their leader, they owe it to themselves and to truth, to take care that they be not taken in by a shovel-hat, which covers no wisdom, and

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37
that they do not surrender their reason at discretion, to every academical scarf which may happen to flaunt before their eyes. 'With great humility, but with manly decision of purpose, it becomes them to discriminate between substance and mere colour. They must not be overpowered by the splendour of a title, nor even of a galaxy of titles. They are pledged, be it remembered, not to the honour of a fraternity, nor to the reputation of a sect, but to truth alone. Every man is bound to use his eyes before he gives away his heart, and, in some sense, to see before he believes.

Look well, then—for such is the upshot of these remarks—look well before you leap.

"Keep your eye thus, not jealous, not secure."

Let your mind be open to conviction, and awake to fraud. Try first the soundness of those principles which claim reception. Then test the propriety of the modes of action proposed. Examine both, not in the light of fashionable opinion, but of impartial and immutable truth. When satisfied, give your confidence frankly and ungrudgingly, although all the world else should exclaim "Fie!" When not convinced, withhold your trust, in the face of whatever clamour may be raised against you. Believe—but be sure you believe on sufficient grounds. Be at the pains of inquiring. Think, investigate, decide, trust. This is the proper scale of progress for a nonconformist.

38

OUT-AND-OUTISM.

THE ingenuity with which men contrive to hide their motives, first from others, and then from themselves, is truly marvellous. Behind the screen of a common maxim, a current phrase, a proverb, or even a mere name, the thoughts which are thought, and the deeds which are done, nominally for the truth's sake, really for the sake of self, if examined by the tell-tale light of honest day—what a sorry picture would they present of this world's morality! How many under cover of some universally recognised saw, like those Pharisees who ornamented themselves with texts of scripture, and devoured the inheritance of the poor endeavour to exalt their infirmities into virtues! How many look with complacency at their own inconsistencies, through the stained glass of an apophthegm, and cheat themselves into the belief that the hue of virtue which they assume, belongs to them, and not to the medium through which they happen to be viewed! It would seem as if man's life on earth were but a systematic effort to practise upon himself. He is for ever whispering into the ear of his conscience some soothing plausibility—and he can feed himself into plump self-satisfaction by the windiest delusions that words can supply him with.

"The golden mean," for example—a phrase which, rightly used, possesses some significance—how convenient a hedge has it proved, behind which for timidity, insincerity, meanness, and worldliness to crawl, that they may hide themselves, and, at the same time, fire deadly shots at whatever, by a manly and disinterested bearing, would

39

reflect reproach upon them! "The golden mean!" Why, men professedly in the service of truth, use this expression to excuse themselves from being over truthful, and positively lament the fact that some natures are too honest for a shuffling world like this, and are unreasonably

intent upon acting out their own principles. They, too, forsooth—they have opinions, but then they are but moderately attached to them. They put on a profession —but they have learned to lay it aside for ease occasionally, as a man exchanges a dress coat for a gown and slippers. They have a sense of duty, but they would esteem it a strange folly to nurture it into that delicacy which must needs note all the minor deviations from integrity, and which becomes uneasy unless even the trifles of life are accommodated to its perceptions of right. They love "the golden mean," prudent and virtuous men that they are—they abhor extremes—and misapplying as well as misinterpreting the admonition, "Be not righteous over much," they come at length to fancy that the readiest way to do good is to do nothing, and that truth is best served by being occasionally denied. The specific form in which this evil shows itself in the nonconforming world is known by the appellation of "moderate dissenterism." This is, perhaps, one of the most anomalous impersonations which ever won approval from men pretending to rationality. A "moderate dissenter" is a title equivalent in point of propriety to "a moderate Christian." It is awkwardly suggestive. It indicates more distinctly what its wearer is not, than what he is. Like a stripe of sticking-plaster across the forehead, it certifies us of some unsoundness beneath it. When we hear of a baker, that he is moderately conscientious, we naturally revert, in imagination, to plaster-of-Paris and burnt bones. A moderately honest servant

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40

is a description of character which conjures up visions of purloined silver spoons. We expect that a moderate patriot will understand how to make the service of his country pleasingly compatible with the advancement of his own interests. In these and similar cases the qualifying term implies what is wanting, rather than what is possessed—and this being well understood, it is never employed except for the purpose of disparagement.

What is a moderate dissenter? If dissent means anything, it means, as we have already seen, a public avowal of our preference for truth—a solemn betrothal to her as our sole mistress. Can we love her too ardently? Can we trust her too implicitly? Can we obey her too faithfully? And yet men are to be found by the thousand, who, in the creaking shoes of self-importance, walk up and down the thoroughfares and bye-ways of society, piquing themselves on the moderation of their dissent. Ah! they eschew bigotry! Far be it from them to force their humble opinions upon the notice of others, or to attach undue moment to the principles which, on the whole, they esteem to be right! They are dissenters it is true; but let them not be confounded with the pushing, noisy, active, enthusiastic men who pant to obtain universal recognition for their principles. No, no! they are moderate dissenters.

Now, in opposition to the commonly-received notions on this subject, we deduce from the fundamental principles of our ethics, that out-and-outism, if we may employ the term, is the duty of every sincere nonconformist. What he is, in the service of truth, he ought to be wholly. For him there is no such thing as "a golden mean"—and in all that pertains to his attachment and obedience to the principles he professes, moderation is a crime, and not a virtue. It may be all very well for trimmers in

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41

connexion with nonconformity to disavow "that low, vulgar, mud-throwing, stone-pelting disposition, which was bred at Billingsgate, and which had learned its lesson well"—it may be quite in keeping with their more refined habits of expression to denounce "the filth and the feculence of nasty sectarianism"—and it may accord with the ideas such men entertain of a large-hearted liberality, in a city recently disgraced by ecclesiastical intolerance, and in the presence of a chairman not many months since foremost among many in a cry for help against the oppressive proceedings of a political church, to place in the same rank, as ministers of Christ,

William Brock, Joseph John Gurney, and Bishop Stanley—that same bishop into whose star-chamber dissenters were not long back dragged for not aiding to make a church rate. We have all seen too much of that lob-sided charity which can hold out its hand of fellowship to a respectable persecutor, and can spit in the face of the vulgar but uncrouching persecuted, to be suprised at such things. That hatred of sectarianism which plays at Christian union one day, and makes even secular education denominational the next—which pours its vials of dirty vituperation upon men who love their principles as nonconformists, and of fulsome adulation upon diocesan liberality—may pass with some ignorant people as genuine Christianity—but must be carefully shunned by every sincere and intelligent dissenter. They, at all events, must distinguish the darnel from the wheat.

We, too, however some may sneer at the confession, abhor from our hearts a narrow sectarianism. But there is such a thing as identifying our principles with our very being—cherishing them as well worthy of a place in the affections as well as in the understanding—loving them, not because they are ours, but because they belong

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42

to truth, and because their full development will intimately affect the present and everlasting well-being of mankind—taking them with us wherever we go—uttering them boldly whenever we have opportunity—carrying them out into practice, not merely when we are under the gaze of men, and stand upon a platform to address ourselves to the world, but in all our private movements and relationships—testing, by means of them, the soundness or unsoundness of habits which have grown into popularity, and rejecting those habits simply because they are not of a piece with the truth which we have received—refusing to depart from them, even at the call of wisdom and of worth, and exalting them to that throne of authority over our thoughts, our passions, and our pursuits, which ought ever to be occupied by what we regard to be the express mind of God. And this is what we mean by

"out-and-outism," and what trimmers mean by "nasty sectarianism." It is not a clamorous, screaming, offensive advocacy of important principles; nor, on the other hand, is it that oily, sleek, and canting benevolence which is always ready to surrender them for the sake of peace. But it is the unbending, untiring devotion of the whole man to the claims of truth—the homage of the inner heart paid to those forms of beauty and of glory which are discerned by the eye of the understanding. It is the calm determination to be faithful which cannot stoop to lick the feet of conventional dignity, and which feels no temptation to pursue with unrelenting hostility those from whom it may happen to differ. It is, in one word, the incarnation of principles believed to be sacred, making them part and parcel of ourselves, and giving them a right over our minds, our voices, and our deeds, superior to that which all the world else might claim. And this we take to be the duty of every honest nonconformist.

43

RESPECTABILITY.

FASHIONABLE goddess! what art thou, that in this boasted age of common sense, drawest to thine altars such crowds of votaries? Cruel Juggernaut of the moral world! what tokens of divinity showest thou, that the grave as well as the gay should dance around thy car, and in frantic devotion fling themselves beneath its wheels, as though too happy to have all manhood and truthfulness crushed out of them? Thou art but a phantom conjured up by worldly imagination, and the homage paid thee by thy worshippers is, by a pleasant fiction, paid through thee to themselves. Thou airy creature of conventionalism, in reason's name, why buildest thou thy gorgeous throne within the very courts of the temple of truth, to entice the hypocrite, to pervert the simple, and to detain so long in thy presence even the honest-hearted who go up thither, that they forget the pious errand upon which they set out? The power of that spell by which thou holdest all classes enchained

to thee—what is it but the natural earnestness of self-importance? And all the antics and postures which men practise at thy shrine are but the expedients resorted to by sheer love of approbation, to appropriate to their own honour as large a share as possible of the respect offered to thyself. They who approach thee with so fair a show of reverence, are less intent upon what to give thee than upon what to get from thee. The vows they breathe forth at thy feet, are but the aspirations of a spoiled nature after human applause.

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They crown themselves with the chaplets which a senseless idolatry places upon thine altars, and in serving themselves fancy that they serve thee. Fashionable goddess! how long will it be before thy fane is cast down, and thyself catalogued with things worth remembering only to be laughed at and despised?

Respectability, however, is a real thing—but the reality is anything rather than a popular idol. It is a sober, unpretending, matter-of-fact sort of character, more often met with than revered. It goes about the world dressed in plain clothes, and seldom excites the smallest sensation. The humble shoemaker who understands his business well, and in all his dealings answers to his profession, is the respectable shoemaker—the prosperous gentleman of the same trade, who has his country villa, drinks claret, drives his phaeton, and aspires to edge himself into the circle of aristocracy next above his own, is the pretender to respectability. The one is a sincerity—the other but a pretence. This fills but a narrow sphere, but it is his own—that, discontented with his own sphere, strives to reach another which he cannot fill. Everything should be measured after its own rule. Congruity between the sign and the thing signified, supposing the thing signified to be itself legitimate, constitutes the fair and only claim upon true respect.. Statesmen are respectable in proportion to the merits of their statesmanship, and not the splendour of their equipage. The respectability of

farmers is to be judged of, not by the number of silver forks which they possess, but by their industry and skill in the cultivation of the earth. And respectable nonconformity is that nonconformity which is evermore itself —conscientious, consistent, thorough—not that which clings to the coat-lappets of worldly greatness, and

45

affects to be regarded as hand and glove with aristocracy.

There are some combinations the grotesque unfitness of which strikes every observer. Cherubs, with baby faces and outspread wings, seldom suggest a spiritual idea, albeit they are represented as flying about in the clouds with neither limbs nor body. For our own parts, we have never yet been able, often as we have placed our imagination at the service of charity, to make anything respectable out of centaurs or mermaids. Treacle is good in its way—and so are oysters—but treacled oysters do not commend themselves to our taste. Mounted dragoons shading themselves with parasols would be generally reckoned a strange sight. Women are not esteemed for being gifted to sing bass —nor do we prize a horse for being able to dance a hornpipe. In all these instances there is an incongruity, which, whilst it may tickle laughter, or excite wonder, forbids respect.

And yet some of the alliances which nonconformity courts in the present day, under the pretence of enhancing its respectability, are to the full as ridiculous. Itself the offspring of the soul's attachment to truth—a spiritual thing—a thing which in its very birth discovers an antagonism of nature to the outer world—a thing which can only find meet companionship with reason, conscience, and religion—what has it to do with the gewgaws and frivolities of life? What honour can the patronage of wealth confer upon it, or wherein consists the gain which it derives from the condescension towards it of the great? When we see the anxiety of its professors to be presented at court—how usually, when

assembled to promote its interests, they seek the presidence of some titled enemy to its claims—how all

46

their measures are squared to meet the prejudices of those who move in the upper ranks of society—how fearful they are of engaging in any enterprise on its behalf which might expose them to the risk of being reputed vulgar—how, even in their most sacred callings, they mimic, in the titles they adopt, the garments they wear, the style of their addresses, and sometimes the very forms of their worship, that upon which the world prides itself, and which it identifies with respectability—the idea which fills our mind is that of utter incongruity. Why, what on earth can conventional gentility add to dissent? Fancy the Apollo Belvidere dressed up, for ornament sake, in a fashionable coat, knee shorts, and black silk stockings—or the statue of a repenting Peter crowned with an opera hat! Fancy anything the most ill-matched which wit could devise, and yet it would be impossible to outdo the strange incompatibility of the affected connexion to which we have above adverted.

Look at it once again—look fixedly, narrowly, and with every moral sense thoroughly awake. Bid the dissenter stand up in your presence, and question him as to his real position. What is he? A man boldly asserting for himself the right of independent thought and judgment—maintaining that right in direct opposition to the authority of civil government and the custom of society—publicly avowing that what he is he is for truth's sake. Is not the attitude which he assumes wholly a moral one? Is it not a bodying forth of intelligent conscientiousness? By what rule can he be measured but obviously a spiritual one? Is not his entire claim upon the respect of others, founded upon the voluntary relationship which he sustains to the power which possesses sovereign sway over his heart? Must not his respectability, as a nonconformist, depend

47

exclusively upon the completeness of his nonconforming character—his sincerity, his truthfulness, his consistency, his zeal? Take this ideal of embodied dissent—case him in superfine cloth—tack to his name some honorary prefix—give him wealth—surround him with an aristocratic atmosphere—and do you improve upon this ideal, or render it a whit more respectable? Is not the man in bed and the man out of bed the same man—and if deserving of honour at all, no more deserving of it in the one case than in the other?

We are advocates for the respectability of dissent—but we wish it to be a respectability after its own kind. Nonconformity is a moral *status*—and its respectability must be sought in its own character. The reverence which it begets, it will beget by what it is—not by the circumstances which constitute its accidental environment. We can only commend the truth by exhibiting the truth—whatever else we may exhibit in connexion with it, with the foolish notion of enhancing its claims, can only serve to divert attention from the substance to the shadow. Let us be consistent Let us be respectable for our dissent—or else, for our worldly station, and our social pretensions. If we decide upon the former, let us prove our practical indifference to the latter—if upon the last, let us renounce the first. If we want our gold to glitter, we must burnish, not paint it. If we would have our nonconformity respected, we must rub it up into an unspotted and shining consistency—not overlay it with conventional frivolities.

48

COURTESY.

MEN suffering the penalty of debauch are said to evince an extreme anxiety to trace an aching head, and a disordered stomach, to any cause but the right one. They never blame the wine, their real enemy—but empty the vials of their indignation upon the roast pig, or, per-

chance, upon that "nasty salmon." This ingenuity at escaping from self-reproach is not uncommon. The sickness of the heart, which is the sure punishment of allowed inconsistencies, is very usually made the gloomy medium through which to look at the faithful advocacy of truth—and all the fretfulness and resentment which in reality grow out of a consciousness that we are in a false position, are attributed to that, whatever it be, which happens to touch that consciousness, and make it smart. We become angry, not, as we ought to be, with ourselves, for being wrong—but with something or other in him who rebukes the wrong. It matters nothing that he substantiates his charge. This, far from disarming, rather inflames, our wrath. We question his motives—we condemn his spirit—we are sure that his mode of dealing with great principles is peculiarly mischievous and offensive—and, like the man whose guilty slumbers are disturbed by cock-crow, and whose uneasiness of conscience makes every note of chanticleer grating and discordant, we are apt to fancy that the irritation excited by our own moral disquietude, is to be placed at the door

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49

of that instrumentality which wakes us up to the knowledge of our actual position.

It is not a little amusing to observe, in the fancy portraits drawn of those servants of truth who most trouble the repose of these unsettled "quietiste," the prominent ideas which they attach to a faithful discharge of duty. The voice which startles them, simply forasmuch as it speaks in the accents of fidelity, is imagined, as a matter of course, to proceed from some tall, thickset, burly fellow, whose features are hedged round with an impenetrable forest of black whiskers, whose eyes look out defiantly from beneath overhanging and shaggy brows, whose complexion is of that coarse and tawny yellow which tells a tale, not merely of exposure to the weather, but also of a disordered liver, and whose whole demeanour is a compound of swagger, impudence, and noise. They seem to suppose that such a face and figure,

set off with a walking stick of the bludgeon species, is the most natural and appropriate embodiment of a fearless mind, a strong conviction, and a determined will. Were their word taken for it, every out-and-out nonconformist—every one who presumes to call inconsistency inconsistency—should have the outward semblance of an ogre—should be

"Monstrum horrendum, informe,"

and should have qualified himself for his mission by a previous course of indiscriminate and savage offensiveness which might justify society in voting him a griffin.

Such being the case, it may be useful to inform the decided and hearty adherents of principle, that duty does not require them to answer to the picture. Firmness of purpose, and unflinching fidelity, are perfectly compatible with gentleness and courtesy—and just

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50

because they will be sure to rub the back of prejudice against the hair, in the discharge of their service to truth, it is the more peculiarly incumbent upon them to take care at least that their deeds never savour of an ill temper, and that their voice is never tremulous with excited passion.

Courtesy is the handmaid to truthfulness. A delicate perception of social proprieties—a benevolent alacrity to please, wherever pleasure can be given without a compromise of principle—a genial cheerfulness such as denotes a mind agreeing with itself—praise heartily awarded where praise is due—patience in listening to explanations—promptitude in confessing an error as soon it is perceived—a careful avoidance of bluster—and when rebuke must needs be administered, rebuke aimed rather at the *thing* reprobated, than at the *persona* who in strict justice are responsible for it—these are by no means irreconcileable with the hardiest and sternest integrity of heart.

There is a conventional courtesy which ill becomes the thorough nonconformist. It is "all things to all men,"

but not with the ultimate view of "saving some." Its features are puckered up into an inexpressive, monotonous, everlasting simper. Its opinions, camelon-like, take the hue of those next at hand. The language of compliment is ever on its ups, and it interweaves with its conversation, in wonderful variety and number, epithets of respect and endearment. When it urges the importance of some, avowed and sacred principle, it does so in a tone of misgiving which invites the auditor to give it the go-by. It suggests all manner of exuses for error, as though error itself was not sufficiently inventive of them. It puts down all unpleasant truths in the category of *tabooed* topics, whether of speech or pen—

51

and its whole aim is to please itself by gaming favour, rather than by conciliating good-will to promote truth.

Courtesy, rightly understood, is no gloser. It never employs itself in making things appear what they are not. It does not veneer deal, and call it rosewood. When it speaks, it speaks intelligibly. Its behaviour is always dictated by a regard to what the highest exigency of the occasion demands. If it would pull a man out of the water, it is rough. If it would stay the plague of some contagious immorality, it is severe. Its law is kindness, and its word is truth. It neither calls good evil, nor evil good. It seeks the advantage of others. In the pursuit of this object it may often have to denounce vice and to expose folly—but it will do neither for its own gratification. It will wound no feelings inconsiderately. It will rejoice in mild means, where mild means will answer. But it will, assuredly, deal with things according to their own nature. Timidity it will encourage. Infirmities it will allow for. It will calmly set itself to remove misapprehension. It will handle gently honest prejudices. From hypocrisy it will tear the mask without scruple—and the designing, who are plotting to mislead the unwary, it will rebuke and expose. And all this it will do from motives of enlightened

compassion—so intimately united are the twin scriptural precepts—"Be pitiful—be courteous."

The purest philanthropy presents us with the best specimens of true courtesy. He who withstood a fellow apostle to the face, "because he was to be blamed," was, perhaps, one of the most courteous men who ever trod this earth. But there was nothing mawkish in his demeanour. Gentle as the summer dew, and transparent as the autumnal air, he knew when and where to speak with indignation. A simple purpose, a settled judgment, a

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52

large and loving heart, cannot but be courteous. Provocation acting upon human infirmities may occasionally sting their possessor into passion; but even then

> "He carries anger as the flint bears fire,
> Which, being much enforc'd, shows a hasty spark,
> And straight is cold again."

53

DISSENT AND DISSENTERISM.

DIAMONDS and charcoal are exhibitions, in different degrees of purity, of the same elementary principle—carbon. To our apprehension, however, an individual may prize the one, and lightly esteem the other, without exposing himself to any just charge of inconsistency. The gem may be worn by those who affect such things, and who seem to fancy that jeweled worth strikes inward, and flashes radiance upon its wearers, without laying them under any obligation to approve of charcoal fires, or to clean their teeth with powder of the same material, however cunningly refined. The two combinations of the same element differ so widely, that our estimate of the one cannot with any reason be taken as the scale whereby to measure our interest in the other.

Dissent and dissenterism, often as they are identified, are even more broadly distinct the one from the other than are diamonds and charcoal. The one is the abstract principle of which the other is the concrete development.

This, is pure truth, directly representative of the Supreme Mind—that, is a mere party, wearing the badge of truth, exhibiting, it may be, little else than human infirmities. Affection for the first does not necessarily imply attachment to the last—nor, unhappily, does seal for "the dissenting interest" always indicate fervent love to dissent.

The sincere nonconformist is, as we have already seen, solemnly and by public profession betrothed to truth. Whatever will obviously conduce to the promotion of

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54

dissent—the wider diffusion amongst men of a correct knowledge of its principles—the quickening of conscience in relation to them—the disentanglement of them from all the extraneous incidents by which their beauty may be obscured—the commendation of them to public attention by importunate activity; to reason, by calm and cogent argument; to confidence and affection, by upright and benevolent conduct—he is under urgent obligations to sanction and abet Indifference here is palpable inconsistency—refusal is flat rebellion. For he stands before the world individually, and on his own personal responsibility, as a *truthsman*—living for, trusting in, delighted with, his sovereign mistress—anxious not merely himself to yield an affectionate obedience to her benign and gentle sway, but to persuade the whole world to come under the same authority.

But this profession, it is important to observe, binds him to no party—far less does it lay him under any claims which may be supposed to arise out of party exigencies or interest. It may be well, perhaps, to set this in a somewhat clearer light.

We suppose we may be allowed to take for granted as an undeniable fact, plain from the nature of things, and strongly authenticated by uniform experience, that a man does not cease to be a man upon his becoming a dissenter. His recognition of certain important truths introduces him to a new sphere of responsibility and of duty, but leaves him still the subject of personal wishes,

hopes, ambition, and attachments. Now within the range of his dissentship—if we may be pardoned the expression—every earnest nonconformist will, for the truth's sake, sympathize with him; but not necessarily beyond it. As a man, he may be in pursuit of objects believed by us to be greatly detrimental to, if not wholly

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55

incompatible with, the advancement of the great principles we profess to hold. And we are by no means laid under constraint, by the fact that he is a dissenter, to sanction directly or indirectly his personal objects. We have pledged our troth to dissent—not to the dissenter; and it is quite possible that the claims of the former may be in open competition with those of the latter.

The case, it is clear, is nowise altered by taking into view a party in the place of an individual; for party is but an aggregate of individuals. The dissenters, considered as a body of men occupying the same position, and affected by the same circumstances, may, simply as men, be held together by a community of interest, and may aspire to certain ends, the realization of which would put them upon a more advantageous footing in relation to society at large. They may be anxious to increase their importance—to stand well with the government—to enlarge their civil liberties—to parade their loyalty—to bask in the condescending smiles of aristocracy—to conciliate the good-will of worldly wealth—in short, so to bear themselves on all occasions, as eventually to constitute a powerful and respectable party. Would that it were clearly understood on all hands that such things are not to be identified with nonconformity—that there may be the hottest zeal in such matters in entire disjunction from any intelligent appreciation of our ostensible principles. They who go out under the banners of truth, to achieve the conquest of the world in her name, may naturally enough seek as comfortable a cantonment as the exigencies of the service will allow; but surely they might see, if they would use their minds to any purpose, a material

distinction between the interest taken in securing for themselves a snug accommodation, and a hearty attach-

56

ment to the cause on whose behalf they have enlisted themselves as soldiers.

The practical conclusion to which we are aiming to conduct our readers is, that partizanship is no duty imposed by his principles upon the nonconformist. He takes a higher position. Men of shorter aims may be unable to comprehend his singleness of purpose—may, with considerable plausibility, point to the little care he discovers to forward "the dissenting interest," as evidence of his insincerity—may regard as treachery to his own friends the fidelity with which he exposes their inconsistencies, and the out-spoken frankness with which he admits and observes upon their follies—may imply by their censures, that the meannesses and vices which lie under a nonconforming profession should be left untouched until meanness and vice under every other garb has been laid bare, and that necessity is laid upon him to see nothing in the community holding his own opinions, and ostensibly embodying his own principles, but their wisdom, worth, and power. They may exalt a certain *esprit at corps* into a cardinal virtue—and by sinuous strains of speech may endeavour to lodge in the mind the conviction, that dissent is sometimes to be sacrificed to dissenterism. Let the genuine nonconformist hold himself aloof from all such delusions. Truth, as truth, is always lovely—man, as man, is always peccable. It is the former, not the latter, that we are sworn to serve. Our profession identifies us with a principle, and with nothing beyond it. To that, and to that alone, our whole responsibility points. Let us but be true to truth —and let us leave the world, and the several sections into which the world is divided, to take their own way. We part company with them, when they part company with the leader whom we follow.

57

THE WITNESS.

"WHAT a dust we kick up!" remarked the fly with much gravity, as, perched upon the carriage pole, he saw clouds of pulverized limestone rising and floating around him. "What a dust we kick up!" Most philosophic fly! Peradventure he thought himself specially commissioned to kick up a dust, and, anxious to magnify his office, gave admiring expression to his sense of its importance. Perhaps the insect was timid, and his exclamation, amplified to take in all his thoughts, might run thus:—"This will never do! We are turning the world upside down. Who can foresee the calamitous consequences of our temerity? What care, what anxiety, what earnest pains-taking, can absolve us from the onerous, responsibility we are bringing upon ourselves?" Little fly! distress not your little mind! Fly away! and leave some other agent to answer for the dust!

"Well! now, what do you expect to do? " asks some "quietist," when urged by serious nonconformity to act up to his profession, and to unite with others in setting forth the claims of truth. The very spirit of the fly upon the carriage pole! Expect to do! As though heaven-born truth had descended hither to summon about her a chamber of councillors, and humbly to ask their opinion as to what will be the result of this or that plan, and as to the proper time and mode of carrying it into effect! As though human conduct, in the service of an immortal sovereign, were to be

68

governed by anticipated results, and obedience were appointed to wait on a foresight of events—a power to look inward, forward, and around, such as overweening vanity only can pretend to—such as man in his best estate is never likely to possess! "What dust can you kick up?" Aye! that is the gist of the inquiry—and

it implies, first, that the dust, when raised, is of our raising; and that the force of our obligations and responsibility must be measured by our supposed ability to raise it.

Look at that clock which graces the tower of the old church hard by. What various and strange emotions have not its iron tongue awakened in the neighbourhood! Wickedness, prowling about within reach of its twanging voice, has hurried off as though at its bidding, to the commission of preconcerted crime. Conscience has been suddenly startled into a recollection of duties forgotten. Many a scene of enjoyment has it broken in upon and dispersed. Countless have been the pangs which all unconsciously it has inflicted. Happily for it, and for the hundreds who profit by it, it is not cognisant of human actions, nor can it read human thoughts. Else, might every wheel within, oppressed by an imaginary responsibility, hesitate to go round—its trembling hands would betray its inward irregularity—and the single function for which it was organized would cease to be performed. That clock was made to tell the hour of the day—and of all the hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, virtues, vices, which its doing so may awaken, it is as innocent as though it had no existence.

The duty of nonconformists is not a whit less simple. It is summed up in this—to bear witness to the truth. What may come out of that is chargeable to their

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59

account no further than die deeds of men, in the foregoing illustration, are to be set down to the clock. Why, if their duty was intended to have been regulated by the evil or the good which the performance of it may be expected to occasion, would they not have been originally constituted after a very different fashion? Estimate the capabilities of man to act for the future! What can his wisdom effect beyond this, that every present step is planted, upon firm and well-ascertained ground? His boasted foresight is nothing but the

record of what *has* been done, conjoined with the presumption that it may be done again. Between his anticipations and the fact, tiny circumstances, as if in mockery, may alight, like Puck from the fairy world, and scatter all his conclusions. A profoundly ignorant creature, with all his seeming knowledge, what does he know of the laws of mind, and how much will his vision take in of the incidents, the world of incidents by which mind, in any given instance, will be acted upon, and determined? Can he see far enough before him to prevent his running upon his own individual injury? And is it, can it be, to the counsels of such an one that the destinies of truth are committed by her Master, or is his business in relation to her plainer, and more within the compass of his ability?

When we hear men jerk out the question "What do you expect to do?" with a tone of confidence which implies that that settles the whole matter, our fancy instantly lifts up its head, and rubs its drowsy eyes, and sees, or thinks it sees, some sprig of the olden time, walking up to Wycliffe, or Huss, or Martin Luther—no matter which—and laughingly presenting the same inquiry. And then fancy pricks up its ears to catch the reply—and it runs somewhat in this vein—"Expect

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60

to do! Why, nothing—save to cover ourselves with disgrace, and become the target at which witlings like yourself may aim the shafts of their pleasantry and scorn. We are impelled, not by our expectations, but by our sense of duty. Were we bidden by competent authority to stand upon our heads, we should just stand upon them—that's all. We cannot command events—we can only command ourselves. We are called upon by a voice which we dare not disobey, to bear witness to the truth which is in us—and when we have done that, we have done our part. The world may sneer in derision, or tremble in awe—may hoot as in Sodom, or repent as in Nineveh. But this is not our province.

'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'"

Nonconformists! read herein your duty. You are not councillors for truth, but simple witnesses. You have a message to deliver—your whole concern should be to deliver it. Don't be speculating upon the quantity of dust which you may raise. Give in your testimony, and you have absolved yourselves from further responsibility. Let no mistaken friends alarm you, by representing your resolution to bear witness to divine principle to be "the most calamitous event for nonconformity which has happened for three hundred years." Though in a galley, like Knox, when they bade him do reverence to an image of the Virgin mother, and when he might have calculated that his testimony would expose him to peril without doing any good to the cause of truth, treat every delusion as he treated that—"This is no mother of God—this is a *pented bredd,*" and flung the thing into the river. Mistake not your office. Cumber not your minds, like the poor fly, with needless anxieties. Truth does not ask at your hands a sagacity beyond

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61

your reach. You are not desired to cast the horoscope of future contingencies. Your obligations do not stretch themselves beyond your power to discharge them. You haye to do with the present, not with the future. Speak what is in you—give outward utterance to the knowledge communicated to you. Aspire to no higher dignity than that which has been assigned to you by the mistress of your souls. The times and seasons are not put into your hands. You are not a parliament for truth, but simple witnesses to it.

62

SELF-SACRIFICE.

MARTYRDOM in the past tense, is madness in the present. So thinks society—and if society should not think so, martyrdom would cease to be what it is. The martyr

belongs to history, not to passing life. It takes the interval of one whole generation before his reputation for obstinacy mellows down into that of firmness. Time canonizes him—and the circle of glory which environs his head can be discerned only at a distance. When a man's self-sacrifice flashes unpleasant conviction into the eyes of his contemporaries he is a troublesome fool—but when he and they have 'passed off the stage, and his character is submitted to others for judgment, he is recognised as a martyr.

Every age is guilty of the inconsistency of building the tombs of former prophets and of persecuting its own. With strange obliviousness, it intently and busily sets about precisely the same work which it condemns the preceding one for having accomplished; and whilst its fingers gripe the throat of some poor servant of truth, it speaks in eloquent indignation of that cruelty which in foregoing times choked the utterance of an unwelcome message. Our glorious ancestors were the violent, vulgar, noisy, peace-disturbing men of their own day; and the crazy enthusiasts of our own era, if they will but continue crazy enthusiasts to the end, will be the honoured fathers of that which is to come.

See, now, with what alacrity men warm themselves at

63

the fire which nonconformity kindled some two centuries ago, and how they bless themselves and congratulate each other, upon the inextinguishable vitality of truth. See, whilst their own countenances are lightened up in the ruddy glow which it emits, and they smile back their gratitude, and look around in all the pride of triumph, and exclaim every now and then, "All hail the faith, and love, and courage, which God honoured to light up this blaze!"—see how they will turn about them, and when, within the precincts of their own sect and day, they observe some unsophisticated brother prostrate on the earth, and labouring to puff into a flame, for the advantage of future generations, a little spark of truth, heedless of the smoke which blinds his eyes, they

sneer at his imprudence, point at him the finger of their scorn, whisper away his character, and slily squirt water, drawn from any puddle near them, in hope of being able to quench what he is laboriously attempting to kindle. Oh! the industry with which these worthies will grope amongst the records of the past for splendid specimens of fidelity to principle, the care with which they will burnish them, the rich and well-chased language in which they will set them, and the ostentation with which they will carry them about as the ornaments of their own person—jewels upon which they can engrave their own initials-—when at the self-same time they are treading under foot every modern concretion of the same moral element, and, wherever they discover it, calling it by a name which, if anything can, will ensure for it neglect and contempt for the next fifty years!

Softly! our wonder at the inconsistency of this world's wisdom, like a fiery Pegasus, will carry us, unless we take care, clean out of sight of the mark at which we aim. Let us alight in good time, and ere we have outrun our

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64

space, explain our design in careering so far upon the back of the above observations.

Resolute nonconformity presupposes self-sacrifice—but then that self-sacrifice must be out and out. To surrender things of one kind for an equivalent of another is comparatively easy. If men might but be esteemed martyrs during their own lifetime, martyrs would be cheap and abundant. There are thousands who will give all that they have, if they may but take back the worth of it in reputation. But this is an exchange which sincerity cannot hope to realize. The test of discipleship to truth is a more searching one. Let us look at it!

To maintain our fidelity, at the imminent hazard, perhaps the total destruction, of our worldly prospects, and then to be blamed for culpable imprudence—to provoke by our zeal the bitter hostility of opponents, only to reap as our reward the severest censure of our friends—to be diligent, and earn for ourselves the

character of meddling busy-bodies; earnest, and be voted bores; vigilant, and be set down as spies in the employ of ill-nature or disappointed ambition—to see one friend after another forsake us, and hear society declare that we are rightly served—to lose caste, and obtain no pity—to have those acts whose birth was accompanied with pangs which rent our whole nature, blown upon, not merely by the reckless, but by the seemingly good and pious—to hold fast our footing on our avowed principles at the cost of all we prize on earth, and then to be assailed for our desperate obstinacy of disposition—to mean nothing but good, and to be perpetually told that we do nothing but harm—to find ourselves left alone, avoided as dangerous, slandered as infamous, pointed at as warning mementoes of self-willed and self-sufficient misanthropy—and, haply, to quit life under a

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65

cloud, conscious that our departure hence will be generally hailed as a fortunate riddance—brother nonconformist, can you make up your mind to that, for that is the kind of self-sacrifice which truth demands of you?

Martyrdom! No, no! Don't count upon martyrdom, for its glory is for the dead, not the living. That name must first rot which is to put forth fragrant flowers. And when the beauteous petals open to the light, and win the admiration of all classes of men, the seed whence they sprung will have ceased to be.

But come, brother! you are not without your reward, if you will look for it in the right direction. Call to mind, for your encouragement, the indescribable rapture of that moment when your eye first met the eye of truth, and, glance catching glance, your being seemed to unite with, and resolve itself into, hers. Then, for the first time, you read the secret of your own creation and history. New life tingled in your veins; and every power and every passion of your soul struck up a concerted movement of joy, the music of which was as the breath of immortality. Over your glowing spirit there stole the delicious feeling that for that hour and

for that communion you were originally made—that all previous pleasure had been a mistake—all previous action a tale without a moral. You gazed again and again into the full and lustrous eye of the heavenly maiden, and saw yourself reflected there—and when she turned her mild but penetrating glance upon you, and made you feel that she saw all that your mind and heart contained, you took her reverently, gratefully, joyously to be your companion for all future time. It is in her society that you must now find solace—and in the witchery of her smiles that you must reap your reward. No light solace, no trivial reward either, to those who

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66

know how to appreciate them! They are characterised by a calmness, a closeness, a domesticity, a suitedness to what we are, what we would be, what we hope to be, which we vainly search for elsewhere. Within sound of her voice we are at home—and to that inner world of thought, feelings, susceptibilities, affections, which make up man, and which, in their untamed state, prey upon, worry, and destroy each other, her reign brings peace—"the lion lies down with the lamb—the leopard with the kid"—all living things agree—there is harmony within —there is sunlight without.

Nestle here, spirit of nonconformity, in the bosom of truth, and when worldly wisdom shivers in the storm, and must needs bide its pitiless pelting, your *self-sacrifice* will be its own reward.

67

PRACTICE.

ANTINOMIANISM! What shall we say of it? What need we say? It tells its own pedigree. Look, in its sanctimonious face, and you will see the image of the beast there. Its breath is foul—its speech malignant—its whole bearing, the bearing of presumption and impudence. Common sense cannot be deceived by its flimsy sophistry—and every moral feeling of the soul is

roused at its approach, and instinctively lifts up the heel against it.

Well! well! speak gently, lest you involve yourself in the condemnation you utter. Antinomianism has several forms, and it sometimes happens that they who are loudest in their denunciations of it under one shape, hug it to their bosoms when it appears in another. To attempt a severance between faith and duty—to cry up the virtue of belief, and to cry down the obligation to act—to make men's hearts the sepulchres, rather than the soil, of truth—to justify the strangling of principles in their cradles, lest they should cry and give annoyance to neighbours—what is this but antinomianism? and who is more chargeable with this than they who are perpetually chiding nonconformity with their authoritative "Lie still?" And it is observable that both classes of antinomians base their tenets upon the modest assumption of supereminent spirituality. It is all for the gospel's sake that professed dissenters maintain a studied Bilence, and urge determined inaction in reference to their distinctive principles. They cannot consent to en-

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68

danger the progress of true religion, by any serious efforts to spread—what? Aye! What, on their own showing? Error? No! Uncertain opinions? Not at all! Conclusions fairly arrived at by human reasoning? This is not their way of putting it! But, revealed truth—a part and parcel of Christianity—a portion of the expressed mind of God. "Hush!" they cry, "for the sake of spiritual-mindedness, hush! Say nothing about that—do nothing to carry out that—baulk not the chances of Christian union by insisting upon that—peril not our present liberty by combining for that.

> "'In shade let it rest like a delicate flower;
> O breathe on it softly! it dies in an hour.'"

Flat antinomianism! Most barefaced, palpable and heretical antinomianism!

Truth says, "Be—but be, in order to do." The thoughts which she inspires must kindle into warm affections—and those affections must needs evolve themselves in action. Nothing born of truth *can* lie still—"born," we say, for there may be an image on the understanding, when there is no life in the conscience—and where there is not life, there can be no nonconformity. But all vitality, moral, as well as physical, craves exercise—and a principle in the heart, though but of yesterday, like a new-born babe, will first cry, and then kick—first profess itself, and, as soon as may be, act.

It is easier to suffer than to do—to bear great trials, than to perform little deeds with cheerful perseverance—therefore, in these "Ethics of Nonconformity'' have we placed "practice" after "self-sacrifice." In the last case, the *vis inertiæ* of a man's will is in his favour—in the first, it is dead against him. There, the line of

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69

gravitation falls before the wheels—here, behind them. And yet, that nonconformity which lives will assuredly act. At least, such is its innate tendency—a tendency which will put itself forth in deeds, unless the paralysis of some morbid theory of morals utterly destroys it.

The practice of the conscientious nonconformist will require comparatively little guidance. Like every other result of instinctive affection, itself will be its best preceptor. It may err in its means, and so may maternal fondness—but, on the whole, even when left to itself, it is almost certain of doing good. For, without wishing to disparage intelligence, whether natural or acquired, it is amazing how small is its power for usefulness, how trivial its influence, when placed beside those of deep sincerity. The very mistakes of the earnest man are often overruled for good—and the fuller the earnestness the less the danger of mistake. Deep waters are placid. Intense fires glow, but do not flame. The soul absorbed in the desire to realize one end, is calm and penetrating—and sees, not so much by reason as by intuition.

Hence, all large-hearted reformers have acted as if by inspiration—and those of their deeds which caution might have pronounced to be madness, experience has proved to have resulted from more than mortal wisdom.

There is a lofty spirit of poetry in heroic acts, which lights up in all generous minds an emulation to achieve them. But, perhaps, in the eye of truth, we can sustain a yet nobler part. To do small services, as we have opportunity—never to overlook them because they seem trivial—to render them with cheerfulness, when they can yield us no revenue of praise—to pay them because we *can* pay them, not waiting till more is in our power—to trudge on day by day, without the excitement of a single incident—to take pains about little things as if they were

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70

great ones—to put soul into details, down to the very mode, if need be, of a shoe-tie—in short, so to show our attachment to truth as the affectionate child does to his mother, not by magnificent presents now and then, but in little, quiet, vigilant, every-day acts of kindness, done, and thought no more of when they are done—done for the very pleasure of doing anything to express love—give us this as the purest, richest, noblest specimen of conscientious nonconformity! He who thus acts is the violet of the moral world: every breeze diffuses the delicious fragrance of his character. He may be unseen, and his head may droop in modesty; but there will be all around him an odour of his own faithfulness, and the perfume of his deeds will fill the neighbouring atmosphere. The influence of that man will be balm.

And it is important to observe that this kind of activity, though the least exciting and the least noisy, is the most satisfactory, and, in the long run, the most useful. It spreads over the life an equable peace. It establishes a moral influence, daily augmenting in power, which, after a time, produces effects which startle their very selves. And as the continual dropping of water Wears away the stone, so an untiring attention to seemingly small duties, overcomes difficulties thought, in the

first blush of them, to be perfectly insurmountable. And then, what conscience begins with many shrinking», and much reluctance, habit carries on with ever-increasing pleasure. The child grows into a man, with brawny muscles and stalwart limbs. A tone of health pervades the soul, and the whole frame becomes nerved and knit for exercise. The eye is quick—the heart is sound—the step is firm. Oh! what a contrast to the puling, pale-faced, tight-laced, hysterical sentimentality of the age! —the poor, inane thing, which pants for the excitement

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71

of the platform, and never lives save in a crowd—kept up merely by the brandy and water of public meetings, hot, strong, and with a *quantum sufficit* of sugar—and when at home, languishing, peevish, fit only for the sofa, and useless as an ailing girl! Reader! which lot will you choose? for the choice is even now within your power.

72

WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW.

"WHERE there is a will, there is a way" is true, within the limits of possibility. "Love will break through stone walls," proves that the limits which hedge about human action are often nothing but what our own indecision of purpose makes them. Let "I will" go first, with a firm and determined step, and "when, where, and how," will be sure to follow. These little adverbs must, in practical life, be taught to know their place. They are good servants, but bad masters. Command them, and they are apt, obliging, useful. Suffer them to command, and they are capricious, obstinate, despotic. The will which is at their beck is a sorry slave snubbed into that tameness and timidity that, like Kip Van Winkle's dog, the least semblance of an uplifted broomstick will send it scudding away with a yelp of apprehension, and with a tail all limp and drooping for want of pluck. Some men make cir-

cumstances, and are considered fortunate. Some are made by them, and curse their fate.

> "The faulty dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

A narrow examination of our own motives would disclose to us the somewhat unwelcome truth, that most of our perplexities as to modes of practice, spring out of our own insincerity of heart. The choice of the best and shortest road, when a man has a lurking indisposition to go forward, becomes a formidable difficulty—and he consumes, in doubt and debate, far more time than he

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73

would have lost, even if he had hit upon the very worst which offered itself. A mad bull at the heels of caution puts to flight a whole bevy of perplexities—bushes are run through—stiles are cleared—ploughed fields are traversed—high walls are scaled—every impediment is overleaped, until a place of safety has been gained. Why? Because, in such a case, determination takes the lead—and, at its approach, obstacles usually give way. Nonconformity may surely exhibit a like decision without being impelled by a like motive. Once resolved upon action, the "when, where, and how" become easy.

"Cast not your pearls before swine," says some trim and furbished pattern of prudence—whereupon, irresolution, knowing the precept to have been given by incarnate wisdom, but scarcely taking a moment's pains to understand it, concludes that it must be very wary, very wary indeed, of indiscriminately proclaiming even divinely revealed principles. Well! but who are the "swine," and how are we to know them? In His day, who gave us the maxim, they were not the "common people" of whom it is testified that "they heard him gladly"—nor "publicans and sinners," for he was reproached with being their "friend"—but the "chief priests and the pharisees," for they it was who "turned and rent him." We have no right to judge any unworthy of the truth, until, by their treatment of truth, they have proved themselves to be such. Many were the cities which the

apostles entered, and of which, in a spirit of true benevolence, they made trial, whose dust they were compelled to shake off their feet as a witness against them. Our Lord himself reasoned with priests and pharisees until it became apparent that reason could not convince, and only inflamed them. The precept, therefore, throws no difficulty whatever in the way of the earnest-hearted,

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74

Conjecture need not worry itself with the vain attempt to ascertain beforehand who are "the swine," and who are not. Their own habits will soon point them out to the active servant of truth—and when he can plainly distinguish them, he will consider himself under obligation to cast his pearls elsewhere, not to keep them in his own hand. His duty to impart to others what he has himself received, runs to an indefinite extent, until events limit it in this or the other direction. Impart *he must*—but facts can only direct him as to whether he shall persist in imparting to such and such individuals or classes.

It is said, by some of those who practise mesmerism, that experienced hands, when slowly, and as it were, inquiringly, passed over the body of a patient, may detect the influence of a current, almost imperceptibly bearing them towards the seat of the disease. Whether a fiction of imagination or a fact, the assertion will serve us for an illustration. A resolute will to promote, by the likeliest modes within reach, the claims of truth, can never be long at a loss. By a law of attraction, the force of which the vigilant will certainly perceive, the means of action will so arrange themselves, as to exert their strongest power, where most it is needed. A living principle lights the way to its own success. Fire within a man, if it be of the right sort, will radiate its brightness all around him—and, aided by its beams, he will see, with a sort of instinctive clearness, what methods will be most conductive to true usefulness. Earnestness is always persuasive. The simple desire to transfer from our minds to others the views which truth has impressed there, succeeds in proportion to its own intensity. There

is a photographic process in morals, as well as in physics —and, as in the last, pictures are rendered vivid according to the degree of light employed, so, in the first,

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75

conviction and persuasion depend, for their depth, far more upon a concentration of soul in him who would produce them, than upon the particular arguments, appeals or acts, through the medium of which it develops itself.

"When, where, and how," therefore, must be left, in each case, to the judgment of sincerity—and sincerity, availing itself of common sense, will seldom mistake. We know that history will be quoted against us—and proofs by the thousand will be thrust forward, of men whose zeal can never be called in question, employing fire and sword for the spread of Christianity; all which we may as well anticipate by the answer, that what these fanatics sought they took likely means enough to attain. They aimed at an universal outward conformity to the church—and they resorted to physical force to secure it Profession, not faith, was their real object—for to profession they attached more importance than to faith. No man in his senses would seek to instruct a human understanding, or to fix the affections of the human heart, by "threatenings and slaughters." Appearances to the contrary are fallacious. Those who wielded such weapons in by-gone days, or who, in modern times, handle similar ones, cannot be imagined to have been intent upon making their fellow-men the willing worshippers of Him whom they professed to serve. Willing or unwilling, they would have conformists—and what more likely to multiply them than an appeal to their fears?

Depend upon it, that the perplexity, as to time, place, and mode, which palsies action, infallibly betokens a shallow sense of obligation. How does intensity of feeling show itself in the more ordinary walks of life? See how gratitude, where it is sincere and deep, albeit limited by poverty in its means of expression, plucks a few hedge-flowers, and knits them into a posy, that

76

simple as it is, and comparatively worthless, it shall yet be fragrant of kindly feeling towards him to whom it is presented! Mark how fond friendship, hearing the voice of slander, pricks up its ears, and watches for an opportunity of vindicating the absent—and, as the case demands, observe with what gracefulness it slips in, now an inquiry, then a denial, anon a reproof, not one of which fails to tell upon the mind of an impartial listener. Or love, is it ever long at a loss for means? Is it not quick to invent, and prompt to execute? And does it not, by any reed, breathe out its music of desire and complaint? Why, then, should all-absorbing devotion to truth be puzzled into inactivity, or pine itself away in doubts? What is there in this spiritual passion which may account for its development in so distracting an anxiety not to be wrong, as to leave untried all means of being right? True nonconformity will as certainly shape for itself a course of resolute practice, as will gratitude, friendship, or love—and his affection for nonconforming principles is much to be suspected which sits still for want of knowing the "when, where, and how."

77

SINGING AT WORK.

GIVE us, O give us the man who sings at his work! Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any three who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He will do more in the same time—he will do it better—he will persevere longer. One is scarcely sensible of fatigue whilst he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness—altogether past calculation its powers of endurance. And nonconformity, to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous—a spirit all sunshine—graceful from very gladness—beautiful because bright

How can it be, some men will inquire, how can it be, whilst things are as they are? Look at the immense, the almost insuperable impediments in the way of ultimate success—the deep hold which the principle of church establishments has upon depraved human nature—the extent to which it has interwined itself with our national customs, habits, and modes of thought—the vast worldly interests which are identified with its maintenance—the amount of popular ignorance to be cleared away—the inconsistency and apathy of the majority of those holding opinions which we deem to be scriptural—the dead set made by all parties against earnest activity, wherever it appears—look at all this, and is not sober sadness the most befitting state of mind? Ought we not to weep, rather than rejoice? Aye! we reply, so far as weeping will estrange you from idleness. But no further. With

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78

such a spectacle before him, a man may well be overcome, and, filled with regrets, may sit down for an hour or two, and pour out his passionate sorrow. But crying is not to be his habit. When his resolution has been taken to consecrate himself, according to his ability and opportunities, to the service of truth, he had much better be cheerful, and rather sing over the work which he can do, than vainly shed tears over that which he cannot. Briny drops are of no special use in this world, but as they relieve an overwrought excitement, or bear witness to the depth of our sincerity. They are not pearls—they possess no fertilizing power—and when too abundant, they do but blind the eyes of those who shed them. But gladness brings with it no drawback. It makes the eye clear—the limbs active—the will tense. It is, in truth, the health of our moral nature.

And let men think what they will, the spirited nonconformist has reasons enough for habitual cheerfulness, if he will only give them play. It is something to have before one a fixed object of pursuit, an ultimate and clearly recognised mark, at which activity may aim. It is something to have arrived at that stage of earthly exist-

ence, where desire, and hope, and affection, and even conscience, cease to run hither and thither in uncertainty, roaming, in endless maze, in search of some definite point in the distant future towards which they can agree to walk in company. It is pleasant to have something settled to do—pleasant to feel assured that that something is worthy of our best efforts—pleasant to put forth such efforts on its behalf—and pleasant, now and then, to note progress. If we are but ourselves in tune, we may make sweet music for our own entertainment, hideous as may be the howlings of the bitter blast without Providence has mercifully associated enjoyment, not, indeed,

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79

with the mere possession of powers, whether bodily, mental, or moral, but with the fitting exercise of them. Nonconformity lying idle in the understanding may yawn with discontent—but nonconformity putting out its energies in useful exertion, will be as happy as a bird.

Nothing is more likely to produce, and to sustain, cheerfulness, than the conviction that every thing we do is telling more or less for the welfare of mankind. And this reward have all the servants of truth, however humble their sphere. No act performed for her can be lost. We may be unable to follow it to its results—but that it has results, and those, too, beneficial in their character, is past all doubt. Good and evil—light and darkness—happiness and misery—axe on this stage of human history, contending for mastery. To give a few blows, even if they be but few, and, to all outward seeming, puny, in aid of the former against the latter, is a satisfaction. All men may not be able to tackle Giant Despair—but they may yet be usefully engaged in dealing out her due to Mrs. Diffidence. We may not all kill lions, and yet be competent to kill spiders. In the war with evil, no energy prompted by hearty good-will can be wasted. The very eagerness which misses its mark may shame the listlessness of some abler hand. Mistakes that prove seriously annoying to ourselves, may be teaching prudence to those who are around us. There is a sense in which it may be

said that they who contend for the truth can do no wrong. They are adding something, by their every deed, to the power of right against might—making some contribution to the general stock—lending some assistance which will be an item in the sum total of final victory. The thought is an encouraging one—for no man likes to "beat the air"—and it is one which every nonconformist may wear as an amulet against depression of spirits.

80

Nor is this all. We have kept back the sweetest drop until the last. Triumph is certain. We have espoused no losing cause. In the body we may not join our shout with the victors—but in spirit we may even now. There is but an interval of time between us and the success at which we aim. In all other respects the links of the chain are complete. Identifying ourselves with immortal and immutable principles, we share both their immortality and immutability. The vow which unites us with truth makes futurity present with us. Our being resolves itself into an everlasting now. It is not so correct to say that we *shall be* victorious, as that we *are* so. When we will in unison with the Supreme Mind, the characteristics of His own will become, in some sort, those of ours. What He has willed is virtually done. It may take ages to unfold itself, but the germ of its whole history is wrapped up in His determination. When we make His will ours, which we do when we aim at truth, that upon which we are resolved is done—decided—born. Life is in it. It is—and the future is but the development of its being. Ours, therefore, is a perpetual triumph. Our deeds are all of them component elements of triumph. Should we not sing, then, as we work—and set about our every duty with lightsome cheerfulness of heart? Where is he that can answer "No"?

81

WINDING UP.

READER, our allotted task is done. With the present number, and the present year, we take a farewell of that rich and ample domain of thought over which, in somewhat desultory mood, we have been straying since the uprising of parliament. It is a region which we cannot quit without some hearings of affectionate regret. We might, indeed, have tarried longer, for we are far from having exhausted the variety of topics outspread before us. But we have answered the purpose we had in view when starting. We have explained the relationship which the sincere nonconformist bears to truth, and out of that relationship have deduced, by a sort of natural logic, some of his most important obligations. To repeat the process would be easy—but surely, it can hardly be necessary. They who have in their possession the key-principle, as most of our readers, we trust, by this time, have, may unlock with it every question of nonconforming ethice. We have done enough in this way to familiarize our friends with the mode of application—all that remains they are as competent to do for themselves,-as we for them. "Well! but there is nothing new in all that you have advanced," we fancy some of our readers will ere now have exclaimed; "your 'Ethics of Nonconformity' are nothing more than the system of duty prescribed by Christianity." Precisely so, we reply. We never promised novelty, or certainly we should not have groped about for it in the region of moral obligation.

82

That is just the most barren ground of curiosities which a man could well select. But is it not something, to put into the body of nonconformity the soul of Christianity? Is it not something to show that the first, legitimately carried out, is but a special development of the last? That the duties of both flow from

one well-head, because the relationships of both are congenial—that true religion is not an act but a spirit, pervading, and giving significance to all acts—that a man cannot regard his dissent as a thing altogether separate and apart from his piety—that he has no warrant for compromising the one, any more than the other—and that the truth which he holds, as a nonconformist, he holds on precisely the same terms, and subject to the same obligations, as that which he holds as a Christian—is it of no importance to have all this well understood?

Why, what has been the parable taken up against all who have of late displayed any earnestness in their dissent? Has it not been that their motives are purely political, and themselves crazy enthusiasts? Have not men of high standing, of wide influence, and of eminent repute for spiritual-mindedness, rebuked the forwardness of that zeal that could not acquiesce in silence and inaction, and deplored its manifestations as the plainest proof of a low and grovelling order of religion? Has there not been pretty universally an implied understanding, that interest in the distinctive principles of nonconformity must be in an inverse proportion to interest in the broader truths of the gospel? Surely, then, it is time to place our duties as dissenters upon their proper basis, and to show that that same system of revealed truth which, when heartily received, makes a kind parent, an upright tradesman, a high-minded

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83

patriot, a glowing philanthropist—makes also, by the self-same influence, the consistent, unyielding, anfl energetic nonconformist. We have done enough, we take it, to expose the cant which has frightened so many dissenters out of their propriety. We dare any man, no matter what his profession, to get up and tell the world that the counsels we have given in these our "Ethics" are condemned by the genius of the Bible. We challenge the whole array of the masters in Israel to overturn what we have been labouring to build up.

If the strain of our observations throughout this series of papers be unsanctioned by God's word, then is it not fitting to let it pass unrebuked; for what is not true is false, and what is false is pernicious. Up, then, you who can crush this falsehood, and do it! Speak, once for all, and let the world know wherefore you carry not every principle of Christianity into the region of nonconformity.

We have sketched the outlines of what, in our judgment, dissent *should be*—have presented to our readers an ideal, formed, we think, upon a scriptural model, of the spirit of true nonconformity. Imperfect as has been our execution of the task, we may, nevertheless, now that it is completed, confidently ask our friends to survey it, and contrasting it as it stands with dissent *as it is,* to say which of the two exhibits more of moral dignity. There may be many who have accompanied us through this series of papers, to whom it may have appeared all but hopeless to look for any general conformity to so high a standard; but surely there are none who on that account would deliberately debase it—many, perhaps, who regret the wide difference between what they ought to be and what they are; few, very few, we hope, who in order to do away with such

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84

difference, would purposely bring down "ought to be" to the level of "are." We make bold to inquire of all such, what is the element wanting in their character, the presence of which would elevate them into a closer resemblance to the portrait we have set before them. Is it worldly prudence, or is it thorough honesty of conviction? Had they a profounder reverence for truth than they have, a deeper insight into its fulness of excellence, a simpler faith in its energy, a more perfect resignation of their whole being to its influence, would they, in consequence thereof, be more or less like the study we have submitted to them for contemplation? Here, then, we are justified in taking our stand, and in affirming that the views and tone of the mind

which would make dissent more supple, more accommodating, more harmonious with the spirit of modern society, may plead what they will in their favour, but they are essentially "of the earth, earthy." Let them only take their right shape, and their power to do harm dwindles into comparative insignificance. The mischief they have been able, to perpetrate hitherto, has been done under false pretences—and opinions have assumed the appearance of "angels of light," whilst engaged in promoting the reign of "darkness."

Come, then, good readers, one and all, let us wind up, as becomes us, with a practical resolution. It will well become the season—it is required of us by the spirit of the times—it is demanded from us by our own solemn professions. Let bygones be bygones. We are entering upon a new year—let us enter upon it as men conscious of the high responsibility devolving upon us. We have pledged ourselves to truth under the designation of dissenters. Let truth, therefore, have from us the fidelity which she claims—and

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85

as we have closed the present year with the contemplation, so let us open and complete the ensuing one with the consistent exemplification, of the "Ethics of Nonconformity."

86

87

WORKINGS OR WILLINGHOOD.

88

89

WORKINGS OF WILLINGHOOD.

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED.

THE brief interval of quiet placed at our disposal by the Parliamentary recess asks improvement. The current of events glides on so noiselessly as scarcely to attract attention, much less repay it. The moment is favourable, therefore, for giving to thought a somewhat higher range than common, and for elevating it to that region of abstractions in which it may exercise and strengthen all its powers. Start not, gentle reader, at the bare proposal, as though it involved unprofitable labour! We are not likely to lose sight of earth, or earth's affairs. Our object is exclusively practical. For when bustle has done its worst to brand reflection as an idler, and the silent musings of philosophy have been classed with the day-dreams of a fretful fancy, it remains true that deeds are but thoughts embodied, and that those minds which most accustom themselves to converse with the *spirit* of things, do most towards supplying the material out of which constructiveness fashions its several designs.

Why look so coldly on abstractions? Why deem that time misspent which is not occupied immediately with the *doing* of things? What we see around us—the actual, the tangible, the real—is nothing more than the bodily form in which there dwells a living soul—and the

90

visible or appreciable qualities of the one constitute the countenance which is intended to give expression to the other. In all that relates to human action, especially, wisdom prompts us to acquaint ourselves as intimately as possible with the germ of which it is the external development; and it holds good in every department of morals, that clear thoughts must precede right practice.

But courage! Our task is not quite so abstract as the foregoing observations may seem to imply. We purpose,

it is true, to look at willinghood—voluntaryism we take to be a detestable term—in its essence, but only so far as it may enable us to mark the deviations from it in practice which so utterly mislead the public as to its real nature. Many are the proceedings which pass among dissenters as appropriate forms of willinghood, which, when closely scrutinized, turn out to be only compulsion in disguise. Some of these it will be our aim to catch and strip, that all men may see of what ilk they are. We are jealous of the dignity of true willinghood. We thoroughly begrudge the homage paid to pretenders who have assumed its name; and we believe we cannot do better service, whilst the public mind is comparatively disengaged, than by tracing out the various channels in which willinghood, if undisturbed in its course, will naturally run.

We can readily apprehend that such a series of papers will be devoid of all attraction for some who yet glory in calling themselves Dissenters. With them it is more praiseworthy to be true to "the cause," than true to truth. Everything supposed to reflect their minds, they would have described *couleur de rose*. The robe of their system, they wish it to be believed, is seamless—of one consistent piece, colour, and texture. The close examination of it which results in the detection of thin places

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91

or unsightly patches, they can account for only on the score of treachery or malice. Like the vendor of flawed crockery ware, they appear to think that it is their business to conceal rather than to point out cracks. They forget that silence may lie as unequivocally as can falsehood—that paint and putty, quiet as they are, may do a world of roguery—and that to be as we ought to be, is, for our own sake, as well as that of others, far better than merely to appear so. Soundness is preferable to comeliness—but, in fact, the first always implies the last

Yet do we hope that our labours in this direction will be cordially accepted by not a few amongst us. There is growing up, we would fain hope, out of the decay of

ecclesiastical conventionalisms, a school of men whose desire it is to see all things, even those which lie on their own door-stone, just as they are, neither better nor worse —who believe no party to have a monopoly of truth, and none to be wholly destitute of it—who are equally concerned to get rid of what is wrong among themselves as to set others right—who pin their faith to the sleeve of no system, but wish to deal with every system as they find it—who regard the world as deeply interested in right thinking, true speaking, and honest acting, in every department of its multifarious concerns—and with whom theories are in esteem only as they are reduced to practice, and rules are valuable only as they are uniformly operative. To such we are especially anxious to commend these successive papers. They will know how to discriminate between the use and the abuse of our remarks, and will not suspect us, in looking towards reform, to mean nothing less than violent revolution.

It may be, also, that the self-supposed and self-avowed opponents of willinghood, may pick some useful thoughts out of this projected series of observations. Under the

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92

spell of strange delusions, they often tilt at windmills, supposing them to be veritable giants. Their mistake, we own, is not unnatural—but, then, it leads to a vast amount of fruitless controversy. Nor is this all. Not seldom, the evils at which they let fly their shafts of ridicule, or hurl their heavier bolts of condemnation, are, in reality, their own cherished principles in disguise. We think it would be well for them to know what willinghood is and what it is not—the forms in which it lives, and the forms which extinguish its vitality—when and where it is certainly present, and active, and when and where it neither has been nor can be. The knowledge will save them many a bootless encounter, and will spare them many an occasion for exclaiming with Richard,—

> "I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
> Five have I slain today instead of him."

We can propose, indeed, to those of our readers who will consent to accompany us, very little in the shape of positive novelty. Yet the path along which we intend to move is not much frequented. Party spirit and conventional zeal have choked up its avenues. We have no other motive for our determination to explore it than a sincere wish to clear the doctrine of willinghood from some unmerited imputations, to explain its essential characteristics, and, by this means, to commend it to many minds who, through misapprehension, have contemptuously rejected it We set about our task, resolved to

"*Nothing* extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

We have no quarrel with men, but with systems. We have no desire to irritate, but to convince and to persuade. Amongst the professors of the voluntary principle, inconsistencies of practice too clearly indicate that

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93

its nature and requirements are not fully understood—that too often, where trusted, it is trusted from habit, rather than from an intelligent conviction of its efficiency—and that, where custom permits, it is practically set at nought. It will be our design to show that every deviation from it in ecclesiastical affairs is an evil to be deplored—and that, amongst Dissenters themselves, there is room for improvement.

94

THE PRINCIPLE SEEN IN ITS ELEMENTS.

WILLINGHOOD! There is a charm in the idea represented by this term which few discern, and none, perhaps, thoroughly appreciate. Of the external modes of its manifestation we most of us know something. The drapery thrown around it, the outline of its figure, its features, its countenance, even the sunlight of its glorious expression, are to many minds familiar things—things upon which they have looked, and,

looking, have reverently loved. But the spirit, of which these are, after all, but a rude embodiment—the essential soul of willinghood—who has conversed with it? Were it possible to commune with this idea—so vividly to see, so intimately to know, so heartily to sympathize with it, as to mingle with it and be as one—could we, by any kind of mental transmigration, quit the environment of thoughts and feelings which our inner self has gradually evolved, and which it is ever destined to inhabit, and become so entirely identified with the spirit of this idea as to observe all outward things, all outward relationships, organizations, institutions, just as they are reflected by it—or might we, by resolute abstraction, get so near to its centre as to command its entire range of vision—we should probably have hit upon the secret in the light of which all the haziness which now enwraps the moral administration of God, and, with it, all the hesitation of our hearts to submit to it, would vanish as a morning cloud. Such perfect intuition we may

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95

sigh for, but, alas! in vain. We must be content with such approaches to it as our deficiencies and infirmities will permit—comforting ourselves, moreover, with the belief that yearnings after the unattainable, although they can never come up with their object, may, to an indefinite extent, impel us towards it.

Willinghood in the maintenance and extension of spiritual instrumentalities is too generally mistaken for an ultimate principle. It is no such thing. It is but a single mode, and that far from the highest, of its manifestation. Voluntary contributions for religious purposes, as contradistinguished from compulsory exactions, is one of the forms, it is true, in which willinghood exhibits itself. But he who sees no more of Christian willinghood than may be thus exemplified, has scarcely got beyond "the weak and beggarly elements" of the subject. And it is because men have so commonly stopped short at this point, that the theme

is usually found to be so devoid of interest, so wanting in true dignity. No doctrine, however intrinsically important, the sole known terminus of which is pay—no system which is believed, whether rightly or wrongly, to point exclusively at the disbursement of money—no arguments, however cogent, nor eloquence, however moving, which go direct, even for the best purposes, to the pocket, and no further, can succeed in firing human souls with enthusiasm. Their music of sublime discourse is interrupted by the tinkle of coin. Their fragrance is dashed with a smell of earth. They are as flowery paths leading to a workhouse. They are as letters all poetry with postscripts all pence—glorious introductions to inglorious results—stately avenues to a paltry hut—"in the name of the prophet—figs."

But, in truth, willinghood is something more than

96

this single, and, as it were, incidental exhibition of it, would lead us to surmise. We must beware of confounding a practical inference with the principle from which it is drawn. The system of supporting Christian institutions by voluntary contributions, is only a subordinate branch from the parent stem. Willinghood is just another term for *manhood,* rightly understood. Affectionate service—intellectual, active, or pecuniary—rendered to one's own conscience, is a somewhat nearer approach to the primary idea. Man in his religious mood, and having to do with religious things, entering the court of his own judgment, asserting his own individuality, weighing evidence, hearing arguments and appeals, pronouncing decisions, and issuing mandates to his own passions and desires—man, claiming his proper relationship to the Supreme, and rejecting the proffered intervention of his fellow-man to overrule his interpretation of what God says, or the disposition with which he shall attend to it—man renouncing spiritual allegiance to all human authority, and vindicating, as becomes him, his right to free inquiry, to personal conviction, and to unfet-

tered action, in all that relates to the keeping of his own soul—this is one aspect under which willing-hood should be contemplated. "I was not made to take law in spiritual things from any power less than divine—to think, or believe, or speak, or do, because bidden thereto by pastor, priest, or king. To *me,* revelation addresses its solemn message, asks *my* judgment, claims *my* acquiescence. It is my prerogative to transact all business with heaven, in my own person, and on my own account. To choose is mine, as mine will be the consequences of the choice." This, however, is only the sterner voice of willing-

97

hood, the sturdier aspect it assumes, in resentment of human interference with the affairs of the soul. As the intelligent and grateful response of the mind and heart to God, its countenance is all brightness, its tones all tenderness, its air all submission. 'Piercing through all the noisy prejudices of human nature, the soft, but earnest, whisper of love is heard pleading for right—for truth—for eternity—for God. Faithful in its reproaches, it utters them, nevertheless, tremulously, as if from excess of emotion. But it speaks not with an ultimate view to afflict. So soon as the pride of the self-willed and rebellious spirit is subdued, it glides imperceptibly into another strain. Its words are all radiant with hope. It comes nearer and nearer to our inmost sympathies—sets before us pictures of moral loveliness, more touching in their beauty than heart had previously imagined to be possible—and breathes persuasion into all its representations. Willinghood is the love kindled by this love. It is the "yes" of man's whole being to the wooing of heaven —the unhesitating, unreserved, confiding, grateful, delighted "yes." It is the assent which marries the spirit of man to the Good and the True—not the obedience of a weaker to the summons of a stronger power, but the response which true love renders to true loveliness. It is, in a word, the result at which

all revelation aims—the soul persuaded to receive with a thrill of thankful acquiescence the fervent kiss which plights the troth of the Highest to it for ever. It is religion. Where willinghood is absent, there can be nought but Pharisaism, in one or other of its phases—where present and active, it elevates into spirituality all purposes, all utterances, all deeds. Let the reader, then, take with him these two thoughts

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98

as essentially characteristic of willinghood—*individuality and choice*—"No," to man's commands; "Yes," to God's invitation;—standing, in the one case, upon rights, and refusing to surrender them—casting itself, in the other, at the feet of supremacy, and proffering all. We shall see anon how this glorious principle must needs *work*.

99

BY WHAT METHODS IT IS TRAINED.

In more senses than one is Earth our mother—in higher senses than that commonly received. Out of her we spring, and from her we have our nourishment. Her kind offices, however, are not confined to these material ends. She teaches as well as supports—breathes instruction into the mind as well as provides subsistence for the body. Earth is our first governess, and aptly does she fulfil the duties of her mission. By progressive lessons she leads on young intelligence from the simplest to the sublimest knowledge—ever revealing, yet ever leaving unrevealed still more than she has taught. She iB herself the embodiment of Infinite thought—Eternal mind made visible. And it is neither uninteresting nor unimportant to observe the general law which characterises her method of instruction. She has much to tell, but she tells nothing formally—marvellous and heart-stirring tales to unfold, but she unfolds them not in systematic order—deep impressions to make, but she makes them not by preceptive directions. She is full of

wisdom, but it is not didactic—of argument, but it is not methodical—of eloquence, but it takes no artificial shape. "No voice—no language—her speech is not heard"—and yet for those who will lovingly commune with her, she has and she produces ample materials for the exercise of every intellectual and moral faculty of which man can boast She speaks only to listeners. She writes in hieroglyphics, but they are such as modest and patient investigation may decipher—and all the illustrations she

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100

offers of the Great Unknown, she offers under conditions which at once elicit and strengthen the sense to which they are addressed.

The book of revelation is in precisely the same relation to willinghood, as the book of nature is to intelligence. The same inexhaustible fulness, the same illimitable variety, the same absence of technical order, the same unobtrusiveness in its method of teaching, are found to distinguish the first equally as the last. Here, as there, there is progressive development. Moral lessons of highest import are embodied, not in formulas, but in facts—not in creeds, but in history. There is the most exquisite order, without any apparent system. All strikes one as having grown up by chance, yet all results in the completest harmony. Biography, history, poetry, prophecy —symbol, allegory, argument, exhortation—dry records of names, and touching effusions of feeling—the vast and the minute—the mysterious and the palpable—the temporal and the eternal—are thrown into forms so inartificial, and are woven into one entire piece with so wonderful, but so evasive a skill, as to contrast most pointedly with all human methods of teaching. The hasty and superficial glance can make nothing of "The Book." To every eye it has its external disclosures, just as to every eye, earth, "the Primer," has its visible phenomena —but beneath the one, as also under the other, there are meanings of which listlessness has no conception—"open secrets" which none but the initiated can read—relations, dependencies, affinities, combinations, which

escape notice save when sought after by reverent study—in one word, a soul with which soul only can converse.

Into this new world of moral and spiritual phenomena willinghood is sent to abide for awhile, and get its living. Whence it comes, and what it is, we have already seen.

101

But it will greatly help us correctly to trace out its legitimate workings, to note the provision made for its sustenance, and the beautiful adaptation of its sphere to all the elements of its nature. As there are form and colour for the eye, and an eye for form and colour, so there is a revelation for willinghood, and a willinghood for revelation. The nature of the object indicates the sphere in which it is to move—the nature of the sphere throws new light upon the object destined to move in it. To understand either aright, we must know something of both.

What, then, is revelation, save to willinghood? A field without a husbandman—a glorious world without an intelligent mind to admire it. Its riches are not upon its surface—its beauties are only such to the eye of a moral taste—its spirit can only be discerned by spirit. It abounds in varied forms of skill and loveliness—but, after all, they are *but* forms—the outward shape iu which the Eternal soul enwraps itself in order to become visible to the souls of men. Over this world of mountain and river, of rich champaigns and arid wilderness, of quiet glades and desolate rocks, of softly purling streams and roaring cataracts, of sunshine and of storms, of light and darkness, man's mind may wander almost ceaselessly, and miss altogether the deep significance of what it sees. Willinghood must be his guide and his interpreter, or all these symbols of a divine plan and purpose will serve no end. Facts, sentiments, judgments, mercies, doctrines, precepts, principles—why, they are but the spiritual alphabet in various combinations, the letters of which may be all known where the sense is thoroughly hidden. Fond study must precede the formation of that

inner taste which recognises the life of beauty in its external forms. One must have gotten some knowledge

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102

of invisible laws in order to discern, in that seeming chaos of varied materials, the perfection of harmony. "The Book," to the indolent, the unreflective, the priest-ridden, is but a wearisome tale of regions we have never seen, and of acts in which we feel no interest. Unless we travel *for ourselves,* unless our heart is in our toil,—in a word, unless prompted by willinghood, what is all that stirring prospect to us, more than is the landscape to the horse driven through it, it may be, by an equally obtuse and un-ideal rider?

Now, it is this unsystematic form in which truth is exhibited to us—this "hiding of power"—this veiling of spiritual loveliness from the gaze of the careless and the profane—oracles delivered in accents which are audible only to the reverent listener—secrets hidden from all but such as will be at earnest pains to discover them—it is this characteristic of revelation which, more than anything else, illustrates the nature and the obligations of true Christian willinghood. If passive and blind obedience to man's dictation, in reference to the relations and duties of the spiritual world, be right—if priestism, in any of its forms, be consistent with the tenor of Christianity—if we are to believe what the Church believes, and because the Church believes it, yielding up our minds, as wax to the seal, to receive the stamp of authority as the sole mark of fitness for heaven—all this is nothing more nor less than a mistake. A creed, a catechism, a prayer-book, and a rubric, would have suited us better than the Bible. Nothing could have been too formal for us—nothing too didactic and direct. Paste and scissors would, in such case, have been the appropriate instruments of the conscience. Intelligence, curiosity, sense of independence, individuality, affection, will, would have been absurdly superfluous. Scripture would have been cast into the

103

geometrical regularity—angle answering to angle, and circle over against circle—of a Dutch garden, rather than into the careless freedom of the natural creation. The whole meaning of it, so far as it could have meaning, would have been made apparent at a glance. It would have been a simple piece of mechanism, not a wondrous world of life. And it might have furnished a fitting scene for the dull dozing of the mere animal powers of humanity; but for the contemplation, the study, the discipline, the refinement, the gladness, and the glory, of free intelligences, of creatures formed in the image of God, it would have been as great an incongruity, as a splendid bed-chamber for the resting-place of swine.

104

THE LISTENER.

ALL things are vocal to true willinghood—all things whisper to it some word of wisdom. To be in perfect harmony with the All-governing Will is the one object of its desire and pursuit—how can it be otherwise than careful in its inquiries, and modest in its conclusions? Didst ever mark a bride when she has freshly given her heart away—and given it without the smallest reserve? See! there passes over that countenance, so expressive of content, a shadow betokening newly-recognised responsibility—a shadow cast upon it by the thought, "Now that I am another's, I must study to anticipate his will." From that hour, love becomes watchful,—scans the features, observes the movements, strives to penetrate the secret thoughts, of him whom she has accepted. So is it with willinghood. To listen—to try and catch the true meaning of every lesson addressed to her—to make out, if possible, the simple melody of wisdom which runs through the most exuberant, and often intricate, variations of divine teaching—diffidently to question first impressions, whence they come, what they are, and whither they tend—to gaze wistfully upon the outer face

of things, whether natural or revealed, lest the spirit they are intended to make visible should be overlooked or mistaken—to cry "Hush!" to all noisy interpreters of God's mind, and keep attention so exclusively directed to "the still small voice" as to distinguish it even in the rudest clatter of confident and conflicting opinions—this

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105

is the first and most appropriate work of Christian willinghood.

Many men mistake here. They confound willinghood with wilfulness; and the latter, as every one knows, is dogmatic, overbearing, and quarrelsome. To hear some men talk—some, too, who believe their minds have gone round the whole circuit of the voluntary principle, and familiarized themselves with all its bearings—one might imagine that every embodiment of truth was visible on all sides at a glance, and that all scenes are, and are only, just what they appear to the eye of a single spectator. They disclaim, in moral and spiritual affairs, the process of induction—they allow nothing for position—they deny all the modifying influences of light and shadow. To them a mountain peak is, in shape, colour, and distance from neighbouring peaks, just what they see it from the spot on which they have taken their stand, and only that. They will not trouble themselves to conceive of the same thing as it appears when viewed from another position, or under another aspect of the heavens. They will not ask themselves whether what they scout as error may not be the opposite side of the very truth themselves insist upon. They have no notion that, even if they should be right, it does not necessarily follow that others who differ with them must be wrong. They are always confident, because they can conceive of nothing beyond their ken. There are topics upon which searching inquiry is, in their apprehension, identified with intellectual licentiousness. To listen would be to sin—to look further would be to peril conclusions they have already achieved for themselves.

Against this confusion of states of mind essentially at variance one with another, we are earnestly anxious to guard our readers. Willinghood, it is true, resents

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106

human authority in all matters of spiritual faith and practice, and, in this respect, cherishes a resolute independence. But the same spirit which pushes back unwarranted assumption, to make a clear pathway for free investigation, will be careful that it does not itself obstruct the course. There is, we fear, amongst all sects, a strange disposition to frown down healthy activity of mind, and to set far greater store by the formal results of inquiry, than by the intellectual and moral exercise which has issued in such results. And here, as elsewhere, they, perhaps, are most guilty who cry out most incessantly against the guilt of other men. We know none who cling with more convulsive tenacity to foregone conclusions—none who put by with more supercilious contempt the evidence on the other side—none who more rigidly condemn as irrational all opinions which vary from their own—than they who are perpetually canting about the freedom and independence of the human mind. They bar up for themselves, and they would fain do so for others, every footpath which does not conduct, more or less directly, to their own homestead. They have their epithet of contempt ever at hand for all who choose to generalize somewhat more widely than themselves. Doubt is a virtue until it proceeds to question the articles of their creed—it is then assailed as stupid bigotry, or something worse. There are few of any sect who love to listen, and who, out of the jarring discords of ecclesiastical and theological opinion, watch for hidden harmonies.

Let it not be imagined that we take truth to be hopelessly buried in uncertainty. On the contrary, we believe it is to be met with and recognised oftener, and in many more quarters, than is commonly supposed. The spirit against which we protest, and which we

107

maintain to be utterly at odds with willinghood, is that which persists in looking for truth only in one direction, from one position, and under one aspect, and which obstinately refuses to look for it elsewhere. That condition of mind is not a favourable one, which turns generalizations, as soon as they are formed, into rigid petrefactions, and thus fixes them against all further change. The materials of knowledge, it is true, are, in themselves, unchangeable—but of what endlessly various combinations are they not susceptible? Who can recall the history of his own opinions without observing what different lessons the same fact has taught him in different stages of his being?—how it gives back to the mind which contemplates it, a meaning adapted to the capacity which is to receive it?—how gradually it comes to lose, to one's apprehension at least, the grosser form in which it originally presented itself, and, connecting itself with surrounding associations, to become radiant with a glory not at first perceived? What right has any one to say to us at the moment the primary impression has been made—"Thus far shalt thou go, but no further"? What right have we to put this restriction upon ourselves?

The true disciple, then, of willinghood, in proportion as the principle which he professes vitalizes his heart, is evermore a listener—never obsequious, but always patient—before the oracle, on his knees in reverent submission—before fallible interpreters of the oracle, on tiptoe in earnest attention. The human authority which would impose upon him articles of subscription he knows how to reject—the lights of learning, genius, faith, with which society has been favoured, he is forward to use for his own guidance. He holds himself ready at all times, according to his opportunity, to go

108

round a subject—to look at it from opposite points of view, and see it in all its visible relations. In short,

he never forgets that one great business of his life is to learn, and that some shreds of neglected or forgotten truth may be found in the most unpromising regions. His method of reaching conviction in spiritual, as in natural things, is by wide and varied induction. He begins with facts, and proceeds cautiously to systems—but he never makes the last a standard wherewith to assay the soundness of the first To the end he is an inquirer—and, if true to his vocation, by making all sects tributary to his own intellectual stores, and all departments of information subserve his own improvement, he gets nearer and nearer to the unity of Truth, obtains readier access to her heart, and resigns himself with heartier cheerfulness to her high claims and her honourable service.

109

SPIRITUAL PLATONISM.

QUACKERY, say we—nothing less than pure, downright out-and-out quackery! We care not for the fashion of the thing—what wretched absurdity has not, in its time and turn, received the prostrate homage of the fashionable world? Spiritual Platonism! Out upon it, as unnatural! A general admiration of truth in the abstract, co-existent with an avowed absence of attachment to any particular truth—affection tendered to an idea, and withheld from every visible embodiment of it—so profound a devotion to an impalpable essence as to leave no room whatever for love to any single mode of its manifestation—let those who care to do so, profess it!—we look upon them as near akin, both in folly and in self-delusion, to the Platonists of genuine flesh-and-blood life. Cold, selfish, vain—sinking into less than men, by aspiring to be more—whose understandings, like a brutal husband, have beaten their hearts into perfect insensibility, and then glory in their freedom from vulgar restraints:—who, nevertheless, under cover of their pretensions to a most catholic liberality, give free

indulgence to their passion for some baseborn and misshapen dogma—showing their vaunted loyalty to truth in general, by sneering down all honours paid to every known form of truth;—oh, if ever it be lawful to cherish contempt for "man, proud man," surely it must be when he exhibits himself in this strutting ridiculousness. Are we not born to be fond

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110

of the children of our own reason—the conclusions, borne to us, not without pain and sorrow, by our own faculties? Must we be churls at home, that we may be courteous abroad? And must the warm passions with which God has endowed us entwine themselves about nothing intellectual or spiritual?

And yet we fear that this school of Platonists is very much on the increase. An assumed impartiality in respect of all the phases of religious faith—indifference to all alike, unless, indeed, attachment becomes more positive in proportion as the creed verges towards a negation—a studied neutrality which is condescendingly tolerant of all opinions, and intolerant only of earnest interest in any—this is the philosophy par excellence of modern times. Freedom of inquiry is confounded with an indefinite postponement of its results. Keep the affections evermore on the wing, or never suffer them to rise above the height of material objects, lest the conclusions on which they may alight should turn out to be erroneous! Give your heart to anything but a religious faith—to science, to politics, to business, to pleasure, to ambition—but presume not to love any special aspect of divine revelation! You may be an enthusiast in all other spheres—you may be wedded, and welcome, to any merely human theory of mind or morals—you may be passionate as a philosopher, a poet, or a statist—but as a believer in the supernatural, and the purely spiritual, you must have no preferences, cherish no emotions. Here, in the sublimest theatre of thought to which mind can resort for contemplation, where all is vast, and, to our appre-

hension, illimitable, and amid objects whose glory none can adequately appreciate—here, where spirit should "find a congenial home, and confidence, love, and joy,

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111

should rear their altar of praise—here, you must forget that you have a heart, and must glide through these scenes as cold and passionless as the ghosts who "revisit the glimpses of the moon." Preposterous! If such be, in truth, the highest form of manhood, may we be preserved from ever reaching such a height!

Willinghood implies choice—choice naturally displays itself in love. It is better for the world, after all—more conducive to the ultimate progress of truth—that men's hearts should be wedded to their convictions, even when erroneous, than that their convictions should be forbidden to pass out of their understandings. Bigotry is hateful—but it is not so insidiously harmful as bloodless indifference. Bigotry, however, is a disposition to encroach upon the rights of others—it is not necessarily connected with a fond attachment to our own. If all were passionless in regard to the opinions they hold, or the forms of faith they receive, there would be no collision of mind in such matters—no careful comparison of ideas—no rigid examination of proofs—and, consequently, no advancement. Mankind reap more benefit, in the long run, from zealous heresy than from stagnant orthodoxy. It does something towards keeping up intellectual and moral circulation. The very tingling it excites helps to dispel apoplectic drowsiness. Nay! it is thus, oftentimes, that Providence secures a resuscitation of what had long been a languishing interest in important truth. Forth comes, at some unexpected moment, a lusty error, vital because the hearts of men are in it, and in the exuberance of youthful spirits it draws its weapon upon all consecrated forms of opinion and faith. There is bustle forthwith. Surprise, anger, dis-

112

may—the emotions primarily excited—are succeeded by resolute decision, and earnest endeavour. The creed which was lazily held, as a respectable form only, has to be defended as a vital reality. It may be shorn of excrescences,—-it may lose something of its symmetrical proportions,—but whereas it was once nothing better than a dormitory for slothful profession, it will perforce be converted into a munition for hearty effort.

We beg, therefore, with befitting respect, but with ail the earnestness of which we are capable, to warn our readers against the silly cant of the day. Let them never be afraid of giving free leave to their hearts to follow their understandings. Where should the affections rest but under the same roof with the judgment? Of what conceivable use are our opinions, unless quickened by our emotions? Caution should precede and accompany inquiry—it is out of place when it interposes between the decisions of our reason and the natural feelings of the heart. None need be ashamed of exhibiting that attachment to truth which the truth itself has succeeded in inspiring. Christianity appeals to us as men—as men who have passions as well as intellect. Modern philosophy, in demanding the forcible suppression of our preferences in respect of religious truth, equally wars against nature and common-sense as did the ecclesiastics who exalted celibacy to a virtue. The short-sightedness of man should teach him carefulness and liberality in conducting his inquiries, and in pronouncing his judgment—but the deep importance of spiritual truth should also ensure the heartiest attachment to whatever he believes to be divine.

We should, perhaps, hardly have ventured upon a discussion of this nature, but for the mistaken belief

113

of some that willinghood, fairly carried out, will land us in latitudinarian indifference. The very term, how-

ever, ought to protect us against so egregious an error. If it implies anything, it implies, unquestionably, our cheerful and active acquiescence in the faith we profess—the ready surrender of our whole being to what is deemed to bear the authority of God. There is no enthusiasm so pitiful or pitiable as enthusiasm against enthusiasm—no liberality so spurious as that which repudiates all seriousness of faith. The greatest persecutors of the age, give them but predominance, would be those who care for no one theory of religion more than another; they show the bias of their minds by invariably sneering at honest attachment to any. It matters nothing whether the views they themselves entertain be correct or false, useful or mischievous; but, in condemning all alliance between men's judgments in religious affairs and their affections, they prove that they are as ignorant of their own nature as they are of the nature of true Christian willinghood.

114

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG!

A LITTLE connubial altercation about the proper position to be assigned to a chest of drawers was thus abruptly brought to a close by the wife—"Well, my dear, you can have them placed where you please, but I"—with emphasis—"I intend they should stand there." How accurate a type of much that passes under the name of willinghood! "Of course you can think as you please—no one questions your right of private judgment; but I think so and so, and dissent from my opinions must expect to bear its penalty."

There are other forms of persecution than those which have upon them the stamp of law. Throughout all classes of society, practices are unscrupulously resorted to, with a view to sway belief, in which spiritual independence is rudely refused recognition, and lack of argument is supplied by weight and vehemence of authority. "You *shall*" is a weapon common enough

in the arena of religious controversy. Hidden beneath the folds of a liberal profession, it is reserved until all other weapons have failed; but, as a last resort, passion plucks it forth, and aims by it to put liberty of thought *hors de combat*.

The fact is, men are apt to construe your difference of opinion with them, and especially on topics which closely touch religion, into a personal affront. They see in it a kind of oblique reflection upon their judgment. The evidence which has sufficed for them, ought to be, they imagine, sufficient for others. If the same force of

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115

argument which made their reason captive cannot overmaster the mind of all others, they conclude that it is rather the will than the understanding which holds out. They resent continued adhesion to one's own views as obstinacy. They appear to think that in declining to surrender to their dictates at discretion, you withhold from them that to which they have an unquestionable right—and they set themselves, with the utmost solemnity, to do to others what if retorted upon themselves they would be the first to denounce as sheer persecution.

We are describing no imaginary inconsistency. Examples of it may be found in almost every family, church, and sect. We have seen instances of it in men, usually loud in their praises of Christian willinghood, which have made our ears tingle with the blush of shame and indignation. A style of language implying divinely authorized lordship—oracular monitions which one might suppose to be filled with the breath of inspiration—tones of rebuke uttered as if from the seat of judgment—warnings to by-standers to see that they stand clear of all participation in guilt—abrupt terminations of personal intercourse—deliberate outrages upon the courtesies of the social circle—all these we have repeatedly seen brought to bear in resentment of some paltry difference of sentiment, by individuals who fancy they hate Popery with a perfect hatred. And they not only do these

things, but justify them—esteeming the authority which they involve, the right of their position or their office. These airs of dictation they take to become, if not their intellectual superiority, at least their official eminence. All that would seriously break in upon this conventional form of despotism, they denounce as mischievous and wicked—and, alas! alas! there are slaves who run beside

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116

their chariot-wheels, ever ready to proclaim, by their acclamations, their own hopeless bondage.

Need we affirm that this spirit, and whatever is akin to it, whether found in the Established Church, or out of it, is directly opposed to Christian willinghood? Shall we inflict any wound upon charity, in exposing it? We think not. In truth—and the remark is still within the range of our subject—we have no great opinion of what passes, in this our own day, for "love to the brotherhood." It is too effeminate for our taste. It wastes its feeble energies in caresses. It fondles its objects in all the tenderness of words. The spring of its tears lies close to the surface. It is given to hysterical excitements. It can scarcely believe itself in earnest but when giving and receiving kisses, and exchanging extravagant epithets of endearment We do not say that the love which thus displays and gratifies itself must necessarily be unreal. But in a world like this, we prefer a higher form of it. Give us the heart which can leave all these witcheries for something far less pleasing, but also far more important —which, like a silent but thoughtful husband, can button about it an invincible resolution, and, in the very teeth of the bitterest misrepresentations and reproaches, can leave the hearth of its own peace, and venture forth under darkness, to do somewhat for good, which all may rejoice in to-morrow as not having been left undone. There are more substantial, more benevolent, aye 1 and more Christian ways of serving "the brotherhood," than hanging on their necks, and saying that we love them.

Willinghood resents human authority in religious faith and practice. Why should her professed disciples

dishonour her by its employment? Why, when penal laws are one by one erased from the statute-book, should we seek to give them perpetuity in our conventional

117

and social customs? Granted, that the difference of opinion between ourselves and another, necessarily circumscribes the range of our mutual sympathies by the whole extent of that difference, how is it likely to be lessened? By rousing up his passions to take part with his understanding? By pelting him with offensive names, or insinuating that he is actuated by sordid motives, or stamping the foot aid' doubling the fist, before his will, as if we, rather than himself, were injured by his supposed error? Or, if the point at which we diverge be one, not of doctrine, but of practice—not of principles, but of the modes of their application—not of what is unchangeable, but of what must be governed pretty much by a general view of circumstances—how can truth gain by abandoning calm discussion and mutual interchange of thought, for Pharisaical admonitions—"Stand by, for I am holier than thou!"

We hesitate not to proclaim our belief that office in religious society is straining what might, and should be, a reasonable influence, into an unseemly and oppressive authority. Again and again have we witnessed more strenuous efforts to prevent people from thinking at all on some topics, than to help them to think correctly. In not a few cases have we met with men creeping stealthily and on all-fours towards inquiry, because it was known that inquiry in certain directions would give offence. To an extent far greater than is usually suspected, congregations of voluntaryists have resigned themselves to this ignoble bondage. To a power other than that which God has set over them—to authority usurped over their naturally free, unshackled reason—to laws which appeal to a lower tribunal than that of an enlightened judgment—they, half-confusedly, half-excusedly, bow down. By a kind of instinct they know what grounds of thought

118

are forbidden them. Reluctant to offend, they deem it most prudent, in some cases, to let conscience "sleep on, and take her rest"—or if, peradventure, stirred up by the manhood within them, they go abroad in quest of information, and having acquired it, act upon it, they become marked men, are frowned upon as seditious disturbers, and are condemned to a virtual exclusion from the amenities of the social circle, solely because they could not practically be governed by the maxim, "Love me, love my dog."

We point to this growing evil, not in malice, but in kindness. It has done much, very much, to retard the triumph of willinghood over generous and well-cultivated minds. It is so inherently vulgar and repulsive, indicates such a want of acquaintance with truth, or of confidence in it, and stumbles so often and so rudely upon our sense of intellectual and religious freedom, that we can hardly be surprised if it has reconciled many to a formal and systematic ecclesiastical despotism. All chains are galling —but if chains must be worn, some are preferred as sitting lighter, and looking more ornamental, than others. An indirect authority is evermore an irresponsible one—and no authority, be its professions how plausible soever, which discourages free inquiry, or would resent honest conviction, can claim the sanction of "the perfect law of liberty."

119

THE BRACED BIRDS.

A CHILD just entering upon his teens received as a birthday present a pair of pigeons. The birds, as usual, were kept close prisoners, until a natural tie was formed, strong enough to bind both parents to their assigned home. The boy was then instructed to give his precious wards their freedom. Poor thing! it was a severe trial of his faith. The assurance, again and again repeated, that he might safely trust to their parental instincts to

prevent the truancy of his charge, did not satisfy him. He must have the birds braced, and allowed but a very limited range of flight. He was at once humoured and punished. After sundry shocks and falls, occasioned by the force with which the pigeons got to the length of the line, they died, and left their young ones, who just then needed their undivided care, to perish.

So is truth treated by men reputed for both goodness and wisdom. How few, how very few, can trust their religious opinions, faith, or forms of discipline, to their own vitality. Some there are, we doubt not—would that they were too many to be cited as exceptions!—who can believe in the self-sustaining and reproductive energy of truth—who, having convinced themselves that a doctrine, or mode of worship, or system of discipline, is part of the mind of God, are no further careful respecting its perpetuity, than suffices to prompt their own earnest efforts in its behalf—who confide with simple but unwavering faith in the all-conquering might of Providential laws,

120

and count, with reason, upon the certain harmony of results beyond their reach, with the continued existence and growth of whatever is heaven-born—who dare to strew their "bread-corn upon the waters," without a misgiving that it will re-appear as a living crop "after many days"—and who, having, to the best of their ability, professed, illustrated, contended for, and exemplified, what they take to be the word and will of the Supreme, are satisfied to hand them over to the next generation, shielded only by that omnipotent goodness which has tended and preserved them in this. We are not without hope that the number of such is increasing, and sure we are that their spirit is nothing more than is required by consistent willinghood.

It is, however, at once painful and amusing to observe the extremely pious unbelief with which the generality of religious men, including the large majority of the disciples of willinghood, set about arrangements for giving perpetuity to their sentiments. Posterity, they seem to fear,

will have no chance of knowing the form and structure of the fly, unless a fly in amber is bequeathed them. Their form of faith must be engrossed on parchment deeds, and must go down to future generations preserved by something more trustworthy than its own essential vitality. They will encase it in legal caveats and provisions—affix it to brick walls, or append it to endowments—hide it from peril in forms of subscription—crystallize it in catechisms—and, in ways which expose both it and them to reproach and contempt, invoke civil law to watch over its destiny, henceforth and for ever. And so it has come to pass, that religious opinions of a by-gone age, have, in our own time, become wards in Chancery; and errors, which increased light has driven forth from every intelligent mind, are petrified into lifeless and

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121

unchangeable forms by the action of influences which ought never to be felt within the realms of conscience.

In the name, then, of that noble principle, the legitimate workings of which we are seeking to illustrate, we record our solemn protest against all such safeguards as those above alluded to, by which men aim to give fixity and continuance to their peculiar forms of faith and worship. At the bottom of all of them will be found intolerance. In one shape or another, more or less disguised, they all imply the argument of the stick. They are elaborate modifications of physical force. Their ultimate appeal is to the policeman and the soldier. They are penal statutes in miniature—diamond editions of Test and Corporation Acts—little-goes of persecution. They introduce what they were meant to guard to the inferior passions of humanity, rather than to the understanding. At best, they are but traps for the conscience, which, like those wired cages which afford an easy ingress to intruders, but prevent egress by circles of sharp points, they would keep where it is by a threatening array of worldly inconveniences. Let the most specious of them be narrowly examined—strip them of thé pretensions which custom has thrown around them—ask

what, if men believe, these are meant to do, and what, if they believe not, they are meant to inflict; and when you have solved this not very difficult problem, ascertain whether they can possibly add an iota to the legitimate force of truth, or offer a single additional argument to which reason is bound to listen! No! These are but the slyer and more furtive modes by which men stoop to coerce mind—tiny church-establishments which link together the secular and the sacred—venomous enough to worry, but not strong enough to destroy. They are the most minute and insignificant of the legal forms, in

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122

which "you shall" can be embodied—but, in structure, function, and kind, they possess all the characteristics of their order. We care not what may be pleaded in their behalf. "What is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander." If these things are right, an act-of-parliament church cannot be wrong. If mind may be bound, it were as well done by a giant as a dwarf.

The dishonour done to truth by these pretended safeguards is, assuredly, not the least among the mischiefs which they perpetrate. Is not every doctrine, every precept, every institution which Heaven has sanctioned, safe in the keeping of the Universal Ruler? Is not its destiny identified with fixed and immutable laws? Has it not immortality in its own bosom? Are not all the elements of moral good inseparably allied with it, so that, as they work themselves clear of human misapprehensions and perversities, it must share in their triumph? Are there not legions of invisible agencies—invisible to us because of the grossness of our unbelief—commissioned by God himself to pioneer a road for it to victory? Is it not in harmony with all other truth—knit by a native congeniality to the entire system of the divine works and wordP Will it ever lose its original power over conscience?—ever be other than a form of beauty to an enlightened understanding P—ever cease to urge prevailing claims upon an upright and unprejudiced heart? Why will it not make way with the next generation as it

has done in this? And if it will not—if it can be supposed that age will impair its vigour, or experience detect its weaknesses—or if, which is the likelier, increased depravity will repudiate its authority—why play upon that depravity by offering bribes in its favour, or attempt to perpetuate vitality which, if it be not in the truth itself, cannot be breathed into it by you? Cease, labo-

123

rious triller! Send not down to posterity what you take to be a thought of God, with this label upon it—"Whoso receives this may hear of something to his advantage."

Men who thus deal with truth, may believe in it as a proposition, but they cannot have the smallest faith in it as a power. They are the veriest sceptics in all that relates to it, save and except the efficacy of their own paltry arrangements. They dare not trust it alone amongst mankind. They have no sort of confidence that it will prevail in its own right. All their provisions show that they think it necessary to add a trifle to its recommendations. They have no opinion of its beauty without their paint. They smile at the sling and the stone, unless accompanied with their own cumbersome armour. A direct appeal to the conscience, even when made by holy writ, they will by no means trust to as sufficient when they, forsooth, are removed from the world. The gospel must be put into trust-deeds, or who knows what might become of it? Aye! lace up the poor tottering thing with the stays of legal phraseology, that it may stand erect—pad it out with starched and stiff provisoes, that its external symmetry may be preserved—give it the longer and shorter catechisms for crutches—and, if possible, a little dowry for independent support—and, then—what? why then, ascend some platform, and quote, in Latin if so it please you, the maxim, "Great is the truth, and must prevail."

Nor ought we to forget the ignoble bonds which, with the best possible intentions, we may thus forge for after ages. Are we not ourselves fretting under the dogmatism

of our forefathers? The blue coat, yellow stockings, and leathern girdle, which were once becoming, are now simply grotesque. The oath against transubstantiation,

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124

which erewhile comprehended a political meaning, has sunk into a mere absurdity. Forms of truth which, considered relatively to past times, were full of meaning, have become obsolete, just as the flame of a taper, although light, is useless in the blaze of a summer's sun. What right have we to prescribe to coming generations? and why should we make our limited views the measure of their faith? Are we the men, and will wisdom die with us? Is it not conceivable, nay, likely, that increased knowledge will give new aspects to many things which we imagine ourselves to have seen on every side, and alter, not indeed the substance of our faith, but the modes in which it shall be expressed? Amidst so strange a variety of opinion among us, is it safe to say to our own, *Esto perpetua*? Cannot we allow to those who come after us the same liberty of judgment which we ask for ourselves? Must we shackle them with annoyances, lest they should stray from our beaten paths of opinion? Who, now-a-days, would like to be tied down to the sentiments of the Reformers, great and good men though they were? Who does not see much that was defective in the Puritans? Is the mind of the church to be ever-more stationary, and the dress of its thoughts of the same shape and size, until the end of time? We wrong posterity by willing that thus it shall be—we presume too much upon our own infallibility.

But we have done. We anticipate the exclamations of surprise with which these remarks will be greeted in many quarters, and the positive dismay with which some will contemplate the possibility of setting truth at liberty from all their over-anxious precautions. We must revert to our story of the braced birds. Better trust to natural instincts than to artificial restraints—to the power of truth than to the force of law. You cannot improve

125

upon nature—you cannot add wisdom to the ordinations of God. Orthodoxy, whatever is meant by it, is safer in the hearts of living disciples than in musty trust-deeds, or articles of subscription. The property which it is too weak to retain by its own authority, it had much better lose, for it can no longer profit by it. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." If we could bring ourselves to believe that pure Christianity depends for its continuance upon such beggarly appliances, we should begin to doubt in earnest whether Christianity is divine.

126

SECTARIANISM.

BORN of a narrow mind—suckled by ignorance—reared to maturity by pride and passion—instinctively dogmatic, imperious, and exclusive—sectarianism, by adroitly yoking itself with conscience, has yet contrived to elude the severe condemnation which it deserves. Mark it well!—for it is wholly "of the earth, earthy." That absurdly exaggerated estimate of differing shades of opinion—that disrelish for all truth which smacks not perceptibly of a given school—that contempt for such, however else distinguished, as cannot pronounce its darling shibboleth—that determined effort to pack up, in the small portmanteau of its own creed, reckless of rumples and fractures, the entire system of revealed religion—that eagerness to disparage all good but that which is effected under its own superintendence—that keen resentment against dissentients, intense, for the most part, in proportion to the minuteness of the difference by which it is provoked—that preference to walk and work apart, jealous lest others should share its reputation, influence, and honours—what are they all but human conceit and waywardness tricked out in the garb of spiritual profession?

Sectarianism is the spirit of party carried into the domains of conscience. It is opinion in the plural

number and the imperative mood—cliqueism lording it over the understanding and the heart. Let us beware, however, of confounding things which differ. It is not the temper of a man's mind in respect of

127

truth, or any portion of it, but the spirit in which that truth is held in relation to others, which constitutes sectarianism. There may be intimate conviction, there may be earnest faith, there may be warm and devout attachment, in regard to particular forms of religious doctrine and discipline, where no taint of sectarianism can be detected—there may be general scepticism or indifference, where it is present in full power. Not the form of truth embodied, but the embodiment of that form, calls it into play. Wherever men use opinion as the sole measure of virtue, look through it as the only medium through which to get a correct view of character and conduct, and mark off, in exact conformity with it, the limits within which their sympathy and co-operation must be confined—there the sectarian element is at work.

The grossest form of this spirit is bound up in the State-Church. Ascendency by law constitutes a hotbed for pushing into preternatural maturity the tendencies of human nature to run into castes. Dissent from a faith elevated by civil authority to a position of worldly pre-eminence, is an attack, not on barren opinions merely, but on substantial privileges, and evokes against itself the bitterest resentment of party. Then come, of course, the bridling up of fancied superiority—the ready imputation of corrupt and sordid motives—the fierce denunciation of alleged errors of judgment—the prompt withdrawal of social intimacy and confidence —the avowed desire of bringing contumacy to punishment—the resolute refusal to recognise it in any shape, to sanction it by charitable constructions, or to unite with it in acts of common benevolence. Heat is necessarily engendered on both sides, by the perpetual collisions of antagonism. The struggle is for mastery.

128

The parties draw off into hostile divisions; and, as in a war between nations, the general feud is taken up by individuals against individuals, between whom no private malice exists, so, in the contest provoked by a State-Church, the public quarrel involves a systematic alienation of sect from sect, producing all the evils of personal enmity. Sectarianism will be rampant until civil establishments of religion shall have been abandoned.

Unhappily, the temper thus chafed into irritability exhibits itself in a thousand 'other directions—just as a man teased into anger, is angry with every one he may chance to meet. Sectarianism walks about undisguised beyond the pale of State-Churches. Denominations, not content with upholding and maintaining, as honourably they may, by fair argument and active exertion, their peculiarities of faith, seek to give a denominational stamp to every interest and movement of social life. The universal is jammed into the particular. The sect must needs undertake everything, as a sect, and act as though there were no other instrumentality for good in the wide world. In the organization and distribution of its charities—in the erection and maintenance of schools—in the constitution and management of reading societies—in home and foreign missions—in the periodical press—each division of the Christian church prefers, in too many instances, to stand alone. There are nominal exceptions, but they are chiefly nominal Real fusion is rare indeed. Even where parties come together, they come rather to watch each other, than to unite in hearty and unsuspecting effort.

The great evil of sectarianism is the benumbing influence it exerts upon both the intellect and the

129

affections. Around both it draws its own narrow and arbitrary circle, and says, "Hitherto you shall go, but

no further." Discouraging inquiry, save when pursued in a given direction, and checking the free and spontaneous flow of the sympathies, it prevents the development of genuine Christian character. Let that denomination which draws around its fellowship the restrictive lines of sectarian clanship, expect the blight and the mildew upon the spot within! Let it look to see every virtue stunted in its growth! If, peradventure, the hardier and sterner products of the soil can live, it has reason to be thankful, albeit they may turn out prickly, sapless, and unproductive; but the delicate, sensitive, and beauteous flowers of religion—the thousand little ornaments of character and worth, charming the eye, and diffusing fragrance through the atmosphere—how can they live upon the withered spot? Reason and experience tell us to seek them elsewhere.

We have already said enough, we would fain hope, to prove how utterly opposed is willinghood to sectarianism. Indeed, the last is but a subtler form of spiritual tyranny, and wherever it has sway, sits astride the conscience with as domineering a pertinacity, as did the old man upon the shoulders of Sinbad the sailor.

In a world like ours, abounding with physical and moral evils, most of which may be extirpated by resolute and judicious culture—where poor humanity, "sick of many griefs," supplicates, in tears and groans, the promptest and most effective interposition of enlightened benevolence—to whose relief reason and religion counsel the most economical and well-planned management of all existing re-creative resources—can

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130

there be a more pitiable spectacle than that exhibited by rigid sectarianism? Is there not enough to do which all can, without compromise, unite in doing? What! Can we not all lend a hand in raising the fallen and the wounded, until it has been settled precisely next to whom, and where, we shall chance

to stand? Does it behove us—does it do common justice to our race—to separate into cliques,—and act, each party independently of the rest, in matters which bring neither into dispute nor display our several peculiarities of faith? Ought not the disciples of willinghood to be amongst the foremost, individually to cherish a large and Catholic liberality? Are they not bound to frown condemnation upon the causes and exhibitions of sectarianism? Should they quarrel with the results of free inquiry, or attempt indirectly either to reward or to punish conscientious conviction, because it differs somewhat from their own? Let us learn to give as well as take—to offer respect to independent thought as well as ask it! The prejudice against colour is as odious and mean in the spiritual as in the natural world—and party spirit is as mischievous, and, we much fear, as little scrupulous, in the Church as in the State.

131

CREEDS.

AMONGST the numerous devices of which the fear of willinghood has availed itself to bandage conscience into a given shape, we may set down creeds, as, on the whole, perhaps, the most perniciously successful. Harmless in themselves, and capable of a useful application, they have usually been perverted into instruments of religious compulsion. Bonds of union, in one sense, they are active causes of discord in another. They may hold together in one visible body men of the most diverse individual views, as frost may bind up, in one compact mass, materials of the most nondescript and heterogeneous natures. The very quality, however, which makes' them constrictive, prevents both fusion, growth, and refinement of spiritual sentiment—bars lawful fellowship, suppresses free inquiry, and, by checking what may be called the insensible perspiration of the mind, disables it from throwing off those grosser notions which youth and inexperience are almost certain to imbibe. Human nature,

considered in its religious susceptibilities, powers, and relations, has only to be swathed in a patent unelastic creed, manufactured of yore by theological or polemical dogmatism, to become as dwarfed, uncouth, and unimprovable a thing, as its bitterest enemies could reasonably desire.

What a man believes, we take to be the very reverse of unimportant—and, spite of their professions to the contrary, we think we are herein at one with the uniform opinion of mankind. Universally, and without exception,

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132

the individual being, man, is but the development of the doctrines he has inwardly received. As is the faith, so is the party to whom it belongs. Out of this root spring his motives, affections, character, conduct. We have no sympathy with those, therefore, who affirm that it is of no consequence what we believe, if only our belief is sincere—we do not understand them. Equally rational, in our judgment, would it be to say, that it matters nothing whatever to health what we eat, if we eat heartily. Sincerity in believing, like appetite and pleasure in eating, may be necessary to extract nutriment from wholesome food—but neither the one nor the other can convert poison into sustenance. Nothing but truth can, in the long run, act beneficially on human nature.

Recognising, then, the essential importance of the subject-matter of faith, we confess, further, our inability to see how there can be intelligent communion between mind and mind, except as truth of some kind is held in common—or how a Christian society can be formed, save upon the basis of hearty agreement as to the kind and amount of truth supposed to constitute the vital element of Christian character. All associations, moral, political, scientific, or religious, must turn upon some common centre. Sympathy, in the absence of which there can be no fellowship, presupposes a substratum of things "certainly believed." To make this substratum visible, either for our own advantage or for that of others—formally to express wherein we are united, and union in which we

take to be pre-requisite to oneness of character, purpose, or destiny—in short, to clothe in human language sentiments which, in our apprehension, must be the groundwork of mutual converse, affection, solicitude, and co-operation, so far, at least, as religion is concerned, seems to us inseparable from any rational notion of a

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133

church. And this, whatever external shape it may assume, is a creed. It may be more or less general—it may embrace facts, doctrines, or discipline, or either of them, or all—it may even embody nothing more than a recognised principle for regulating faith; but it is essentially a creed—something to be believed and confessed in order to fellowship.

Beyond this limit, to which, in truth, they are seldom practically confined, creeds are purely mischievous. As summaries of revelation they are useless—as guides to the inquiring, they mislead oftener than they direct—and as laws enforced upon the conscience, they are opposed to the whole scope and spirit of the Christian economy.

It is getting, at last, to be pretty generally understood, that knowledge of a proposition does not by any means imply knowledge of the truth intended to be expressed by it. The first is mere possession—the last is digestion. The one is like snow upon the branches, a useless incumbrance—the other is like water at the root, rising up as sap, and pushing the hidden germ into beauteous development God's method of manifesting truth to the mind is, if we may be allowed the expression, diffusive. He has done up nothing in a concentrated essence—and if He had, we are unable to receive it in that shape. It seems to be a law of our constitution, that truth can only become incorporated with our souls when presented in comparatively impalpable quantities, and by- many and various processes. Attention, perception, comparison, discrimination, reflection, generalization—all must be exercised in turn, in order that what is without our minds may be absorbed into, and become part of, them. And,

hence, what the Supreme Mind would have us to know respecting Himself, and our relation and obligations to

134

him, he has expressed, not in an orderly series of propositions, the full meaning of which it would require ages to evolve, but variously, incidentally, and diffusively, in a vast world of providential facts, laws, and relationships. The soul of nature cannot be got at in geographical definitions, however correct—nor can the spirit of revelation be found in creeds, however orthodox. He who best knows the powers of the human mind, and in what manner they are to be dealt with in order to healthy development, has chosen to disclose His will in extended historical records, in poetical flights of devotional feeling, in comments and reasonings elicited by actual events. No epitome of what He has thus communicated can convey to man the spiritual nutriment which is to be gathered "with the sweat of the brow," from the Book itself. The truth, thus displayed, cannot be taken up by the soul, so as to sustain and invigorate it, in a merely abstract and concentrated form. As means to religious knowledge, creeds are worse than useless—for, assent to the propositions they contain is very commonly mistaken for faith in the great realities to which they only point.

Not a whit more valuable are they as guides to the inquiring. True or false, their inevitable tendency is to bias the mind to a foregone conclusion. Like carriage ruts across an open common, they may lead in a right direction, or a wrong one; but whoever is tempted to trust in them, is sure, also, to give his own judgment the indulgence of a nap. And if it be true, as, we think, daily experience proves, that the mode in which we arrive at belief is scarcely less important than the belief itself, it is quite obvious that all aid which ministers to mental indolence by proposing short cuts to momentous conclusions, and dispensing with the necessity of moral

135
discipline in study, does more harm in encouraging lazy habits of conscience, than good in conducting thought to correct results. The faith which comes not by wrestling many a fall with grim and gigantic doubts, is near akin to mere credulity. It may vegetate, but it can hardly be said to live—and its history, like that of constitutional invalids, is made up, not of manly deeds and cheerful endurance, but of nervous depressions, frequent pains, and constant sense of weariness and irresolution.

It is, however, as laws enforced upon the conscience, that creeds are most opposed to the spirit of willinghood, and that they are to be most unhesitatingly and frowningly condemned. And this is the end to which they are most frequently perverted. Advanced at first as representatives only of a common agreement, they are appealed to in after controversies, until they gradually become authoritative, and at last insist upon ruling over the mind by "right divine." Dissent from them is denounced as heresy—doubt, as scepticism. They exact a slavish submission, and their advocates preach up the doctrine of passive obedience. To the natural progress of spiritual knowledge, they oppose all but insuperable obstacles. To the very back-bone, they are conservative. "More light" they eschew as a perilous, impious demand. Themselves the best conclusions of a past age, they aim to circumscribe the conclusions of all future ones. They allow nothing for the clearer atmosphere or more advanced day of after times. The discoveries of science—more accurate observations in geography and natural history—rich illustrations, furnished by an intimate acquaintance with the customs, manners, and idiomatic phraseology of the East—laborious collations of ancient manuscripts and versions—patient philological researches, guided by sounder canons of criticism—obviously juster

136
views of mental and moral philosophy—and, above all, larger inductions, drawn from full veins of practical

experience—these helps to the understanding in the interpretation of revealed truth are to be imperiously thrust aside as treacherous, when they cast suspicions upon the divinity of a prescribed creed. Up starts bigotry, and preaches a crusade against "free-thinking" and "philosophy falsely so called"—maintaining that the chains imposed upon religious belief are of heaven's own forging. A host of bad passions rally round the threatened idol of lazy-witted devotees—and the creed which originated in a desire for union, is made the symbol of intolerance, and the exciting cause of interminable discord.

137

THE NIGGARD AND HIS REWARD.

"POOR fellow! He deserved a better fate. I pity him from the bottom of my heart," was the substance of a remark which passed round a circle on 'Change, on the announcement of a ruinous loss which had suddenly overtaken a man of unimpeachable character. "Well," observed a Quaker, on the watch to turn the current of feeling to a practical account, "I pity him a hundred pounds—how much dost thou pity him, friend? And thou? And thou?" Compassion thus adroitly appealed to, responded with unwonted generosity, and the unfortunate man's loss was made up to him in a few minutes. It would not be amiss if the disciples of willinghood would honour their principles in the same way as these gentlemen expressed their pity. Assuredly, there is room for improvement in this respect. Usually, of all items in a man's expenditure, the lowest and paltriest is that which he lays out in support of truth—and, for the miserable pittance which shame alone prevents him from withholding altogether, he allows himself to be dunned, as if for a disputed debt, and parts with his gift at last as he would with property unlawfully wrested from his grasp. How few, comparatively, are they, who freely, liberally, and in proportions settled on principle, set apart of the substance they possess, for the promulgation of views they hold to be identified with the best interests of

society! Louder than others, perhaps, in the praise of certain doctrines and principles, prompt to defend them

138

when impugned, to explain them where misunderstood, and giving every kind of evidence but one of cordial attachment to them, it is yet by no means uncommon for such men to dole out, for their promotion, nothing more than the small change of their incomes, and grudgingly offer to truth trifles which they would blush to present to any one of their own friends. We know of nothing more calculated to strike a damp into a warm heart, or to chill earnestness into despondency, than the lingering reluctance with which too many professed admirers of willinghood resign anything, for whatever cause, in the shape of money. Other things they will give in profusion—professions, commendations, good wishes, presence, advice, tears of sentimental sympathy, and acclamations of rapturous excitement—anything but hard cash. The first hint which looks askance at the purse produces a sudden elongation of the face; and over the countenance, but now lit up with glowing enthusiasm, there steals visibly a shade of uneasiness, deepening into dissatisfaction as the floating hint condenses into a request.

Look, now, at the mode in which this spirit deals with what it recognises as Christian institutions. It may be that State-churchism, by paralyzing to a vast extent the sense of individual obligation, is responsible for the general prevalence of a niggardly habit in respect of the public means of spiritual instruction and worship—or, it may be, that the outward form in which those means appeal for support is oftentimes ill-calculated to command deep respect, or sincere affection. Be the cause, however, what it may, the result is a fearful blot upon the reputation of willinghood. Religious teachers screwed down by an

139
iron-fisted parsimony to stations of pecuniary anxiety, and even beggarly want—services, cried up as surpassingly valuable, and rewarded with thoughtlessness, neglect, or audible murmurs, in respect of their claims, however modest, to substantial recognition—high ability in some instances, pure devotedness in others, in all, ministrations chosen, accepted, and rendered availing, dismissed from the door of competence, aye! affluence, with the barren salutation, "Be ye warmed and clothed"—no consideration in the exactions made upon time, strength, solicitude, and thought, and in the same spirit no inquiry as to the mode in which heavy encumbrances are borne—the lagging discharge of clear moral indebtedness, viewed and occasionally spoken of as if it were a spontaneous and unmerited favour —every expense incurred in the maintenance of truth grumbled over as unwarrantable—every contribution solicited for the diffusion of correct knowledge and sound principles regarded as a fresh tax upon, and trial of, forbearance—these are exhibitions of the hinder parts of voluntaryism which do anything but commend it to general approval and adoption. If scepticism still prevails, especially in high places, as to the power of willinghood to grapple single-handed with human depravity, we have no right to marvel, with these blemishes in view. Scenes, such as those to which we have passingly pointed, are not, in themselves, so comely as to charm away hesitation. If the whole system were of this complexion, it would be hard indeed to pronounce it other than radically unsound. Happily, candour can discover not a few redeeming features. But there is more than sufficient ground for inculcating with earnest effort upon the minds of voluntaries, the importance, nay! the necessity

140
of recommending the noblest of principles by the most cheerful liberality.

One of the unhappy results of this niggardly habit, directly traceable to it, and hardening the closeness of its texture, is the common adoption of practices which, under the pretence of appealing to willinghood, infringe most unceremoniously upon its most obvious laws. Strange, fantastic, and indecent, are the stratagems resorted to to entice munificence from its hiding-place, or to poke and goad it into spasmodic action. Distrusting cogent argumentation, lucid statement, graceful persuasion, and pungent appeal—distrusting, in short, all manly attempts upon the conscience and the affections, as inefficient for the purpose—some men do not stick to prowl about among inferior and questionable motives, with the avowed object of enlisting them in support of philanthropy and religion. For ostentation one sees provided a scheme of public competition—for vanity, bazaars of fancy-work—for sensuous tastes, musical entertainments, figured at due intervals with devotional exercises and flowers of pious oratory. The roving are favoured with a steamboat excursion. The bashful are penned up in situations which render it morally impossible for them to pass the plate unnoticed. Begging waxes intrusive and impudent, and "the cause and interest" travels into unknown districts, enters all sorts of houses, takes the inmates by the button, and worries them, if possible, out of a subscription. All these are but the more insidious forms of compulsion. They bring disgrace on willinghood; and, alas! they do not a little to furnish plausible excuses for those who are disposed to evade real and solemn obligations.

It will be contended, we know, that unless society

141

were tickled or twitted by little devices like these, great truths and noble institutions would be left to perish of inanition. Would they? Then, why not at once proclaim willinghood "a delusion, a mockery, and a snare?" Would they? Let them be left, then, if their own vitality and merits cannot sustain

them! Better, a thousandfold better, that they should seem to outward observation what they are, and what is their real power. The wrinkles of care and distress furrowing the majestic countenance of truth, the tottering gait, the short and labouring breath, the weeds of deep poverty, the numerous but indescribable signals of neglect—let them all be patent—open to the world's gaze. Then, at last, if ever, there will gush forth waters of sincere sympathy. Then, conscience will find a tongue, and, pointing at that wan figure, will rebuke with effect the selfishness of the age. And then, roused by the touching spectacle men of God will grow serious, and, renouncing all conformity to the spirit of the times, heroic hearts will form sublime purposes, and by an energy inseparable from a commanding faith, will pluck life from the jaws of death, and plant verdure, beauty, and fruitfulness, in the very desert. Would that things were come to this now dreaded pass!

The niggard has his reward. Sowing sparingly, of course he reaps sparingly—and with his sparse and stunted crop of good results, he has a full field of mischievous weeds. The instrumentality which he starves, soon deteriorates in the course of succession. Ill-qualified dogmatism steps into the shoes of neglected worth. And the men of this generation are now paying in servility and stupid adulation, what they would be honester and wiser to pay in the current coin of the realm. Let them

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142

keep their own independence sacred—and let them gart with what is comparatively worthless, save as it is freely dispensed.

Liberality! open-browed, serene-eyed, smiling Liberality, sister of Faith and Love, once known in the Christian church as the fairest, purest, and pleasantest, of all companions! whither hast thou retired? what uncouth thing is that which fills thy wonted place? If thou hast been driven forth from our midst, it was not, it could not be, from any failure on thy part to bless the

homage of thy votaries! The soul in which thou abidest is made ever gladsome by thy presence! All holy sympathies gather attentively about thee! All moral tendencies thrill with delight at thy touch! Thy soft and fervent kiss gives impulse to all the elements of true nobleness! Obedience to thy will, when thou pleadest for truth and goodness, is its own incomparable and enduring reward! Oh! descend once again, and make us all familiar with thy charms! Teach us how much more blessed it is to give than to receive! Prompt us to seek our own best life in-the well-being of others—in the establishment of truth, peace, liberty, and righteousness! And so attune our spirits to harmony with the gentle song of nature, and the sublime strain of revelation, that we, fulfilling the highest ends of our creation, may breathe the atmosphere of heaven on earth, and thus prepare ourselves for that diviner stage of being, in which spontaneous well-doing will constitute complete and ever-increasing bliss!

143

SATISFACTION IN DUTY.

THE little village of Amwell, about two miles on the London side of Ware, is chiefly remarkable as the burial-place of Sir Hugh Middleton. The church is near to, and visible from, the great north road, and between them runs, or rather creeps, the New River, planned and executed by this princely merchant, chiefly at his own expense, and ultimately to the ruin of his own worldly prospects. Seated on the box of the mail, a friend of ours was once passing this interesting spot, when he ventured upon some remark, or inquiry, relating to the last resting-place of the illustrious dead. "Aye, Sir!" replied the coachman, with a twinkle of his eye, and making the language of his craft, as he whipped his wheel horses, the vehicle of his wit. "Aye, Sir! he lies nice and close to his work, don't he?"

We shall take the liberty of using these words, apart from the arch allusion which they contain, to illustrate a

very important feature in the "workings of willinghood." We are anxious to point out how the principle is most certain of being well developed, when they who are acting it out are "close to their work"—in other words, we shall attempt to press upon the minds of our readers the thought that satisfaction in duty, independently of success, is the main source of moral power and spiritual progress.

Utter carelessness as to the practical issue of sincere efforts for the enlightenment and improvement of our fellow-men, is neither possible, nor desirable. To some

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144

extent, conduct must be prompted, guided, and sustained, by a rational expectation that it will tell somewhat, however little, upon the destiny of our race. The wish to project our life, our thoughts, principles, and influence, beyond the narrow span of present existence, is, perhaps, scarcely less natural, and infinitely more laudable, than the ambition of transmitting our name to a distant posterity. One may surely take pleasure in the belief, and draw some strength from it, that the impulse we are now communicating to mind will be reproducing and extending itself after we are gone—and that when all that is personal to us is forgotten, the nobler part of us—the moral emanations we are sending forth—what we have said, and what we have done—will continue in undying vitality, and will be mingling with, and modifying, and, peradventure, governing the thoughts and conclusions of those who shall come after us. We see no harm likely to arise from the indulgence of this pleasing and elevating hope —we can detect in it no infallible sign of human infirmity —and we are, assuredly, of opinion, that whatever accession of power to the inner man can be gained from such a source, is fairly available for all the disciples of willinghood.

Guarding ourselves from possible misapprehension by the limitation thus laid down, we are the more free to insist upon the importance of pursuing that course, in the maintenance and promulgation of the truths we

have received, prescribed by views of present duty, rather than by prospects of success. The one motive puts us in harness "Close to our work"—the other leaves so wide an interval between us and it, as to diminish, to no small extent, the purchase of our resolution, and to ensure an inconveniently frequent slackening of the traces.

145

"Sufficient for the day," according to the highest authority, "is the evil thereof"—sufficient, also, the obligations to be discharged. Why should we place our reward far ahead of us, in uncertain and remote contingencies, when we can have it always within immediate call? Why should we startle our motives, never exuberantly courageous in treading the path of self-sacrifice, by bidding them sum up the entire distance between us and our object? Where is the wisdom of surveying, at one view, the long chain of impediments, stretching far away into the future, over which we must pass in order to reach our end? All this, however, we must do, if we are to fetch our motives to action, and our delight in our work, from probabilities of success. The order of our forces, thus disposed with reference to the issues of things, lays them open to the repeated incursions and interventions of guerilla discouragements. The van-guard of our hopes is too much in advance of the main-guard of our determination, and untoward events will oftentimes rush in to interrupt the line of communication between them. It is impossible, whilst success is made the measure of our obligation, or the main scope of our resolution, to keep our various forces " well in hand." Hence, the abrupt halts, the pell-mell retreats, and the signal failures, of so many who start with all colours flying, and amidst loud flourishing of trumpets. They set their reward "upon the hazard of a die;" and a few unlooked-for difficulties, by severing them from their hopes, hold both at their mercy.

Willinghood, in order to a steady development of its power, must set out on "a more excellent way." Happily,

one is open to it. Satisfaction in present duty places and keeps it "close to its work." To discharge the obligations of the day within the day, leaving the morrow

146

till it comes—to do with alacrity whatever Providence points out as best to be done now, and at once—to yield a ready submission to tile promptings of conscience, in dealing with the affairs and relationships actually around one—'to cope, step by step, with single difficulties, and which, taken as they come singly, are easily manageable —to look for moral enjoyment, as wise men look for health, in the regular exercise of all our powers—to be more solicitous to do, than to succeed in doing—to esteem being at one's post more honourable than shouting for victory—to ease our minds, without procrastination, of daily responsibilities—and to commit the whole disposal of tendencies, probabilities, and results to Him who presides over universal government, and who sees "the end from the beginning"—this is the proper path of willinghood, and, walking in it, it will accomplish all that is appointed for it. This, too, is the directest road to happiness. Nay! we understate the case. In this road happiness will be our familiar companion, and uninterrupted satisfaction will be unremitting strength.

Let it not be alleged that the course we have here indicated necessarily shuts out all forethought, all wise adaptation of the means to the end. It does nothing of the sort. Such assistance as men may derive from well-digested plans of action, which, however, we think a mechanical age immensely overrates, and which often turns out to be mistaken or imaginary, may be secured even by those who work most exclusively on the principle we have recommended. He whose main anxiety is to be in the right way, is just as likely to exercise his judgment in deciding upon the point, as he whose sole care it is to get at the end. It is one thing to look ahead that we may know whither we are going—it is another thing to look ahead to find motives for going at all. Peering into

147
futurity is not amiss for the guidance of the understanding; but it is a perilous method for the determination of the will.

Popular forms of expression have done much to mislead us on the subject. "Such and such men," it is often remarked, "were far before their time." Aye! if the actual event be exclusively regarded—No! if we look at the necessity of their agency to bring about the event. "Before their time!" Is the morning star before its time, because it precedes the day? Is the aloe before its time, because many summers pass over it before its blossoms make their appearance? Is the architect before his time, because a generation or two must sink into the dust before the magnificent conceptions of his imagination can be embodied? Why, the men who are before their time are they who make after-times what they are. What if they "died, not having received the promise? "They found motive enough, and reward enough, in their work. Is it for those who have " entered upon their labours," and who reap what they sowed, to pronounce, by implication at least, their self-sacrificing efforts to have been a profound mistake? At this rate, Christianity is the greatest of all administrative blunders, and its heroes the most egregious of all fanatics—for when has it not been far in advance of its time, or when were they other than "men everywhere wondered at"?

Let the friends, then, of Christian willinghood, aim to keep themselves "close to their work." They are not responsible for events—why should they bind up their satisfaction with them? When shallow utilitarianism sneers at them for wasting their efforts upon impracticable objects, let conscience be prepared with the answer, "We are not committed to the achievement, but merely to the daily discharge of all duties in relation to the

148
thing to be achieved. Our reward is within us. In living, we live. Linked with truth, we cannot be de-

frauded of our chosen portion, nor disappointed of our cherished hope.

'The stars shall fade—the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt nourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt, amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.'"

149

GENIALITY, KINDLINESS, FIDELITY.

We are not of those, and we have more than once confessed it, who believe that speech should be always soft as velvet, and glossy as silk. The treble pipe which enters the ear with a welcome, is sometimes the precursor of bitter meanings, as a pretty page will sometimes herald the approach of a hectoring tyrant. A harsh and husky voice often does duty for a generous and sympathizing heart. It has become fashionable, we know, to think otherwise. The polished conventionalism of aristocracy is coming to be regarded as all one with the kindliness of Christianity; and uttering, on all occasions, "dulcet and harmonious breath," is identified with exhibiting the spirit of the, gospel. We have known gentlemen of singular religious pretence, ludicrously exemplify this too prevalent mistake—insinuatingly and blandly whisper to scoffers, that "it's a thousand pities they won't believe"—and seek to discharge themselves of their protest against error and sin, much as Bully Bottom promised to play the lion's part—"roar you as gently as any sucking dove—roar you an it were any nightingale." We have no taste for this dreary monotony of simpering politeness. We soon grow weary of sentiments and modes of expression, which slip forth from the mouth, or pen, as glibly and noiselessly as streams from the tap of a sweet-oil butt. The truth is, where a great work is to be done, we must expect to hear the clatter of "axes and hammers"—and the old saw

150
contains not a little practical philosophy—"Fair words butter no parsnips."

Constrained to confess this much, we feel it nevertheless incumbent upon us to show that willinghood, allowed to develop itself according to its own nature, will produce the richest specimens, not of fidelity merely, but of geniality and kindliness. There is nothing in the laws of its own being—nothing in the necessary modes of its working—to require rude and offensive airs. It is not a Grantley Berkeley, whose unfailing resource in every exigency is "a punch in the head." It can calmly say No, without planting itself forthwith in a squaring attitude. It can remonstrate with wrong-doing without gnashing its teeth. It is neither compelled nor disposed, in advocacy of truth, to pelt her assailants with the first missiles of scorn upon which it can lay hands. Its mission does not ask an unintermitting display of puckered brows, clenched fists, and stamping feet. It has nothing in common with the irascible passions—no partnership with "envy, malice, and all uncharitableness." On the contrary, when truest to itself and its principles! it is always calmest and most self-possessed. Brawling may suit idleness; but, wherever anything of "mark and likelihood" is to be done, and there is a willing determination to set about it, there will be a reluctance to waste the energies in paltry and personal collisions.

The irritability which is invariably giving itself out in burly and blustering words, and deeds of untoward texture, is common enough, and not unnatural, where conscience is out of joint. When men are driven, by stress of circumstances, upon courses which their judgments disapprove or their hearts dislike, it is not wonderful that they should become snappish and morose. It is no unheard-of thing for people to fire off against

151
others the indignation which their own misdeeds excite within them, nor for those individuals who are at war

with their own convictions to take up menacing positions against all surrounding neighbours. It is easier, and far more grateful, moreover, to divert the revenge of an ill-treated conscience to the inconsistencies of others, than to let its blows fall upon our defenceless selves. We seem to compass a double gain thereby—an opportunity for crying, "Come, see my zeal"—and a temporary release from the objurgations of self-reproach. Depend upon it, they who will go any distance out of their way to hit a blot, are glad of any pretext of being away from home—just as a habit of suspecting everybody indicates a more than decent familiarity with suspicious motives.

Willinghood, if it be sincere, is at ease with itself. It has laid its heart at the feet of its judgment, and is content to let it abide there. There is, therefore, an inward harmony ever at hand, like the harp of David, to drive away "evil spirits;" and whatever goes forth from this tranquil centre will be of like nature with itself. Geniality and kindliness will be the twin hand-maidens of fidelity. Things done, and things left un-done, will be regulated by a supreme regard for truth, and, consequently, by a rational desire for the highest interest of society. Goodness, not impulsive and arbi-trary, but directed by such wisdom as can be commanded, will prompt our undertakings and shape our acts. He who has yielded himself up, after due inquiry and courtship, to truth—who has taken her "for better, for worse," to love, honour, revere, and obey her—is under comparatively little temptation to let his combative propensities run riot. The object of his devotion will have the pith of his energies, and his strength will grow up in one single stem of consecrated obedience. In tune

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152

with himself, he will be aptly inclined to be in tune with all. The discords awakened by his faithfulness are no more a part of him, no more agreeable with his nature, than the war-cry of savages is attributable to, or in consonance with, the philanthropic zeal of the missionary who seeks their reclamation. They are not the most

humane surgeons whose hands tremble with the lancet in the limb, and who leave tying up a bleeding artery to wipe away their own tears of distress. The pain occasioned by scarifying or amputation does not imply cruelty in the operator. Let us not mistake here. Genuine kindliness does not uniformly dictate either words or deeds which will prove agreeable to others, but rather such as unbiassed reason will decide upon as best fitted to do good. Whatever is done by willinghood should be done at the suggestion of true benevolence; and it may reply to its own occasional misgivings, as well as to the complaints of those whom it has wounded, "For, though I made you sorry, I do not repent, though I did repent." The genial bent of willinghood, however, will display itself most prominently in its chosen methods of maintaining and enforcing the doctrines it has received. Where error crosses its path, it will not spare to catch and strip it. The hypocrisy which aims at misleading it, it will denounce with becoming vehemence. It will show no toleration to vice, nor dispense hollow compliments to meanness. But the staple of its effort—the business to which it will give itself with spontaneity and delight-will be the winning and impressive manifestation of truth. To unveil its intrinsic loveliness—to dispatiate upon its excellences and charms—to point out its glorious symmetry—to show its harmony with all the conclusions of right-mindedness—to cast upon it the different lights of past and passing providential dispensa-

153

tions—to trace out its practical influences, and the bearings which they have upon human destiny—in a word, to make it as attractive as it is good, and cause it to be as much loved as it is really amiable—this is the method which willinghood will prefer. In such engagements as these it will move in its own element—gracefully, delightedly. To build up will be more in unison with its final objects than to destroy. To bless, rather than to curse, will be regarded as its appointed mission.

Thus have we attempted to convey to our readers some adequate idea of the "Workings of Willing-hood." The illustrations we have selected are not all that have occurred to us, but they may suffice for the purpose we had originally in view. It was our object to enlarge prevailing notions as to the nature and claims of the noble principle which is represented by its name. We hope that to some extent we may have succeeded in this effort—and that the course of our remarks has contributed to raise admiration of, and deeper respect for, scriptural voluntaryism. We now purpose taking leave of the subject, and, with the close of the present volume of the Nonconformist, closing the present series of articles. Under other circumstances, we might have wished to prolong our observations—but propriety as well as convenience bid us hasten to wish our indulgent readers "a very happy new year."

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