



YOUNG MEN
OF
THE BIBLE



THE
YOUNG MEN OF THE BIBLE:

A SERIES OF PAPERS

BIOGRAPHICAL AND SUGGESTIVE.

BY
REV. JOSEPH A. COLLIER.

WILLIAM P. NIMMO & CO.,
EDINBURGH.

1880.

MORRISON AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.



YOUNG MEN OF THE BIBLE.

(Frontispiece.)

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	9
JOSEPH;	
OR, THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH,	11
DAVID;	
OR, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE YOUNG MAN,	29
ABSALOM;	
OR, THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE YOUNG MAN,	49
DANIEL;	
OR, THE SAFEGUARDS OF THE YOUNG MAN,	71
THE YOUNG RULER;	
OR, ONE THING NEEDFUL,	93

	PAGE
PAUL;	
OR, CHRISTIAN MANLINESS,	109
JESUS CHRIST,	
A PATTERN FOR YOUNG MEN,	131
SAMUEL :	
"ASKED OF GOD,"	153
SOLOMON :	
THE WISE KING OF ISRAEL,	173
JOB :	
THE MAN OF PATIENCE,	197
GIDEON :	
WHO FOUGHT IN THE FEAR OF GOD,	221



INTRODUCTION.



CELEBRATED German professor once said, "Whenever I appear before my pupils, I feel inclined to make them a respectful bow."

Upon being asked the reason of this, he replied, "Because I see before me the men of the future—the power of the state, and of their age."

It is with feelings of equally profound reverence, not only for the statesmen and men of influence, but especially for the Christians of the future, that the author dedicates these pages to the young men of the present day. As he confers the greater benefit who cultivates the young and thrifty orchard, rather than the decaying one, or who toils faithfully in strengthening the foundations of an edifice, rather than in adorning its walls; so he who rightly exerts himself in behalf of the young, and in any way adds strength to the character upon which the life of eternal ages shall be founded, occupies a sphere of usefulness

which any servant of Christ may covet to enter and improve.

If secular history is "philosophy teaching by example," sacred history is a higher philosophy; that is, religion, teaching in the same manner. The biographies of the Bible are simply practical illustrations of its teachings—an experimental garden, where we are shown first the seeds, and then, side by side, the sweet and bitter fruits of truth and error, holiness and sin.

Those with whom we are to hold converse are young men, like ourselves possessing all the susceptibilities and passions, and liable to the same temptations that belong to the youth of every age and land. And as he sometimes escapes a bitter experience who is willing to accept the hard-earned lessons of others' lives, so we may profitably study the paths of those who have gone before us, and thus gain instructions that are sometimes acquired only from the wreck of a shattered life.

Without attempting an exhaustive discussion of the themes before us, the author will be more than satisfied if these few life-studies shall lead any to a more thorough searching of the Scriptures, and a fuller acquaintance with its biographical treasures. For "wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy Word."

Joseph;

OR,

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH.

“**COME**, while the morning of thy life is glowing,
Ere the dim phantoms thou art chasing die;
Ere the gay spell which earth is round thee throwing
Fades like the sunset of a summer's sky.
Life has but shadows, save a promise given,
Which lights the future with a fadeless ray;
Oh touch the sceptre, win a hope in heaven,
Come, turn thy spirit from the world away.

Then will the crosses of thy brief existence
Seem airy nothings to thine ardent soul;
And shining brightly in the forward distance,
Will of thy patient race appear the goal.
Home of the weary, where, in peace reposing,
The spirit lingers in unclouded bliss,
Though o'er its dust the curtain'd grave is closing,
Who would not early choose a lot like this!”



JOSEPH.

GENESIS XXXVII., XXXIX-L.

THERE is no portion of sacred history that is more full of varied incidents, or to the thoughtful mind more richly suggestive, than that which relates to the life of JOSEPH. No highly-wrought romance, though clothed in all the charms which the most vivid imagination may impart, can be compared in thrilling interest to this simple, truthful Bible story.

After a childhood and youth passed happily in his father's house, and marked, as we must infer, by an unusual degree of parental affection and careful religious training, he first appears before us at the age of seventeen, a young man full of promise—his virtues, however, and the evident favouritism of his father, subjecting him to the jealousy of his brethren, and thereby not only to much discomfort, but to the peril of his life. In the discharge of filial duty he soon affords them an opportunity to vent their hatred upon him. Far from home, he is utterly in their power, and but for the intercession of a brother

more tender-hearted than the rest, he would have been murdered.

But Providence always watches over its chosen instruments; and the passing of a caravan of merchants that way suggests the thought of selling him as a slave. Twenty pieces of silver conclude the cruel bargain; and while the guilty brothers return home to add falsehood to their other crimes, and the aged patriarch mourns bitterly over the loss of his beloved son, Joseph engages with his customary fidelity in the service of Potiphar his master, rising gradually in his confidence, until he becomes the virtual head of his large household.

Thus are they ever the most prospered who, instead of yielding moodily to the first pressure of misfortune, rise resolutely above it, applying themselves faithfully to present duty, both patiently waiting for, and at the same time hopefully working out, their deliverance.

But every new station brings with it new temptations, and soon Joseph is called to struggle between duty and the seductions of sinful pleasure. His mistress becomes his artful tempter, and assails his firm principles with a persistency which is only equalled by the force of his brave resistance. He is brought to that crisis which, with almost every form of sin and vice, must sooner or later be reached and passed by the youth—the turning-point whence open out the alluring path of iniquity upon the one hand, and upon the other the straight path of holy self-denial—a

point upon which often an eternity revolves. *How will he meet it?*

We read not of a moment's suspense, and if there was any inward struggle, it was not evinced in outward hesitancy; for instantly taking his stand upon the high ground of religious obligation, he replies, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Noble reply, and indeed the only one that is equal to the emergencies of temptation. The youth who can entrench himself in the conviction that it expresses, as in a castle, will find it a fortress which no allurements of evil can undermine, and against which the very "gates of hell shall not prevail."

The prophet has said, "It is good that a man should bear the yoke in his youth," and Joseph certainly was not exempt from whatever of hard discipline is requisite to the development of a strong, robust piety. For soon he lay a prisoner, the innocent victim of his mistress's wrath, accused of a crime which he from his very soul abhorred. Yet still making the most of his situation, and sustained by the consciousness of innocence, he, like Paul and Silas in their bonds, shows that the Lord is with him, and patiently awaits the hour of his vindication.

Meantime the stately march of Providence moves on, and events ripen for his deliverance and yet greater exaltation: soon he stands before the king, and rides, amid the acclamations of the multi-

tude, as minister of state, and at the age of thirty occupies the highest position in the kingdom, next to the throne. Here his wise counsels prove the salvation of his adopted country; and a nation kept alive during a protracted famine, his own father's family furnished with sustenance and a home, and the foundation laid for the sublime history of the race of Israel, are the successive providential developments connected with his honoured career.

Without dwelling upon all the lessons of this wonderful life, for they are many, let us confine our attention to this one, which it manifestly teaches—**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEASON OF YOUTH.**

I. This will be evident from the fact that youth is *the formative period* of life.

A high degree of importance attaches to every rational, intelligent being at this period of his career. The merest infant is a casket in which lie concealed immortal destinies, and the most degraded form that beats with human life carries under its filth and rags the germ of endless development. The soul of man, wherever it exists, and in all the ruin that sin has caused, is still a wondrous structure. Its capabilities so vast and varied, its susceptibility to pain and pleasure so exalted, its destiny so gigantic, who can measure them!

There are stages of existence which, by reason of their relative bearings, possess a peculiar importance—critical periods which give their shape and

character to all that follow. As in the physical history of our globe, the processes seeming to have been undergone thousands of years ago decided the formation of mountain and ocean, continent and island—so, long after time has closed, we shall look back to certain events in our individual career when the moral elements within us were fused and shaped into fixed traits and settled destinies.

When and where did Joseph acquire those principles which lay at the foundation of his character and success? Not surely in the days of captivity to a heathen master; for not only was he then surrounded by circumstances highly unfavourable to moral improvement, but even then his virtues shone with a force that betokened years of patient culture. His biography admits us only to the fruit-laden tree, leaving us to infer what must have been the seeds that alone could ripen into such results.

We may therefore go back to his first appearance upon the stage of history, a youth of seventeen, and note the silent process by which each separate virtue rooted itself in his nature, sending down their strong fibres into his soul's depths, preparatory to their shooting upward and outward in his noble deeds. For as with the body, so with the mind and heart, the youth gains not the strength of manhood at a leap, but only by a gradual growth, and constant, unperceived development. The man of lofty virtues and high attainment may seem to spring forth at once, full armed, to grapple with events, but it is not so; each joint of

that armour has been forged in secret, often too in pain, amid the fires of self-discipline, and riveted by hard blows of temptation that had threatened to dash it in pieces. We must not always give to mature life all the credit of its deeds; we must go oftener back to early youth or even childhood for their secret spring. Manhood may develop that which already exists, may build higher and more majestic the structure already begun; but to youth belongs, I had almost said, the creative power—the power that gives to manhood and old age, and generally to the immortality beyond, their bent and direction.

Joseph at thirty, the upright, honoured prime-minister of Egypt, was only the Joseph of seventeen developed into a broader, fuller, higher life. The elements of his character were in both instances the same. In the Washington who, full of years and of honours, retires from the presidency of the Republic, you cannot fail to recognise all the moral and mental features of the youthful lieutenant. The impression, therefore that every man makes, upon his age and country is not so much determined by the events and associations of his manhood, as by the ruling principles or passions of his boyhood and youth; so that you are now in the bud what you shall be in the flower, and with few and rare exceptions, your present is the faithful type and prophet of your most distant future.

It is an eventful moment when the masterpiece of the sculptor's skill is being cast in the mould, for

soon it shall harden, and whatever be its faults or virtues, it must go down to posterity unchanged. It is an hour of thrilling interest when a nation's destinies hang trembling in the balance, and a word or act may shape them for unborn generations. But oh, where, in the case of an individual, is there a period so eventful, so fraught with tremendous consequences for good or evil, as when the youth pauses upon the threshold of active life, and yields his plastic mind to the abiding impress of truth or error, and forms those habits which shall be interwoven with the whole texture of his coming existence?

Could the young man who is disposed to trifle with solemn truth have the future unveiled to his view, and see this or that evil practice embittering a career that is now so full of hope—see the silken threads of sinful pleasure turning into cords that shall strangle his soul's life—see the luxuriant harvest of disgrace, poverty, wretchedness, that shall spring from the seeds he so recklessly sows, he would surely be aroused to sober reflection. Or could he who now struggles successfully against temptation, look beyond the present conflict and victory, and trace their beneficent effects upon the confirmed principles of manhood and old age, he would surely be inspired with fresh strength, nor think the most hard-earned conquest dearly bought.

Let this thought, then, be lodged deeply in every youthful mind;—that *now* is the crisis of life—that every hour of time, every habit of thought, feeling,

or action, the book or paper you read, the words you hear, the associates you choose, the purposes you cherish,—each makes its indelible mark, and all work together in forming you for honour, usefulness and happiness, or for shame, misery, and death.

II. The season of youth is also important in view of *the possibilities for good or evil that lie wrapped in it.*

Who could have foreseen, even with Joseph's prophetic dream in his mind, that the young man who was driven a fettered slave into Egypt should in a few years occupy the highest position in the gift of the king; that he whose estimated worth was expressed in twenty pieces of paltry silver, should be the man of his age, and make his abiding impress upon all coming generations? Who would have beheld in the shepherd-boy David, the mighty warrior, the illustrious monarch, the inspired poet, that he afterwards became?

We may, indeed, in every instance, trace a necessary connexion between the traits of youth and the successes or reverses of mature life; we may say in general that prudence, industry, and piety will produce corresponding results; but who can in any given instance forecast the future, and predict the coming position, deeds, and influences of the young man? He may possess elements of greatness, unsuspected by himself or others until occasion calls them forth, and he becomes an instrument for carrying out

some grand design of Providence. Circumstances now unforeseen, developments unlooked for, may yet clothe with vast power for good or evil one who to-day is esteemed of no account. Even apart from any peculiar endowments or favouring circumstances, there is that in the bare position of any youth which may well cause him to "rejoice with trembling" in view of the possible future which he may, if he will, work out.

Look at his position. He stands upon the threshold of life, strong of nerve, hopeful of heart, girding himself for his allotted tasks. Within him are powers susceptible of an endless culture and improvement—a mind that only awaits the husbandry of patient discipline in order to yield the choicest fruits of wisdom, on which a world may feast; a heart to whose expansive power there is absolutely no limit, and whose sympathies may yet bless the age and the race; and before him, oh what a future if he be spared to enter, and have the skill to improve it! What opportunities that await some strong hand to grasp them, and extract their hidden blessings; what opening avenues to heights of honourable usefulness awaiting the men whose firm steps alone can climb them; what unfinished tasks of the world and the Church, of science, philanthropy, religion, appeal to his worthiest ambition, and invite his most ardent endeavours; what uncultivated wastes all ready for his moral ploughshare; what harvests ready for his sickle; what work for all minds, all hands, all hearts; what

a sublime career for every youth who has the will and the faith to embrace it! The years are rich in promise, and none can estimate the power of the young man who, though to-day weak and despised as Joseph among his brethren, yet, like him, alive to his position and his capabilities, resolves to make the most of his coming years, to make the most of himself, the most of events and opportunities, the most of time and eternity. I care not whether he have genius, wealth, or friends; for strong sense, good principles, and ardent piety are a man's best wisdom and riches, and God himself is his friend. Such an one will rise above every discouragement, and will be astonished to find how, year by year, he is made a blessing and an honour to his race.

No attentive reader of history can fail to be impressed with the important part which young men have borne in the great affairs of the world. Joseph, before reaching the age of thirty, moulds and directs the policy of a mighty nation. David at eighteen is anointed King of Israel, and at twenty-two delivers his nation from a harassing foe. Daniel at about eighteen takes his rank above the wisest men of his age. Luther at twenty-nine revolutionises the whole moral aspect of Christendom; and so Alexander, Napoleon, and Washington achieved their greatest prodigies of skill and valour before the age of thirty-five.

I say not that *every* youth is likely to occupy important posts in society, or to wield commanding in-

duences ; but he who fills the humblest sphere to its outermost limit with holy activities, living with earnestness, not for himself, but for God and his fellow-man, thereby exalts and ennobles that sphere, be it ever so degraded, and impresses himself upon his times, and is sorely missed when he is gone ; while upon the other hand, as with Joseph and hosts of others, he who is faithful in that which is least, is the more likely to be summoned, in providence, to the same fidelity in that which is much, that so, to "him that hath should be given, and he should have more abundance."

What should this teach us ? Not by any means an overweening confidence, nor a proud ambition, nor an affectation of that superior wisdom which is chiefly to be gained by experience—for these are fatal to the young—but simply a sober realisation of the momentous position we occupy as the "heirs of all the ages, foremost in the files of time," and a corresponding improvement of that position by all means within our power.

Does any youth, timid and shrinking, sigh to himself, "I am nothing, and can do nothing in my present and prospective circumstances that will be of any great benefit either to myself or others ?" I would have you take heart from the career we have been contemplating, and learn that providence has its especial blessings in reserve for those who by the patient culture of right principles are prepared to improve them. The current of events upon which

you are launching is covered by a misty veil which no created eye can penetrate, and with every coming day you can only conjecture its hidden morrow. The wrong habit, therefore, that you carelessly form, the erroneous principle you cherish, may, for aught you know, yet prove a curse, not only to yourself, but to multitudes of others; and so, upon the other hand, the flame of piety you now foster amid tears and discouragements may yet warm and quicken unnumbered souls.

There is much in this very uncertainty of events, coupled as it is with the assured general tendency of certain principles and courses, that invests the season of youth with its peculiar charms, and fills it with exciting motives and glowing aspirations. Happy are they who go forth in the strength of truth and right to the great life battle, neither cowering before temptation or adversity, nor over-elated with success—full of hope, and fuller yet of faith—wise to observe providences, great of heart, distrustful always of self but never of God, resolute in purpose, diligent in action, lifted above all baser motives by those drawn from God, Christ, and eternity, and seeking their reward in the skies. Into their laps shall be poured the real treasures of life, if not the riches of this world, and into their hearts a heaven-like blessedness; and their lives, be they long or short as we measure them, shall be long enough to show how noble is a true Christian manhood spent for worthy ends. The possible of such a life becomes the actual, and the

waking dreams of aspiring youth, like Joseph's, become glorious realities.

Would you look at the other side of this picture? Take from the hovel or the gutter one of those numerous wrecks of our poor humanity, who attest the *possible evil and ruin* into which the most promising life may degenerate. Be not shocked if we drag such a one before the refined reader, and let us question him. He will speak of high hopes, golden opportunities, and bright prospects that marked his early years, but alas, he was not equal to their improvement. He sighs over the destiny which he might have seized, but that he indolently let it slip from his grasp, while he lent a too willing ear to pleasure's syren song, and surrendered his body and soul to temptation, until the years that might have been useful, honoured, and happy, became little else than one long, drear captivity, whose chains have gathered strength by age, and whose burdens have more and more enfeebled his once resolute will, until he can only cry out despairingly from the depths which he vainly tries to escape. The hopeful "I may be" of his earlier years is changed to that saddest wail that can issue from human lips here or hereafter: "I might have been this or that, had I only been faithful." But youth comes not again; and though he repent ever so bitterly, he cannot turn back the sun of life in its course. "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended." Oh, who would not take warning from his miserable career!

III. The importance of youth is plainly evinced by *the whole tenor of the Word of God.*

Who can have failed to notice that in its appeals to the young its tones seem to breathe an unusual tenderness, as if expressing the very inmost heart of the loving God? To none others does it speak with such intense solicitude, to none does it hold out such glowing promises and invitations. Its biographies of the great and good are almost all illustrative of early piety, and its teachings might almost be summed up in the kind appeal, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

The Bible, then, is not only the fit companion of the aged saint, the joy of the afflicted and the mourner's solace, it is pre-eminently the young man's guide and counsellor, and they who study it most will best realise the truths we have been contemplating.

The youth, then, does in many respects occupy one of the most solemn and important positions in the universe of God. And what should be the effect of this momentous truth upon his mind and heart?

Let it beget a deep humility; for how feeble is the instrument, and yet how grand the work, and how unmeasurable the responsibilities!

And connected with this, let there be a proper self-respect, a due appreciation of the powers and influences intrusted to us, which shall keep us mindful of our duties, and which should be equally removed from pride and from inglorious timidity.

And with this, thoughtfulness—a serious inspec-

tion of our character and habits, a wise forecasting of the years to come, a patient schooling of the mind in its highest wisdom, that our future find us not unprepared to meet it.

And chiefly, let our subject form a powerful argument for early piety, for the embracing of that religion which is God's armour to strengthen weak man for his conflict—religion whereby youth is clothed with its highest charms, manhood made more manly and godlike, old age clad with unearthly grace and beauty, and eternity filled up with "pleasures for evermore."

Would you know the secret of Joseph's happy and successful career, and of every life of man that is truly noble and blessed? The God of truth and love bends down and whispers it to your hearts. Oh, listen to the gracious words: "*My son, give me thy heart.*"



David ;

OR,

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE YOUNG MAN.

“ We are living, we are dwelling
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling;
To be living is sublime.

“ Will ye play then, will ye dally
With your music and your wine?
Up, it is Jehovah's rally ;
God's own arm hath need of thine.

“ Worlds are charging, heaven beholding ;
Thou hast but an hour to fight :
Now the blazon'd cross unfolding,
On, right onward for the right.

‘ Oh, let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad ;
Strike ! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages, tell for God.”



DAVID.

1 SAMUEL xvi. 30; 2 SAMUEL i. 13.

HOW much of human history is of a piece with the transaction recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel. Short-sighted man, dazzled, like the prophet, by "the outward appearance," often beholds in some Eliab of imposing exterior, one anointed of the Lord to do His great works; but He who "looketh upon the heart" disappoints the expectation, and summons a David from the sheepfold, a Matthew from the derided office of publican, a Peter, Andrew, James, and John from their fishing-nets, to become His powerful instruments for benefiting the race. Thus, in almost all the great civil and religious movements of the world, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," "that no flesh should glory in his presence."

What was there in the stripling DAVID, not yet out of his teens, that commended him to the Lord as the fit successor of Saul upon the throne of Israel?

He certainly possessed a rare union of gifts and graces that went to qualify him for his destined position. To the genius of the poet he added all the prowess of the warrior and the far-reaching skill of the statesman. Gentle, mild, and tender of heart, his magnanimity to his foes enhanced the lustre of his victories; his devout humility, the invariable attendant of true greatness, set off in more striking colours his invincible courage; while the ardour of his holy zeal was only equalled by the soundness of his judgment and discretion, and his manly self-reliance by the strength of his trust in God. Yet it was neither his wisdom, nor genius, nor bravery that made him the chosen of the Lord out of all the hosts of Israel; but rather his strong piety, that crowning gift which binds together all others, and alone gives them unity and completeness; and which, especially when embraced early in life, lays the foundation for the highest possible attainments and the greatest possible usefulness of man. When men select a person for some important post, they ask whether his youthful education and habits of life have been such as to fit him for it. So with God; only, while not overlooking other and necessary qualifications, he lays the chief stress where many lay the least, upon *the heart's* early discipline in the school of religion.

David was not in this respect found wanting. Often, no doubt, in the solitude of the fields, so favourable to holy contemplation, surrounded by his flocks, the unconscious types of the intelligent multi-



Young Men of the Bible—Page 32.

tudes who, in after years, should "hear his voice and follow him," and the symbols of God's people in their relations to the divine Leader, he had sung to his harp that wonderful psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;" and when, the flocks all gathered in, the moon and stars looked down upon him with their quiet beauty, he sung, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

But he was now to exchange these scenes of holy delight for the most arduous responsibilities that belonged to his land and his age—was to be invested with the reins of kingly power at just that period which should decide the structure and character of the government for centuries to come. New duties require a new consecration; and the Spirit of the Lord, of which the oil poured upon him by the prophet was only the outward emblem, anointed him with fresh heavenly influences. Thenceforth his high natural endowments assumed a new and more exalted character; and David was a braver warrior, a better statesman, and a sweeter poet, as well as a holier servant of God, by reason of the divine impulse thus given him.

It is always so. None are so gifted that their powers and talents may not be enhanced by the indwelling Spirit of God, which adds wisdom to the wise and strength to the strong; and by giving to all our powers a higher direction and a grander scope, makes

one more of a man in every worthy element of his nature.

It is true that David had his faults, as who has not? Yet in these we may see that he had the same temptations and infirmities to contend with that we all have; while in the bitter penitential confessions and cries for mercy that now and then interrupt the joyous strains of his noble psalms, we may learn both the sorrow of heart that should attend every departure from God, and the means by which the wanderer may return.

In the prominent features of the earlier life of David, we find illustrated *the duties and responsibilities of the young man*. These duties, as will be seen, are of a threefold character, as they pertain *to society, to the state, and to the church*.

I. Notice first those of a *social* character.

God has so formed us that we can neither divest ourselves of the instinctive impulse which, like a chain, binds us to those with whom we mingle, nor ignore the obligations that these relationships involve. We all have, as it were, two lives; or rather, two aspects of the same individual life; and the one that is outer, and that forms its part of the great, strong life, pulsating through the arteries of domestic, friendly, and business intercourse, has its invariable laws, that are as binding as any that relate to the secret soul—laws too that are not to be found in codes of man's devising,

not in customs or usages of society, though they be entrenched in the most venerable antiquity, and come to us with the sanction of a thousand years; but only in the revealed will of God, in the one law that embraces every other—love to God first, and then to man.

In this comprehensive principle we discover an important element of David's beautiful life; all his relations, whether public or private, being characterised by a spirit of noble self-sacrifice. Risking his life when a mere youth for the safety of his flock, he afterwards exposes it freely for the benefit of his country; and if in subsequent years he sometimes listened to the appeals of pride or ambition, the whole tenor of his career was marked by a generous consideration for others' welfare—by devoted, lofty friendships, and a large-hearted philanthropy.

In this behold the root from which grows out the proper discharge of every human obligation, whether to God or our fellow-men; even as its opposite, selfishness, is the poisonous root of all that sin and sorrow which has over-run the moral world with weeds and briars, and turned the heart of man from a garden into a tangled wild of iniquities.

Man never was intended to live only for himself, and therefore it is that no man can be happy who lives for himself. The one proposition flows necessarily from the other; for man, out of the path in which God has formed him to walk, must be unhappy and constrained; as the bird, formed to soar towards the sun, would be miserable if tied, with clipped wings

and fettered feet, to the ground ; or as the seraph, formed for the atmosphere of holiness and praise, would change his songs to sighings if condemned to walk the thorny path of human life.

Let it then be settled in every mind that the fundamental law of all social relationship is to be found in the dictates of a kind, benevolent heart, that wishes well to all and evil to none ; that prompts alike the friendly word and courteous demeanour, and that goes to make up what nothing else can either make or successfully counterfeit, the true gentleman. With this as a basis, one will scarcely require any other special rules for his guidance than that all-inclusive one of the gospel, "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

He who obeys this will ever be upon the alert to impart, as well as to receive ; to confer benefits, as well as to enjoy them ; and in conferring, to enjoy them all the more. As the heavenly bodies, moving harmoniously through space, reflect upon one another the light that warms them, so we, each in our orbit, whether as stars of greater or lesser magnitude, are to regard ourselves as charged with a mission to every one with whom we associate ; our chief question being, not, How may I derive comfort or happiness ? but, How may I cause other hearts to sing for joy ? —not, How many blessings may I pluck for myself from the boughs that overhang life's wayside ? but, How many may I disseminate ? Some persons are like the gaudy, odourless flowers of the tropics, in

which all the fertilising influences of sun and earth go into brilliant outward show, pleasing to the eye, but nothing more. Others resemble the blossoms of our orchards, with their modest purity of garb and colour, yet blessing all with the fragrance that they exhale, and then only dying to turn into fruit for man, as if their motto were, "None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." Would that this motto might be inscribed upon the opening portals of every youthful life.

Most remarkably was this principle illustrated in the life of David. His disinterested friendship with Jonathan, sealed by solemn and repeated covenant, is one of the most charming instances of manly affection that we have upon record. What can be more moving than that scene where, ere he flies from the hostility of Saul, he lingers in parting embrace with his tried and faithful friend; and "they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded?" Or what more beautiful than the plaintive dirge with which he lamented this friend, slain in battle: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love was wonderful, passing the love of women?" And so every young man is the better for cherishing strong friendships with the wise and good; and he whose soul is knit to one or more chosen associates, with whom he can sympathise in right aims and feelings, is thereby the better armed against temptation and confirmed in paths of virtue.

But there is a trait that is far more exalted than the love of one's friends ; and that is, love to an enemy. The best of men are liable, by their very virtues, to provoke the hostility of the envious and malicious ; and from the time of which it is significantly written, "Saul eyed David from that day forward," he was hunted by this degenerate king with a relentless hate ; yet, after enduring an almost unparalleled series of persecutions from him, no sooner does he find Saul than he makes it an occasion for the display of a forbearance that is yet more unparalleled. Twice does he thus spare the life that is spent in hot pursuit of his own blood ; and when Saul dies under other hands, he not only mourns him in touching elegy, but sternly avenges his death upon his murderer.

How different is this from that standard of worldly honour which calls resentment manly, and brands with cowardice the lofty heart that, instead of meanly crushing its enemy, dares to conquer itself, and thereby achieves the greater victory over its foe.

He who cherishes this spirit of kind-heartedness and magnanimity, governed by Christian principle, cannot fail to become a worthy, useful, and beloved member of society. He has in his possession the key that will unlock all hearts, though they be barred against him ; and the means not only of his own temporal advancement, but what is better still, of discharging with fidelity his weighty responsibilities to others.

Without noticing at length the remaining catalogue

of social duties, let it suffice here to impress this one paramount thought, that every youth is, by the very laws of his nature and the force of circumstances, no less than by the precepts of the Bible, solemnly accountable to God for the manner in which he discharges them. For your influence over your friend, for your hourly example, for your measure of fidelity to every trust, be it great or small; for your connivance at wrong, whether in theory or practice; for all the nameless traits and habits that go to make up your personality, and which you more or less impress upon those around you, "know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

We can perhaps scarcely expect that they who are now going off the stage of human action should do much to exalt the standard of social morality that is now so low; but many do look with hope to the rising generation fearlessly to apply the pure precepts of Jesus to every department of human intercourse, until they shall refine that which is now debased and polluted, and inaugurate a better era. Let not these hopes be disappointed. Only dare to do right—dare to be singular, if needs be, though the finger of scorn be pointed at you, and your spirit chafe under your comrades' sneers or laughter; let it be enough that God smiles upon you—dare to strip off sin's artful disguises, to despise its hollow mockeries, to lay open its shallow pretences, and to make your face as adamant against both its wiles and its threats—dare to go forth to battle with the Goliaths of evil, though

they be of giant stature, and their spears like weavers' beams, and they defy in swelling words the armies of Israel ; for the stripling David, with his sling and stone, shall conquer them in the name of the Lord of hosts. Be valiant for the truth, patient under opposition, meek under injury, strong in the anointing Spirit of God ; and then the great social evils that we now deplore shall be slain, the better day shall dawn upon the human brotherhood, and the glad reign of love, virtue, peace, and holiness, for which men have so long waited, shall bless this weary world.

II. The second class of responsibilities are those of a *civil* character, or those owed by the young man to *his country*.

David, though brought up amid scenes of comparative retirement, shut out from the influences of the Israelitish court, was one of the most devoted of patriots. The first act which drew all eyes upon him, and marked him as the hero of his times, was his fearless encounter with Goliath, with which all are familiar. Whether we consider the pure, unselfish patriotism, the unfaltering courage, or the sublime faith in Israel's God which he evinced upon that occasion, we cannot but linger admiringly upon the narrative, and regard it as one of the most memorable exploits in the annals of the world.

The same qualities which he then displayed characterised his whole career, both as a subject and as a king. Thoughtless of personal danger when his

country was in peril, indifferent to personal comfort when his comrades or subjects were suffering, loyal to his king, even when branded by him as an outlaw, and ever acknowledging the reigning Jehovah as the true sovereign of Israel, he is in many respects a model which may safely be held up before the future citizens, lawmakers, and sovereigns of the country.

We may learn from him that the first great duty of every citizen is that of an abiding love for his country. This is one of the native instincts of the noble heart. History tell us of many a devoted hero, reared under an oppressive despotism, and groaning under unjust exactions, with little in the character of his ruler to excite anything like generous enthusiasm, who yet has poured out his blood and his treasures in willing sacrifice for his country's good. In a country such as this we live in, it is the duty of every man to be a patriot, and to love and revere it with an affection that is commensurate both with the priceless cost of her liberties, and the greatness of her civil and religious privileges. Indeed, however it may be in other lands, in this one the youth may be said to draw in the love of country with his native air: and it is justly taken for granted that all will seek and maintain her interests, as that the child shall love its mother, on whose bosom it has been cradled, and of whose life it is a part.

We may safely say that in no other country but this is it more important that all should rightly understand and faithfully fulfil the duties of citizen-

ship than in this. While ignorance is the natural stronghold of tyranny, knowledge is the very throne of civil liberty. It is the interest of despotisms to foster a blind, unreasoning obedience to arbitrary law; but where, as with us, almost the humblest has his voice in the administration of public affairs, more depends upon the enlightened sentiment of the masses, than upon even the skill of temporary rulers or the character of existing laws.

It is, therefore, important that we become familiar with the history of our country and with its mode of government. As David was wont to rehearse in glowing strains God's dealings with His people, so should we review the successive providential interpositions by which the little one, nurtured amid storms and trials, has become a mighty nation. And this, not only that we may the better understand the nature of our institutions and their cost, and learn the great principles that underlie the civil fabric and constitute its safeguard, but especially that we may learn to give glory to Him in whom states, nations, and empires, as well as individuals, "live and move and have their being."

I will add, that loyalty to government is an essential element of true patriotism. If ever any subject was strongly tempted to trifle with a corrupt civil authority, David was; but mark how, during all those years when he was pursued by royal hatred and perfidy, he maintained an unbroken allegiance to King Saul.

Although we possess, as we think, the most perfect form of government that exists, it is scarcely to be expected that it should always work without friction, or even discontent; but the intelligent citizen or ruler will not be swerved by these from his path of firm adherence to law and order, and the maintenance of the powers that be, as ordained of God.

David was elevated, in the providence of God, from the sheepfold to the throne. It is a peculiarity of our wise national system, that advancement to almost as high a position is not uncommon. But while none can forecast his individual career, this is certain: every British youth will be, if spared, a power for good or for evil in shaping the destinies of a mighty nation. Oh, then, be alive to your solemn responsibilities, and discharge them with fidelity, in the fear of God. Be true each to your trust, as the guardian of precious liberties. Ever prefer the nation's good to your individual advancement. Listen rather to honesty than to ambition, and to duty rather than to temptation. Adopt as your motto the noble words of him who said, "I had rather be right than be king," and never, no, never, let your first warm love for your country grow cool under the pressure of party faction; never, no, never, lend your ear or voice or influence to aught that is inconsistent with its largest and most united interests.

III. A third class of obligations are those owed by the young man *to the Church*.

What can surpass in beauty and fervour the expressions of love for Zion with which the Psalms of David so richly abound! His devotion to the Church and her interests even exceeded the love that he bore to his country, and his patriotism was enhanced by his piety. Devoutly acknowledging the God of his fathers in all the exploits of his earlier career, one of the first acts of his kingly authority was to restore the neglected ark of God to its proper place, with appropriate solemnities; and his next, had God permitted it, would have been the building of a magnificent temple in which to enshrine that sacred symbol of the Divine presence. "See," said he to Nathan, "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." But although his pious purpose was frustrated, it being left for his son Solomon to fulfil, David required no such monument to attest his affection for the cause of Zion. It breathed in his whole life; and those effusions of his sanctified spirit which have come down to us, do of themselves form a temple more glorious and enduring than the most costly material structure, resounding through all generations with holy praise to Israel's God.

Now, although none of us occupy David's position of commanding influence, or are gifted with his marvellous genius, yet the same Church and cause of God, which is one and the same in all ages, has its strong, paramount claims upon our dutiful service, and lavy

upon every youth responsibilities that are proportioned to his situation, means, and influences.

“Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?” is a question as applicable to-day as when it was first propounded, more than two thousand years ago; and the answer comes to us from the fresh grave of many a standard-bearer in Zion, and from the silvered hairs and tottering forms of others, “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.” Through all generations of God’s people, there has ever been going on this transfer of weighty interests from the older to the younger, a bequeathing of the dear cause of God—richer legacy than gold or silver, more momentous charge than houses or lands—to those who, in the vast procession of the living, move on to fill the places of the dying and the dead. And, blessed be Abraham’s God, there never has been, and there never shall be wanting “a seed to serve Him.”

And now upon the young, the strong of the present time, are being gradually devolved these interests. Providence fastens them upon their shoulders, and either to shake them off or to trifle with them, is to incur God’s just displeasure, and lay up a fearful account against the judgment-day. The only question then must be—and let us meet it like men—What are the duties of the young man to the Church, and how may he best discharge them?

I should be unfaithful to your souls did I not say, first of all, you owe it to the Church, to yourselves, and

to the God of your fathers, that you at once seek and continually cultivate *an earnest, personal piety*. This is to the Church, only in a higher degree, what patriotism is to the state, the basis of all intelligent, hearty, and well-directed action. None can fulfil these solemn trusts without it.

Here then, at the outset, you are met with the cordial invitation to number yourselves with the people of God, not in name and profession only, but in the hearty sympathy and fellowship of souls redeemed by the same blood of Christ, consecrated by a heavenly anointing to the same work of Christ, and made heirs of his Father's love and his Father's house. Oh, withhold not yourself from God's people, from your true and eternal happiness. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

We live in a time that is full of interest and high incentive to every lover of Zion. This is pre-eminently the age of *Christian enterprise*, and therefore one that calls loudly for the consecrated energies of *the young and the active*. Look abroad through the world: see how old systems of error and superstition are crumbling to their rotten foundations; see how the blind nations are feeling amid the darkness for the truth that shall give them light and end their gropings; see the fresh, radiant life that is beginning to animate the reviving Church upon earth, vitalising the great body of Christ with an electric sympathy; see the rapid march of Providence, the swift progress

of the awakening Spirit and the word through almost all lands; see the faint dawnings of the millennial era that greet the eye of faith, and tell me, is it not a glorious, a *sublime* thing to be a *young man* now, to be coming on instead of going off the stage of action—a *sublime* thing to be privileged to bear a hand in carrying to its triumphant issue the precious cause for which Christ died, for which martyrs have bled, and to which the good and the holy in all ages have devoted their best energies? Oh, ours is the most favoured generation that has ever lived, and the era now dawning shall be the brightest that has yet burst upon our globe. Why does not every heart leap forward to the embrace of so golden a future! why does not every voice and hand feel its strong impulse, and draw from it the incentive to a holier consecration!

Men, Christians, of that future, would you be equal to its grand events, and stand with the honoured ones who shall be instrumental in inaugurating them? Then now, to-day, buckle on your armour and engage in the warfare, that you may share in the victories of Zion. Awake to your solemn position, to your heavy responsibilities; rise to exalted views of duty and of privilege; enter into the very spirit of the Church's angelic mission, and into close sympathy with Christ your King; bring all the enthusiasm of your nature to bear upon this work, and with it the holier ardour that springs from faith and love. Ask ever, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and

whether the responsive voice of the Lord that bought you point to some lowly sphere of action or endurance, or to posts of honour in His Church; whether to some thorny path among the vicious and degraded, or to some height of Zion's walls as watchman and ambassador, or to yon distant fields whitening for the coming reaper. Oh, be faithful, be diligent, be hopeful, be prayerful, humbly leaning upon the almighty arm; and then—God working in and through you, His the power and the glory, yet yours a part of the toil, and yours the good servant's reward—you shall not disappoint the trust that the Church commits to you with fears and tremblings; but when "the burden and heat" shall be past, the world shall be the better for your having lived in it, the Church shall be better, heaven shall be happier, when its welcome harps shall echo to your ear the Master's plaudit, "Well done!" "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."



Absalom ;

OR,

THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE YOUNG MAN.

“ Oh, streams of earthly love and joy,
On whose green banks we dwell,
Gleaming in beauty to the eye,
Ye promise fair and well.

“ Ye lure us, and we venture in,
Cheated by sun and smiles ;
Ye tempt us, and we brave your depths,
Won by your winning wiles.

“ Too deep and strong for us ! we glide
Down your deceiving wave,
Like men by siren songs beguiled,
On to a siren grave.

“ O world, with all thy smiles and loves,
With all thy song and wine,
What mockery of human hearts,
What treachery is thine !

“ O world, there's fever in thy touch,
And frenzy in thine eye ;
To lose and shun thee is to live,
To win thee is to die.”



ABSALOM.

2 SAMUEL xiii. 23-39; xiv.-xviii.

WE have viewed David as a young man. Perhaps, however, no portion of his career is clothed with a tenderer interest than that scene in which he appears as a *father*, when all the ardour of his affectionate nature bursts forth in passionate lamentation over a son who has long abused his love and disgraced his house, and who has now perished in the very act of high-handed treason: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Can anything be more touching than this spectacle of parental grief over one who, by his course of life, would seem to have forfeited all claim to compassion?

Yes, the world has witnessed a display of abused, yet continued parental love, that was more beautiful by far than even this; it was when God, who has "nourished and brought up children, and they rebelled" against Him, stopping not with the sad wish, "Would I had died for thee," in the person of Jesus Christ, *did* die a human death for the sake of those

who were engaged in a worse conspiracy than that of Absalom, as it was against a better Father and a more exalted government. When we look upon a scene like this, we may gather some faint conception of the great heart of the divine Parent, which so bewails and would relieve the miseries of his erring sons and daughters, and who has given such proof that, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

The name Absalom signifies in Hebrew *the peace of his father* ; but so far from verifying this title, he became a Benoni, or "son of sorrow," to the heart that idolised him, and a sword of sharp contention to his father's kingdom. Yet David's experience in this respect, though bitter, is by no means uncommon. There are fathers to-day, and mothers, whose hairs, prematurely white, are being brought down in sorrow to the grave by the waywardness of those who once gave fair promise of cheering their declining years. Oh, Heaven pity those who are thus stricken and wounded by the staff on which they had hoped to lean—stung by the life that they have nurtured with fond patience through weary years. Yet most of all are they to be commiserated who are so lost to all filial feeling, so deadened to every right principle and affection, that they can deal unmoved the blows under which the heart to which they have been pressed so often and so tenderly, is slowly breaking, breaking to the grave.

Absalom as a youth combined in his person many

prepossessing qualities, which won for him the popular admiration, and which, with all his faults, rendered him the idol of a doting father. Endowed with rare physical beauty, and with every grace of form and mien, brilliant of mind, courageous of heart, fascinating of address, he yet appears to have grown up intensely vain, selfish, unprincipled, the slave of his baser passions, and to crown all, the victim of the most unscrupulous ambition. We tremble for such a one when he enters the arena of active life, for we see in him vast elements of mischief, both to the world and to himself. Calculated by his winning, popular qualities to exert a leading influence over others, he is of all men the most likely to undermine the public virtue and artfully to betray the best and holiest interests of society.

The history of this unworthy prince is brief, yet, as might have been expected from his traits of character, eventful. His first recorded crime was committed against his brother Amnon, who being older than himself, stood between him and the coveted succession to the throne. Under the pretext of avenging a dishonoured sister, Absalom causes him to be slain by his servants at a family feast, and then flies for safety to his father-in-law, with whom he remains three years. At the expiration of this time, by a cunning artifice upon the part of Joab, he is restored to his former home, and two years later, to his forfeited favour at the court of David.

Who would have supposed that, under the fair

show of filial love with which he at length receives forgiveness from an injured father, there could beat so traitorous a heart? But soon his dark plottings begin to ripen into deeds. He suddenly assumes a more than royal state; his equipage and retinue, as he rides in public, eclipsing in magnificence those of the king his father, and dazzling all eyes by their ostentatious display. Nor does he stop with this. Having won to himself that vulgar admiration which is called forth by unaccustomed outward pomp, he next insinuates himself into the good graces of the people by an affected interest in their humblest affairs, and an apparently sincere desire for the administration of justice. The plot is deeply laid, and thus far all works well. The only thing needed to finish this picture of consummate villany is a disguise of religion, and this he is not long in assuming. Under the pretext of paying a religious vow, he repairs to Hebron, where, sustained by a formidable number of adherents, he is proclaimed king. At first the tide of events seems greatly in his favour; but soon Providence vindicates the rightful sovereign; the army of Absalom is defeated with a loss of twenty thousand men, and the traitor prince, fleeing for his life, is caught by his hair in an oak, where Joab kills him.

It was an appropriate close to such a career; and the death of Absalom affords one out of many illustrations with which history abounds of the untimely end in which a wicked ambition is likely to culminate.

Our subject, as suggested by the life and character of Absalom, is, THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE YOUNG MAN.

If, as we have already seen, religion makes its strongest appeals to the young, so also do vice and irreligion. The soul of man, as long as it is in the body, is a disputed territory, that

"Keeps two worlds at strife :
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life."

Yet I think I see the invisible combatants gathering more closely about the youth than about any others. If there be good and evil spirits that "excel in strength," veterans in the unseen warfare braver than the rest, who are commissioned to the most important points in the world-wide battle-field, they throng where young hearts are beating. And this not without good reason, for it is the point where character, habits, destiny, hang trembling in the balance; and the power that can gain the control of that formative period of life generally controls the whole, and decides its issues for eternity. At the same time, there is that in the youthful nature which renders it peculiarly susceptible, not only to right influences, but more especially to wrong ones. Yielding and impressible, it receives like wax whatever stamp is put upon it, and the good or evil habit formed when the heart is pliant, soon hardens into the shape that it shall wear through coming years. And then, how

much there is to which temptation may make its artful appeal! The natural appetite for pleasure in all its forms, the keen relish with which the youth greets the new world of joys opening to his view—none of them having yet palled upon his senses or revealed their hidden sting—his unsuspecting nature, his inexperience of worldly or Satanic wiles, his strong impulses and passions, and worse than all, his depraved, unregenerate heart, except it has been renewed by grace—that secret ally of the enemy without, which is too ready to betray the citadel within, and throw open the gates to the foe—all combine in rendering the young man an object of peculiar interest to the powers of evil, a point for the concentration of their best forces, and the plying of their most cunning arts.

Now “to be forewarned is to be forearmed,” and a knowledge of imminent peril is the first requisite in order to successfully guarding against it. It is with faint hopes of doing any good that we appeal to those who are grown old in sin. It is hard to turn them, wrecks that they are, from the current on which they have so long drifted; but we may well address the young, who are just spreading their sails to the breeze and launching forth from the harbour upon the unknown ocean, and may hopefully point such to their only chart, the Bible, to yon beacon lights that warn them of hidden dangers, to the reefs and shoals and breakers that lie all along their route, and to the wrecked fragments floating around us, which, like

Absalom in his death, admonish us how sadly may terminate the voyage that seems now so full of promise.

Our temptations are as varied as are our natural temperaments, tastes, and dispositions. The adversary not only draws from a full armoury, but his weapons are in every instance adapted to his intended victim. He tempts David through the avenue of sensuality, Absalom through that of ambition, Judas through his covetousness, and Peter through his vain-glorying. In fact, whatever be the weak point in one's moral armour, Satan will find it out ; and there, like Ahab, he is sure to be stabbed, except he is upon his guard.

I. Of these different classes of temptation, notice, first, those that appeal to one's LOWER NATURE, or to the bodily appetites and passions.

The chief failing of Absalom in this particular appears to have been that of personal vanity. He gloried in being the handsomest man in all Israel. Of commanding form and graceful bearing, he especially prided himself upon his long, beautiful hair, which he ostentatiously weighed whenever it was cut. Perhaps, in conformity to the fashion then prevalent in Eastern courts, it was sprinkled with gold dust, further to enhance its splendour and increase its weight.

It is sufficient to say that the pride of a fine form or features belongs only to the weakest and most

enervated minds. A temptation that is so effeminate, so utterly opposed not only to everything like manliness, but to every ordinary dictate of good sense, surely need not be dwelt upon at any length. It will be enough to remark, in passing, that as the pride of Absalom proved the halter that hung him between heaven and earth, and placed him in the power of his pursuer; so this kind of vanity is often the ruin of the soul that cherishes it, and generally makes its possessor the easy victim of the great Destroyer.

And now, how shall we speak of those other alluring paths of mere sensual indulgence that open upon every hand to the youthful pilgrim through this world? Satan stands at their entrance, in guise and manner a very "angel of light," whispering in soft tones of the roses, but never speaking of the thorns; bidding us listen to the ravishing music that comes floating through them, but drowning with his voice, like the Hindoo drummers at a burial, the wails that arise as one and another stumbles and falls over the hidden brink. Oh, how artful are his blandishments, how cunning his suggestions! "God has formed you to be happy," he says with mock reverence. "You would not have been endowed with these varied appetites and passions, had He not meant that they should be gratified. Away, then, with all idle scruples, and enter these inviting paths."

And in one respect he is right. God does intend that we should be happy; but beware of the subtle logic

with which he would ensnare you ; nor for a moment accept his false conclusion, that pleasure is to be found in disobeying God and yielding the reins to brutish self-indulgence.

One of the most dangerous of these many alluring avenues that open out to the youth is that of *indolence* or sloth. And what chiefly renders it pernicious is, not merely that it leads one away from the paths of delightful activity we were formed to tread, but that it is one from which branch forth all paths of vice and crime.

No mind furnishes so inviting a field for the tempter as one that is unoccupied. Indeed, it is probable that the luxurious indolence of the court of Israel, operating upon the ever busy, active mind of Absalom, first led the way to his ambitious projects. He could not be at rest, and his treacherous plottings were the natural consequences of his idleness. No mind, no heart, save that of the idiot, can be wholly vacant or at rest. If not employed in that which is good, or at the least harmless, a troop of evil thoughts and passions come rushing in and take possession. How much of vice and ruinous dissipation has its origin in the fact that "time hangs heavy" on the idler's hand ; and how many, in trying to kill time, in reality kill themselves ! God pronounced more of a blessing than a curse in the decree, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread ;" and in even compulsory toil He has furnished us with one of the grandest safeguards against temptation.

There are few words from the lips of a youth that furnish so broad an invitation to the tempter as those too frequent ones, "I have nothing to do." They form the motto with which many a besotted wretch has set out upon his downward career, and might appropriately be inscribed as the epitaph upon the grave of the degraded drunkard, the infatuated gambler, the slave of lust and sensuality, and the high-handed criminal. "Nothing to do!" What, with that immortal mind to be trained and informed with truth and wisdom; with those exalted powers within you for whose improvement you are so soon to give account; with those hands that are so strong for toil; with that soul that shall live or die for ever? "Nothing to do?" Oh, say it not when thy brother is perishing; when desolate hearts are waiting your kind mission to them; when there are burdens to be lifted from the weary, and tears to be wiped from sorrow's eye! Be not a drone in God's busy hive. The world, in these stirring days, has no room for such; but make haste to fill your minds, your hands with blessed activities, that they may be proportionably emptied of sin and sorrow. And then see to it that your hours of leisure, when body or mind shall crave their rest, be hours of keenest watchfulness; for then, if ever, the tempter is near and your soul is endangered.

Without stopping to notice all the remaining forms of temptation that belong to the class we are now con-

sidering, let us take as a fair type and sample of the rest, *intemperance*.

It was amid the drunken revelries of a feast, when Amnon his brother was merry with wine, that Absalom, stimulated to the deed no doubt by the intoxicating cup, caused his servants to murder him.

But it is in no such light as this that the tempter appeals to the giddy youth. "Only once," says the siren voice; and the red wine sparkles and dances as if it were the very spirit of life; "it will cheer your heart, or quicken your brain, or drown your sorrows." "Be a man," shouts his comrade; and he points to one and another in high circles, and says it is respectable or fashionable to drink.

Oh, what an eventful moment, when the youth pauses with the cup in his trembling hand, scarcely resolute enough to say *no*, scarcely willing to say *yes*. It has doubtless been with unnumbered multitudes the turning-point of their endless destiny. Does he yield? A new and strange sensation of pleasure steals all through his frame, and he asks if this is the enemy he had been so taught to fear. Do we warn him of the hidden danger? He deems it an insult to his manliness to be reminded that others, strong and brave as he, have fallen before this tyrant; and he deliberately adds link after link to the chain of habit that is fast binding him down; until, his mind clouded, his will enervated, his heart besotted, his purest affections deadened and polluted, he lies fettered

hand and foot, the abject slave of his destroyer. Now and then a gleam of reason, or the faint voice of conscience, startles him from his brutish degradation, and he feebly resolves to throw off the bondage ; but he lacks the moral force to do so, and the tempter who had once so flattered his strength, now laughs at his weakness, and leads him whithersoever he will. Once a man, he is now but little removed from the beasts that perish ; once a useful, prominent member of society, he is now a disgrace to his friends and humanity ; once favoured with religious influences and impressions, he is hardened against every holy influence, is ripe for crime, ripe for shame, ripe for perdition. Who could have supposed that the sun that rose in such clear, strong beauty, would, ere it reached its zenith, go down in such a night—that a life so lovely in its budding promise could yield such bitter fruit ? Better for such had they never been born, for the world is full of heavy-hearted Rachels, weeping and refusing to be comforted for their children, who have perished by this worse massacre than that of Bethlehem ; and full of mourning Davids bending over drunkards' graves with the cry, "Would to God I had died for thee, O my son, my son !" And the voice that comes to all from the depths to which the wretched inebriate has sunk himself is this : "Avoid, as you would a plague, this fearful destroyer of peace and purity, of health and life, of body and soul ; and as you value character, happiness, and the

approval of God or man, 'Look not upon the wine when it is red.'"

"Look not upon the wine, O thoughtless one,
While you have gifts that it may steal away;
Youth, grace, and wit, and genius, now your own,
Are all too precious for the spoiler's prey.

"The love of kindred and the joy of friends
Around you cling, as to the oak the vine;
To every circle light your presence lends:
Oh, look not on the soul-destroying wine!

"Leave to the dull, the ignoble, and the slave
A joy so base, a strife with such a foe;
Whom to o'ercome no honour brings the brave,
To fall by whom were triple shame and woe."

II. But some there are who, by reason of their confirmed good habits, tastes, or principles, deem themselves proof against these lower and more sensual allurements. Yet Satan has a snare for every foot, and a song for every ear. He has his appeals to our HIGHER NATURE—to what may be called the more refined and exalted instincts of the mind.

Prominent among these is the one so plainly indicated by our subject, *ambition*. Youth is peculiarly the season of high aims and exalted anticipations; and these are not by any means to be repressed, but rather to be guided to right ends. They are to a man's whole nature what steam is to the engine, a motive power, that if ill regulated may lead to disaster and ruin, but which properly controlled and guided, will accomplish the most beneficent results.

This cannot better be illustrated than in the opposite careers of two brothers, the sons of a king. With the one, this principle was a consuming eagerness for power, and that for its own sake merely, and gained by whatever means ; with the other it was the commendable desire to *make the best use* of power, holding it simply as a means to a higher end, the glory of God and the good of men. With one, no music was so sweet as the voice of popular applause, secured by whatever sacrifice ; the other, while by no means indifferent to public opinion, as none should be, aspired to the favour of God as the supremest good. With the one, ambition was a dark, malignant passion that overmastered his whole being, and as if with demoniac power, hurled him into the commission of crime, and would have waded through seas of blood to its fulfilment ; with the other, it was a noble aspiration, chastened by piety and lofty impulse, that conducted him to rare heights of wisdom and blessedness. While—most instructive contrast of all—with Absalom it defeated its own end and hastened him to a dishonoured grave ; with Solomon it not only attained its worthy purposes, but gained with them all the glory that the most ambitious spirit could have desired.

Few classes of temptation possess such a dangerous fascination as this one. Appealing at the outset to the native, innocent aspirations of the youthful mind, it slyly feeds and flatters them, until they gnaw with a fierce hunger, that the more it is fed, craves all the more. He who surrenders himself to its sway will

find it the most exacting of taskmasters, whose demands upon character and principle will have no end, until they have sapped every virtue of his heart and mildewed all his joys. The incense of the public idolatry is often bought with the costly price of all that a man should hold most dear; nay, frequently with no less a sacrifice than himself, laid body and soul, a "whole burnt-offering," upon the altar of this insatiate Moloch.

Its appeals to the youth of this day are many and varied; but whether it take the form of unprincipled political aspiration, as with an Absalom, or an Arnold, degrading one from a man into an intriguing demagogue, and from a patriot into a traitor; or that of mammon-worship, with its strong temptations to dishonest aggrandizement, and to the gambler's coinage of heart's blood into gold, that men may say, "How rich he is;" or that of the pride of intellect, with its affectation of superior wisdom, whose very parade best proves its folly: in short, whatever be the shape in which the temptation comes, shake off unsanctified ambition as you would a viper, and when tempted to barter immortal interests for a breath of fame, say with all the might that God has given you, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

To this day there may be seen just without the gates of Jerusalem a heap of stones, which mark the supposed grave of the traitor Absalom; and every troop of passing travellers stop to hurl upon it their indignant tribute to the memory of an ungrateful

son. Truly, "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." "The name of the wicked shall rot, but the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

III. A third class of temptations relate directly to the SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL CONCERNS of the young man.

When Absalom's treachery was ripe, he desired permission of his father to go to Hebron, offering as his pretext, "Thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord." Whether the vow had really been made or not, his words sufficiently express an intention that is no doubt sooner or later formed in every youthful mind, "I will serve the Lord." But alas, it is no sooner formed than Satan whispers, "Yes, religion is a good thing; you must possess it: but there is time enough yet for that. Put it off; you will be better able to attend to it by and by." And then he plies his arts more vigorously, and rivets his chains more tightly than ever. With each succeeding day and year it becomes harder to shake them off, and easier to postpone repentance, until the fatal procrastination has become a settled habit of the soul that he cannot conquer. His repeated purposes of piety, being as often broken, only confirm him in sin, and the heart, fed with such frequent promises, becomes indifferent to the reality. Thus the blessing that had once seemed

to be so near, recedes farther and farther from his feeble, irresolute grasp, and the grieved Spirit of God takes His eternal flight; and only when "the harvest is past and the summer is ended," does the giddy trifler awake to behold the miserable cheat to which he has fallen a victim. Alas, that in this world of death, with his companions falling like autumn leaves around him, with eternity and the dread judgment-day so close at hand, the heir of immortality can be beguiled into such a surrender of his dearest and eternal interests! Procrastination in temporal things is a dire evil, for it is "the thief of time;" but in things spiritual it becomes far worse, for then it is the thief of eternity. "Put it off?" No, a thousand times no. Rather be every other joy postponed, and every other purpose broken, than defer for a day or an hour the paramount claims of God and Christ and heaven. This is the rock on which more souls have perished than upon any other. Let us be warned by their miserable fate.

There are numerous other temptations that assail with peculiar power the youth who is intent upon salvation. The fear of ridicule is Satan's snare for some timid souls, in whose ears the voice of human praise or blame sounds louder than that of the Lord of all. The love of ease deters another from his highest good, and he clings to the burden of his guilt and doom because he thinks—mistaken soul!—that it is lighter than the cross. Another, yielding to his destroyer a fuller confidence than he gives to

the God of truth, believes those lies by which religion is defamed; as that it is gloomy, joyless, and a mere system of harsh constraints. With others the tempter erects out of their amiable virtues a barrier to piety, and, by flattering them with the thought that they are good enough already, converts their very morality into an obstacle to conversion. But whatever be the plea of this devourer of souls in any individual instance, well do we know that, as with the one from whom our Saviour cast out the devil, He will not permit any to become the easy subjects of grace, but will, at the very sight of Jesus, try every expedient to hinder them from coming to Him to be saved.

Where, then, is the young man's resource? First of all, and in respect to every phase of temptation, let the soul be ever upon its guard against the least act of yielding. Both reason and experience teach us that it is easier to refrain from the first oath, the first glass, the first gratification of lust or passion, than afterwards to retrace the wrong step thus taken—far easier, nobler, happier, to fly from the first temptation, than to conquer a settled habit that has seized upon body and soul with its merciless fangs, and is fast destroying them.

Tradition tells us of a great rock upon some southern island, by virtue of whose magnetic qualities the ship that ventured within the circle of its influence would be attracted towards it with greater and greater swiftness, until, every bolt and bar being drawn forth by its invisible power, the whole would fall to pieces

at its base. There are many such rocks in life's great sea—rocks of temptation that have power to loosen every moral fastening which is not secured by the strong principles of piety, and to dash to a hopeless wreck the soul that dallies with them. The only safety is in giving them a wide berth, and with firm hand steering clear of their outermost verge of attraction.

Let there also be a guard upon the inmost heart, keeping it "with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The thoughts are the sentinels that keep the avenues to the whole being, and everything depends upon their fidelity. The youth should have a care lest they prove worse traitors to him than was Absalom to his king; for when Satan can bribe them into parleying with him, we may well tremble for the citadel.

The one grand, all-inclusive safeguard of the youth or man against so subtle a foe is personal piety. Let there be Christ's truth in the mind, His love and grace in the heart, His strong hand fast in ours, and His crown of reward held over us from the skies: with these none can fail; without these none can succeed. For in that Christ "hath suffered, being tempted," and hath resisted louder appeals of pride, ambition, indulgence, than have ever addressed his followers, "He is able to succour them that are tempted." Go forth, then, in His armour, with the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word

of God, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee. Then shalt thou conquer, and shalt fulfil a nobler ambition than that of Absalom, as thou dost aspire to a grander kingdom, even the one "prepared for thee from the foundation of the world." And well may that soul afford to dispense with all lesser aims, and repel all baser motives, to whom the voice of the King declares, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."



Daniel ;

OR,

THE SAFEGUARDS OF THE YOUNG MAN.

“ UP for thy life, young soul,
Foes gather round thee fast ;
Up, for the swift hours roll
Thy favour'd season past.
Now thou art strong, gird for the fight ;
Decay erelong shall waste thy might.

Mark how, from realms above,
The Spirit o'er thee bends ;
Gift of the Saviour's love,
Him God the Father sends :
He leads secure ; His sword and shield
Make victory sure—make Satan yield.

God and His saints invite ;
Hell warns with dreadful voice ;
Life, death, all things unite
To press thy timely choice.
List to that call. On Jesus' side
Trust now thine all ; in Him abide.”



DANIEL.

DANIEL i. ii. vi.

IN our last chapter we traced the sad career of an unprincipled youth, who, yielding the reins to pride and ambition, fell before the tempter, and sank, in the prime of his manhood, into a dishonoured grave.

In beautiful contrast to the misguided Absalom, stands out upon the page of sacred history another youth, reared like him amid the corruptions of a royal palace; yet, unlike the son of David, surrounded by idolaters, and exposed to those peculiar trials of virtue and morality which could only be found in the luxurious court of the King of Babylon. But though having little if any outward incentive to piety, and every conceivable allurements to sin, and even to a denial of the faith of his fathers, we find him maintaining through a long life his unbending integrity of character—which, the more it is tried, shines all the more conspicuously—and leaving his name embalmed among the most beloved and honoured of the earth.

If the career of Absalom stands out like a warning beacon-light to the youthful traveller over life's treacherous sea, the pure life of DANIEL, which we are now to consider, sketched by the Divine finger upon our chart the Bible, indicates our only safe route through the temptations of this world to God. We have noticed the perils of the youth, as illustrated by the melancholy biography of the one; let us now look from these to his SAFEGUARDS, as exhibited in the course of the other.

These may be regarded as of a twofold character, as they pertain to the intellectual and the moral parts of our nature, or to the successful culture of the mind and the heart.

I. It is to be remarked that, as with Joseph, David, Solomon, Paul, and all others whose names have become identified with the highest usefulness and honour among men, so Daniel, even while young in years, aspired to the ripest and most mature WISDOM. A captive boy, separated from friends and kindred and native land, he was one of the four chosen out of all the children of Judah to enter the royal household and to be prepared, by careful training in the Chaldean language and literature, for the king's service. Here was indeed a trial from which the youthful foreigner might well have shrunk in dismay; for, whatever might have been his natural aptitude or his acquired Hebrew learning, yet in the midst of so many able native competitors, nothing but the utmost

labour could enable him to acquit himself with credit, much less with anything like distinction, in the peculiar departments of Babylonish science. Yet, with that fidelity which was so marked a feature of his character, he applied himself at once to his tasks; and his painstaking diligence, as is ever the case, was so well rewarded, that when, after three years of study, the day of public trial arrived, it proved that "in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of" Daniel and his three Hebrew companions, "he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in his realm." And in this wisdom, gained as it must have been with much self-denying application and an avoidance of many youthful indulgences, lay in a great measure the basis of Daniel's career of greatness.

Need we say that the same principle holds good at this day? There is in every youthful brain a precious mine, whose treasure, now hidden, waits to reward the diligent workman, and "the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." This mine may exist in equal richness in any two youths as they set out upon their career of life, and yet the one may die a wise, useful, honoured man, and the other may die a comparative fool; just as of two rough blocks of Parian marble in the same quarry, one may be made a splendid triumph of the sculptor's art, a form of grace and beauty; and the other, turned to base purposes, may be trodden under foot of men. Here

you will see the chief difference between the wise and the ignorant—between a Newton and an unlettered idler, staring with vacant wonder upon him and his telescope: the one had diligently worked the inner mine of thought, and fused the rich gold in the fires of self-discipline, and stamped it with the seal of consecration to a noble purpose, and thrown away the rubbish; the other, scarcely realising that he had a mind, and conscious only of a body that had to be fed and clothed and warmed, had become gradually indifferent to his higher and immortal powers, and the world was none the wiser, and he himself was scarce the wiser, for their existence.

Now the mind of every youth is a solemn trust, to be improved, like everything else that we possess, for God and humanity. It matters not whether it be strong or weak; whether gifted with the varied powers of genius or with a single talent; or whether placed in circumstances favourable or unfavourable to its highest culture: in the Divine judgment, the possessor of one talent is just as accountable as he who has ten; and it is no less the duty of the mechanic or the clerk to improve his mind, so far as he may within his allotted sphere, than of the student in college halls or the candidate for professional learning. His duty, do we say? The honoured names of Franklin, Sherman, and hosts of others, who have struggled up from obscure poverty, and become, like Daniel, the councillors of state; the names of Luther, Bunyan, and other bright and burning lights in the

Church's history, remind us that no station is so low, no obstacle so vast, but that he who makes a right use and improvement of his mental powers may yet rise to positions of high usefulness if not of renown.

And by this improvement I do not mean the mere acquisition of knowledge, the storing of the mind with facts, but also that mental discipline, those habits of thought, reflection, and observation, which make one not only intelligent, but practically wise. One's mind may be a very storehouse of erudition, as his barns may be filled with grain, but neither the one nor the other will benefit mind or body, except it be used, digested, and assimilated; and as the food, by this process, contributes to physical strength and health, so the mental aliment should be made conducive to that wisdom which is the true healthful working of the mind.

In this will be found one of the strongest safeguards against temptation. "Keep sound wisdom and discretion," says the wise man; "then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." The cultivated mind resembles the cultivated field, where the good and the useful crowd out the worthless and the poisonous. But more than this, the love of knowledge, being itself one of the higher instincts of our nature, is apt to elevate the soul above the baser passions, and to lead us on to purer and more innocent sources of gratification. It opens out to the view a world of wholesome delights, from which one will not be likely to turn aside to the

gaming-table or the drinking-saloon. It admits us to the society of the great and good in past and present ages, whose profitable converse will leave but little relish for the company of the vicious and the profligate.

And the youth, while thus gathering to himself an armour against many kinds of temptation, will at the same time be girding himself for life's duties. In this age of the world, and especially in this country, very much depends upon the *intelligence* as well as upon the virtue of young men; and in the race after distinction, usefulness, or true excellence of character, the tribunal of public opinion, like the court of Babylon, adjudges its highest prizes to wisdom. Never was there a time so marked by the activity and triumph of cultivated intellect. In every sphere of society, every branch of human occupation, there is a pressing demand for the highest degree of knowledge and intelligence. The trial of Daniel before the king and sages of the realm is sooner or later re-enacted in the case of every youth, as society takes the measure of his attainments, and promotes him to that honour which is the reward of wisdom, or leaves him to that "shame" which is "the promotion of fools."

But another and severer ordeal approaches, when He who has intrusted to us these immortal minds for His glory and the good of man, shall say, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Thrice blessed then the "good and faithful servant," who, having improved his gifts to the attainment of heavenly wis-

dom, can say, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." Thrice wretched then the slothful one, who, in his grovelling self-debasement, has "dugged in the earth and hid his Lord's money;" for the "unprofitable servant" shall be cast into "outer darkness."

If you aspire to worthy ends by worthy means, if you would vindicate your manhood, make your life a blessing, and gain the approval of God and man, let not that glorious mind slumber within you, but awaken it to its life-work. Give it food, that it may grow and live; give it drink from the heavenly fountain; give it the exercise and discipline that shall gird it for duty, and start it resolutely upon the upward course. As its race is to be eternal, see to it that it receive now the right direction, so that long ages after the body has mouldered into dust, it shall be found still seeking and gaining new heights of wisdom as it for ever approaches that only point which it may not aspire to reach—the mind of the Infinite.

II. The second and more important class of youthful safeguards and preparations for duty, are those that pertain to the heart, or to our MORAL TRAITS and qualities.

Of these none are more conspicuously illustrated by our subject than *moral courage*.

No sooner was Daniel introduced to the Babylonish

court than his conscientious piety was exposed to a severe test. The king had appointed for the three Hebrew youths a rich and generous diet, similar to his own, with a view to their being well nourished and strengthened in body, while their minds were educated for his service. But in this food there would naturally be much that was strictly forbidden in the Jewish law, which not only prohibited many articles of diet that were used by the heathen nations, but also required that the kinds of flesh which were allowed should be killed in a certain manner. Besides this, the young Hebrew was in danger of eating food that had been offered, after the ancient usage, to idols, which circumstance might seem to identify him with their false religion and worship.

It is difficult for us, who enjoy the larger liberties of the Christian era, to enter fully into the convictions of the ancient Jew upon a matter like this; it is enough that to one who honoured the Divine law, it was no trifling thing. A mind of less resolution than Daniel's might have hesitated long before insisting, at such a place and under such circumstances, upon these peculiarities of religion; but not so with him. The true moral hero requires only a clear sense of duty in order to discharge it bravely, and without fear of consequences. This Daniel had, and he instantly "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank," and he ventured, mere boy that he was, to communicate his decision,

with all due respect, to Ashpenaz the prince. He who dares to do right has God upon his side. And the youth pleaded not alone ; for He who turneth all hearts as the rivers of water are turned, seconded his suit, and crowned it with success, by giving him favour and tender love with the prince, who granted his request, and allotted to the four Hebrews "pulse to eat, and water to drink," as the result of which temperate diet their countenances soon "appeared fairer than all the children which did eat the king's meat."

Thus early in life was developed and put in practice that moral courage, that firm unyielding adherence to known duty, which sustained this man of God amid all the corruptions and temptations of a wicked court, which no voice of pride or ambition, no sneers of ridicule, no flattery of his king, who loaded him with honours, no devices of his envious foes could for a moment overcome. Animated by this, he dared, as a faithful prophet, to rebuke King Nebuchadnezzar for his pride, and to stand before the prouder Belshazzar with the words, "Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting;" and for three successive dynasties, while occupying stations of high authority under each, fearlessly to profess the faith of his fathers, and to acknowledge Jehovah in the midst of heathenish idolatries.

The most striking exhibition of this trait, however, occurred towards the close of his life. A man like Daniel could scarcely have hoped to remain un-

assailed by that mean, ignoble spirit of *jealousy* which the spectacle of virtue, when conjoined with success, always engenders in base minds. Having been promoted by Darius above the one hundred and twenty princes of the realm, and thus placed next to the throne itself, he naturally became a shining mark for the shafts of envy and detraction. Well has it been said, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before *envy*?" Such, however, was his integrity of character, and his fidelity in the administration of the government, that a hundred keen observers—their vision sharpened by the spirit of ambitious rivalry—could find in him no flaw. There was but one resource left them, and then said these men, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Approaching the king with artful flattery, they procure a decree which forbids prayer for thirty days to any other than Darius, under penalty of being cast into a den of lions. The conspiracy is well laid, and now the prophet must either prove recreant to his Hebrew faith, and dishonour the God of Israel, or else, as they apprehend, die a death of violence and ignominy, and so be removed out of their way.

Seldom has piety been put to so severe a test, and never has it stood the trial more courageously, or issued from it more triumphantly. With the exception of some passages in the life of Jesus, there is scarcely anything more sublime upon the page of

human history, in view of all the circumstances, than the simple statement, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." While making no unnecessary parade of his devotions, he at the same time abated them not one jot or tittle, nor took any pains to conceal them, though conscious that, to all human appearance, his every word of prayer to God was the pronouncing of his own death warrant.

Mark the result. The decree was irrevocable. The king, much as he commiserated Daniel, had no power to repeal it—the faithful prophet was cast into the den of lions. But the Creator is master of the most savage of His creatures, and the prayer of the man of God has power to enlist upon his side those mighty invisible spirits that are "sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation." Thus while the king passes a troubled, sleepless night in his palace, the gloomy den is made beautiful and pleasant by the presence of an angel of the Lord, who stops the mouths of the lions; and in the morning God's servant comes forth unharmed, and his persecutors perish by the very death they had plotted against him, affording one of the many verifications of the proverb, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead;" signally illustrating both the power and the safety of right prin-

ciples, and the sure tendency of envy and malice to defeat their own ends.

But especially do we here see exhibited the nature and value of true moral courage, which, rooted in an invincible faith in God and in the right, and looking only at present duty and the approval of the Judge of all, makes a man as adamant against temptation, carries him over every obstacle, and renders him superior to every fear, except the fear of sinning. Possessed of this, the youth or man is strong for duty, and stronger yet for trial; destitute of this, he is the feeble, unresisting slave of himself and others, the sport of every gale of passion, and of every allurements to evil, and is ripe for disgrace and ruin. It may be taken for granted that every right principle which we possess must, sooner or later, have its *trial*, which shall issue either in its greater strength, or in its overthrow. None can escape the ordeal, neither can any evade in any instance its consequences either of victory or inglorious defeat. He who has not already passed it, must look forward to encountering the first slur against his piety or integrity, the first temptation to dishonesty or untruthfulness, the first whisper of unjust calumny or malice, the first beguilement to a letting down of principle and a compromise with wrong. Happy will it be for those in whom as in Daniel, men can find none other fault than that which is the highest virtue—a supreme devotedness to the law and will of their Creator.

There are several things that enter into the trait

we are now considering, and go to render it a grand safeguard for the young man.

Of these, one of the most important is the possession of *settled principles of action*, which shall serve as an invariable law to the mind and will, and furnish a universal rule of conduct. They form the anchors to character which, moored in the depths of eternal truth and right, maintain in unyielding firmness the soul that cherishes them. And they constitute the chief difference between the moral hero and the slave to vice and sin—between a Daniel and an Absalom; the one being governed by those fixed laws which alone are adapted to an immortal being, the other being at the mercy of every passion and propensity of his corrupt heart. For no principles can be considered well established which are not stronger than our passions, and which do not bring the lower part of our nature into subjection to the higher. Without these a man can no more be brave for duty, than a soldier can be courageous on the battle-field when his heart is in league with the enemy and his hands are destitute of weapons.

And what good principles are to the heart, the same is a *lofty purpose* to the life. But few, if any, have ever attained a high degree of excellence or usefulness whose early years were *aimless*. The man who lives and acts without a settled plan, his views bounded by the passing hour or day, and with no bright goal in view whose prospect shall quicken his footsteps, will be weak, vacillating, and irresolute, and

likely to fall a ready prey to the first onset of temptation. Then let every youth aspire to be something, to do something good and noble in his career through life. A single worthy end, carefully considered at the outset, and then tenaciously adhered to, furnishes of itself an element of surpassing strength. And of all the aims that can be placed before the human mind, where is there one so truly grand and commanding as that with which Daniel was animated—the glory of our Maker?

The youth thus fortified with good principles, and led on by a high and holy purpose, has need to be *decided* in acting upon the one and gaining the other. Many a poor combatant in the life warfare has bit the dust because of his indecision; for oftentimes to hesitate before the tempter is to yield and fall; and in all cases the more speedy and determined our resistance, the more rapid and complete will be our victory. Who can help admiring this quality in the persecuted man of God, as he kneels in his chamber towards Jerusalem, and calmly braves the fatal decree of the heathen king, rather than surrender a principle which is right, or disobey his Maker?

Yet, after all, the grand secret of Daniel's fearless adherence to the right is to be found in a firm *faith in God*—in God's Word as the highest truth, in His providence as the best protection, in His love as the supremest blessedness. Ah, here we behold the spring, not only of Daniel's marvellous courage, but of that which has animated all prophets, apostles,

martyrs, and given them their victories. It enabled Stephen to preach the truth to his murderers ; it put into Paul's mouth those brave words, " I am now ready to be offered ;" it inspired Luther with the undaunted reply to the threats of his enemies, " Had I five heads, I would lose them all rather than retract the testimony I have borne for Christ ;" and again, when threatened with the fate of John Huss, " Were they to make a fire that would extend from Worms to Wittemberg, and reach even to the sky, I would walk across it in the name of the Lord." Truly said the prophet, " The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

Ah, ye who stand timorously upon the threshold of great duties, scarce venturing to go forward, because, as with Bunyan's pilgrim, there are " lions in the way," while yet conscience permits you not to go back, know that here is a principle that can endue you with a more than earthly valour, and carry you on triumphantly through every opposing danger. Have faith in God through Christ, and you are unconquerable ; for then you toil not, battle not alone, but " God worketh in you ;" and as Darius said to Daniel, " The Lord whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." Only have faith in God, and a divine impulse shall be given to all your powers, that shall bear you, as on angels' wings, along the heights of holy consecration. Then no danger shall appal you, no snare beguile, no voice of scorn or malice disturb your calm composure or divert your

course. Oh, in that faith be brave, bent ever upon duty; for duty is yours, and results belong to God. Have courage to frown upon the wrong; and though it be almost single-handed, to maintain and defend the right and the true—courage to obey the voice of conscience and of God, and to stand in your place a tower of moral strength, fearless, undaunted, impregnable to assaults of earth or hell.

“Be brave, my brother;
Fight the good fight of faith
With weapons proved and true;
Be faithful and unshrinking to the death;
Thy God will bear thee through.”

III. Our subject suggests as another of the youth's great safeguards, *THE HOLY SCRIPTURES*. Of these Daniel was not merely a casual reader, but a diligent student; and no doubt much of his excellence of character may be attributed to an early observance of the Psalmist's prescription, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

This is emphatically the divinely-appointed security for the young, and none are either safe or happy who neglect its precious pages. No weapon is so sharp and powerful against temptation as the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” No earth-born rays can so illumine our way through the darkness as this “lamp to our feet,” this “light to our path.” Do we seek for wisdom? Here it exists in its highest perfection. Or for good principles?

This is the storehouse from whence alone they may be gathered. Or for moral courage? Here we may best learn its nature and its triumphs. Or for high aims in life? The Word paints before us the sublimest ends that it is possible for man to aspire to, even glory, honour, and immortality beyond the grave.

It would be hard to conceive of any situation more hopelessly sad, or more fraught with extremest peril, than that of the youth who turns his back upon this volume of heavenly truth. He is like a ship speeding at random over a dangerous sea without either chart or compass; like a traveller lost in an unknown country, with perils upon every hand, who has neither guide nor guide-book. Neglect the Bible, and you stumble in a dark path, filled with snares and pitfalls, and ending shortly in the "blackness of darkness for ever." Read it, study it; and lo, the night becomes light about you, and endless glory opens on your view. Who will be content to walk in darkness when he may have the blessed light of life shining around him and within him?

Slight not this neglected book—this voice of infinite love to the weak, wandering soul. Take it down from the shelf where it lies neglected, wipe off the dust, and open thy heart to its gladdening beams. Perhaps it is the gift of a mother's love, and has been bedewed with her tears of anxiety for her darling boy; or it embalms the memory of some friend to your soul, whose prayers are still unanswered. Of

this at least we may be certain : it is all radiant and glowing with the love of the Father in heaven, and of Jesus the Saviour, whose message to you is, "They that seek me early shall find me."

IV. The last and crowning safeguard of the young man is PRAYER. We look with astonishment upon the calm devotions of the man of God as he kneels in his chamber towards Jerusalem, in the face of the king's fatal decree ; yet, after all, it was only because he prayed, that he was able to do it so fearlessly. There is a power in this agency that no mind of man can measure. One may be weak and inexperienced, encompassed by the most appalling dangers, and no human arm or voice be nigh to befriend him ; it matters not : in the still communion of the heart with God strength is sure to come, and the earnest cry for help summons the very might of Omnipotence to the suppliant's side, gives him the victory, and arms him for fresh conflicts. And will any in this world, where dangers cluster upon every side, and all the arts of Satan beset the unwary pilgrim, refuse to grasp, by the prayer of faith, the outstretched arm of God, which alone can save him ? Oh, with that soul within you, more precious than all worlds, a soul that is to be saved or lost—with the pit yawning before you, and an unseen power drawing you stealthily towards it—with heaven, bright heaven, alluring you with its angel voices to everlasting joys, "pleasures for evermore," and God above

“waiting to be gracious,” be persuaded now to fly to the throne of grace ere you be driven from the throne of judgment. Arise and go to thy Father, and say unto Him, “Father, I have sinned,” and by earnest supplication make God himself your safeguard, your strength, and your salvation. To this He tenderly invites you, asking every youth the solemn question—Oh, heed it well, and answer it speedily—“Wilt thou not from this time say unto me, My Father. thou art the guide of my youth?”



The Young Ruler;

OR,

ONE THING NEEDFUL.

Why haltest thou, deluded heart?
Why waverest longer in thy choice?
Is it so hard to choose the part
Offer'd by Heaven's entreating voice?
Oh, look with clearer eyes again,
Nor strive to enter in in vain.
Press on.


Let not the body dull the soul:
Its weakness, fears, and sloth despise.
Man toils, and roams from pole to pole
To gain some fleeting earthly prize;
The highest good he little cares
To win, or striving, soon despairs.
Press on.

Oh, help each other, hasten on;
Behold, the goal is nigh at hand;
Soon shall the battle-field be won,
Soon shall your King before you stand.
To calmest rest He leads you now,
And sets His crown upon your brow.
Press on.



THE YOUNG RULER.

MATT. xix. 16-22 ; MARK x. 17-22 ; LUKE xviii. 18-23.

HE gospel narrative, while it is based upon the most striking and impressive realities, may yet be viewed as a kind of representative panorama. Here every variety of human character and condition, painted from real life, is subjected to the strong light of Christianity, and made to pass in instructive review before every generation of mankind. Whether we follow Nicodemus in his midnight visit to the great Teacher, or look in upon the guest-chamber where the proud Pharisee and "the woman which was a sinner" appear in such striking contrast, or trace the career of a Judas, Paul, or Peter, we find something more than mere history ; we discover the foreshadowing of varied scenes, and the delineation of widely diverse characters that are reproduced in every age to the end of time. Thus in the incident which forms our present subject, we see exhibited upon the one hand a beautiful, and yet as it proves, defective type of moral excellence, and

upon the other the mingled affection and anxiety with which its possessor is regarded by Christ.

A youth, running and kneeling to Jesus, asks, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" In reply, our Lord points him to the commandments of the moral law, but is met by the answer, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me." Mark x. 17-22.

As the person here spoken of is said by Matthew to have been a young man, our Lord here appears peculiarly as the young man's Friend. With the exception of the family of Bethany and "John the disciple whom Jesus loved," this is the only instance in which any individual is expressly mentioned in the gospel as the subject of Christ's love. "Jesus beholding him, loved him." No doubt this circumstance may be chiefly attributed to the engaging qualities of the youthful ruler; yet may we not also infer that there was a peculiar charm in the freshness of his opening manhood, and in the noble impulses and warm affections which generally mark the young heart before it has become seared and hardened by long contact with the world? Thus now as ever, the same Lord Jesus, beholding those whose early years are adorned with the graces of virtue and morality, and especially those who aspire ardently

after eternal life, loves them, even while His voice of affectionate solicitude declares to such as are destitute of the crowning grace of piety, "One thing thou lackest."

We read of this young man that he came running, and kneeled to Christ, and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Although "he had great possessions," he was yet poor in this: he had no heavenly hope. His riches were all bounded by the world and time: they were only "treasures upon earth," corruptible and perishing. Yet in this very inquiry, he confessed both his dissatisfaction with them and his intense yearnings of soul after the true and enduring riches.

Our Lord, then as now, loved to be inquired of by sinners in reference to their eternal interests, and He answered him with that kind fidelity which the occasion required. Detecting at a glance the true situation of the youthful suppliant, He probes with a master-hand his eager yet blinded heart, and points him first of all to the moral law. Why did He do this? Do we not read that "by the deeds of the law no man living shall be justified?" Ah, His words, "Thou knowest the commandments," were meant to be like the surgeon's knife, which, by touching the diseased part, should reveal the malady; for it is also true, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." He would first convict him of guilt and ruin, that he might thus be brought through the narrow gateway of a lowly penitence to the gospel of life and peace.

But the young man at once replies with evident sincerity, "All these things have I kept from my youth up."

These words give us the clue to his character and life. Let us now endeavour to analyse them, noticing both what was commendable and what was defective therein to the view of Christ.

There was *much that was worthy of commendation*; and in this respect the young ruler was the type of a large class who are to be found in every Christian community.

He was no doubt the child of pious parents, by whom he had been religiously educated, receiving every advantage which the Jewish schools and synagogues afforded. Upright and conscientious, he made God's law the rule of his conduct, and scrupulously observed His Sabbaths and ordinances. With the most painstaking diligence he endeavoured to avoid the appearance of evil, and to live up to all the requirements of an exalted morality. What were his strugglings with temptation, his wrestlings with the world and the flesh, in his earlier years, we know not. The result only is before us—a character so adorned with lovely traits and virtues as to have won the esteem and confidence of the community, and promoted him, while a comparative youth, to the chief office in the synagogue. Nor was this all; the beauty of his earnest morality attracted the regard even of the Lord Jesus himself, who "beholding him, loved him."

Are there not multitudes now living who answer to this portraiture? Yes; and they are the hope of the Church and the world. We meet them in almost every Christian household, in the Sabbath-school and sanctuary—the young, gifted, and amiable, whose lives are conspicuous for their virtues, and beautiful for their unswerving fidelity to every trust reposed in them. There is something indescribably attractive in the spectacle of a youth thus rising superior to the promptings of the world and sin, who nobly dares to plant his footsteps in virtue's paths, and nobly strives to win the prize of moral excellence, and in whom the generous impulses and warm affections of early life are seen to be consecrated by a dutiful obedience to law and a patient self-discipline. Such a one answers to the poet's description:—

“ His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, Behold a man ! ”

But the best feature of all in the character of the young ruler was this: he sought eternal life. His aims were not bounded by time, if his possessions were. They overleaped the grave, and aspired to a crown of glory, honour, and immortality beyond. Indeed, in the earnestness of his desire after the heavenly portion, he could not refrain from “ running ” to meet Jesus, and falling at His feet, as he cried out, “ What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? ”

Are there not many who answer, in some degree at

least, to this description, and who, if they share not in the ardour of this youthful suppliant, do still desire sincerely that they may be saved? They perhaps postpone the earnest effort, while yet not yielding up the aspiration after life. They hear an inward voice that whispers to their secret souls of things unseen and eternal, of a better portion, a brighter hope, and more exalted destiny than this poor world can give; while yet their ideas upon the subject may be as vague and ill-defined as those of the ruler who asked, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Now in this class of persons who, in comparative uprightness and sincerity, are blindly feeling after God and heaven, we may well believe that our Saviour is deeply interested. He looks upon them with tenderest compassion and love, and longs to impart to them the gift that they desire.

So, too, the Church "beholding them, loves them." She regards them as perhaps very near to the kingdom of God—as almost Christians; and the very virtues that adorn their lives inspire the ardent wish that they may be "not only almost, but altogether" the disciples of Christ. Yes, it is to these, the religiously educated, whose minds are so well informed in Bible truth, and whose consciences, by careful nurture, are become quick to discern good and evil—to these, the tender trees that have been planted in the house of the Lord, that have been watered with precious heavenly influences, and for many a year

favoured with such varied moral culture—it is to these that the Church now looks, in the hope and prayer that their budding promise of good may be made to issue in those fruits which alone are pleasing to the Lord of the vineyard. To them she looks for the fulfilment, under God, of the divine promise, “Instead of the fathers shall be the children.”

And this very interest with which Christ and His Church regard the young, prompts us to a faithful exhibition of those *defects* which may exist side by side with the most amiable virtues of the human heart, and which form, with the class we have described, the chief barriers in the way of eternal life.

It is a sad truth that even a rigid and scrupulous regard for outward duty may be converted by Satan's artifices into an obstacle to salvation. Yet so it is, that while the gross transgressor, when plied with the appalling thunders of the violated law, may be led at once to see his guilt and danger, and cry out for mercy, the outwardly upright and moral will reply to the divine requirements with the words, “All these things have I kept from my youth up.” So said the young man to Jesus; and we will not charge him with conscious falsehood in the boastful assumption. He spoke from an honest, although mistaken, judgment of his own character and life. The reply of our Lord was intended to correct this false estimate of himself, and to lay bare the plague of his heart: “One thing

thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow me."

What a severe requirement, it will be said; must we then really part with every earthly possession in order to secure the heavenly? No; although as regards our ardour of affection and the force of our attachments, Christ's words are true for all: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." But Christ read the heart of the young man before Him, and saw that its besetting sin was love of the world. In bringing him face to face with it, He would reveal to him what he had before failed to discover, the *spirituality* of the moral law, and show him that however he may have conformed to the *letter* of that law, nay, although his righteousness may have exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees, still he was guilty before God, and in all His uprightness was still lying under the sentence of condemnation. No doubt he was lacking in other respects, for "in many things we offend all;" yet Christ pointed to the chief flaw in his character, leaving it to his own conscience, thus partially enlightened, to suggest the rest. The event proved the wisdom of Christ's mode of dealing with him; for with all his apparent earnestness after eternal life, he could not endure the test. The earthly riches outweighed in his estimation the heavenly, and he went away from that interview with Jesus "sorrowful, for he had great possessions." He had come expecting to be assigned some laborious

sphere of outward duty that should flatter instead of humbling his pride of heart; he returned grieved and disappointed by the discovery that he was not the saint he had supposed himself to be, but an unworthy sinner, clinging to an idol that was destroying him, and yet which he had not the heart to surrender.

And so to every one, however exalted and shining his moral qualities may be in his own estimation, or in that of the world, if he rest upon them his hopes of life and glory, Christ distinctly says, "One thing thou lackest." Your life may answer the demands of the most exacting worldly morality, and the keenest human scrutiny may detect in it no flaw, while yet in the eye of God you are a sinner, guilty, condemned, perishing under the weight of His just wrath and curse. There is a wide difference between the human and the divine standards of judgment; and though Jesus may regard with tender interest the young and amiable who aspire after His favour, His very death for sinners shows that He cannot and will not set aside those declarations of the law which we all have broken: "He that offendeth *in one point* is guilty of all," and "Cursed is every one that continueth not *in all things* that are written in the book of the law to do them."

It is to a conviction of this truth, and so to a conviction of guilt and impending doom, that every soul must be brought that would gain the prize of eternal life. To this end the great Teacher, in the instance

before us, brings the youthful inquirer under the brow of fiery, quaking Sinai. See how its fierce lightnings play—the emblems of almighty wrath against every soul of man that doeth evil! Hark how its thunders go crashing through the false hopes and refuges of lies that men build upon their own wretched, imperfect goodness! Hear then, O soul, sounding to thine inmost depths the warning, “By the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified.” Lay bare thy heart of sin to the light that streams from the countenance of the Lawgiver, as hereafter it shall be laid bare to the eye of the Judge of all; and in that light survey, if you can endure the spectacle, your inmost thoughts and emotions, and you shall read upon them all, in the handwriting of Him who wrote the perfect law upon the tables of stone—those emblems of the hard, impenitent heart—this inscription: “Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting.” Here, at the foot of Sinai, is foreshadowed that scene which awaits us all hereafter, when infinite Justice shall arraign every heart and life of man before its dread tribunal, “and all the world shall become guilty before God.” We may come to the divine law as the youth came to Jesus, vain and self-confident, and hopeful of eternal life; but he must be blind indeed who can do otherwise than go away ‘sorrowful,’ realising the death-sentence that hangs over him, and with the voice ringing in his ears, and sounding its knell to his inmost heart, “*One thing thou lackest!*” There are heights in this law of God

which all thy vain strivings after goodness failed to touch; and here are depths in which all thy best works are lost and swallowed up. You may be virtuous and upright, an ornament to society and the world; still, "One thing thou lackest." You may not want for comforts, riches, pleasures; but out of the midst of these unsubstantial joys, and from the dregs of every cup of earthly delight still comes the voice, "One thing thou lackest." You may even cherish the strong desire after eternal life, and the purpose of securing it; but until you have complied with the gospel requisition, desire unfulfilled and hope perpetually baffled will still cry out, "*One thing thou lackest!*" Oh, beware lest this voice, now uttered in gracious warning, should, because unheeded now, be spoken hereafter in your condemnation, and for the lack of the one thing needful, thy soul be driven away in its wickedness from the life and heaven that are now held freely out to you.

What, then, is the one thing that is necessary to our procuring eternal life?

Need we say that it is piety—the exercise of faith in Christ, and of a well-grounded hope in Him? If, after the example of Christ, our thoughts have been directed to the law with its sentence of condemnation, it has been with the same end in view: that the law might, as the apostle says, be our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. We turn then from Sinai to Calvary, from the curse to the blessing, and repeat the

Saviour's words of grace to the young suppliant at his feet, "Take up the cross, and follow me." The cross that was set before the ruler was that of parting with cherished idols, and a self-sacrificing consecration of his all to the Lord Jesus. The same conditions are imposed upon every applicant for eternal life. Whatever may be the object that you value most, and that usurps the place of God in your heart, and hinders you from closing in with the gospel offer, whether it be the world or the flesh, riches, pleasures, friends, or an innate pride of morality that is unwilling to sit at Jesus' feet and accept the merits of His blood and righteousness, that is your cross, and Jesus bids you in His strength take it up and follow Him. He bids you fly to Him as your only refuge from the curse of the broken law and the frown of an angry God. If, by the truths we have now considered, He has stripped you of the rags of an imperfect righteousness, it is that He may clothe you with the mantle of a perfect righteousness, in which you may stand accepted in the Lord's great day, and in which even the eye of infinite justice shall not discern "one thing" lacking. If He points you to your cross, it is not, that, like the ruler, you may go away sorrowful, but that your sorrow may be turned into joy; for no cross is so heavy to be borne as the burden of unpardoned guilt; nor does Christ lay upon any disciple a weight so heavy and crushing as the one He bore for our salvation.

But why speak of crosses to one who aims at eter-

nal life? Do not all toils, all sacrifices dwindle into insignificance when compared with so grand a blessing? Oh, set *this* before you as the object of your highest endeavours; and with such a prize in view, close your ears and steel your hearts against every temptation to delay or falter in its pursuit; like Bunyan's pilgrim, who, when solicited by family and friends to turn back to the city of Destruction, put his fingers in his ears and ran on, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!" thus "flee from the wrath to come." Like the young ruler, let your heart in its intense eagerness, come running to Christ, and in its deep humility kneel to Him with the inquiry, "What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?" His answer to you and to all is this—Oh, ponder it well—"He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."



Paul;

OR,

CHRISTIAN MANLINESS.

“SIGH not the old heroic ages back :

The heroes were but brave and earnest MEN ;

Do thou but hero-like pursue thy track ;

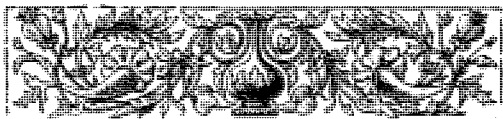
Striving, not sighing, brings them back again.

The hero's path is straight to do and say

God's words and work, in spite of toil and shame

Labours enough will meet thee on thy way :

Do thou forsake it not to seek for them.”



PAUL.

Acts viii. 1-3; ix. 1-31; xiv., xvi.-xxviii.

WE are now called to notice one in whose person were perhaps united more of the elements of real greatness than in any other mere man who has lived. Paul leaps upon the stage of action a young, ardent, impassioned devotee of the religion in which he had been educated; strong and sincere in his convictions of duty, all his fresh energies consecrated to the work of suppressing what he honestly believed to be a dangerous heresy, and his earnest nature rendering him as eager a persecutor as he afterwards became a defender of the Christian faith. It is sad to look upon such a spectacle of conscientiousness in the commission of crime. Few are more to be pitied than the zealous bigot, who truly believes that he is doing God service in his efforts to crush a rising truth and quench a dawning light; and awful, indeed, would have been the career of this ardent Pharisee, had his after-life but half fulfilled the dark promise of his early manhood.

But his wonderful powers were destined to quite

another and an opposite field of action. We know not whether the triumphant death of Stephen, with its exhibition of heroic faith, had suggested to his mind the doubt whether Jesus might not, after all, be the Christ; yet it is not improbable that, as Augustine has remarked, "The Church owes Paul to Stephen's prayer;" for, one day consenting to and aiding in that martyr's death, upon another, very soon after, it is said of him, "Behold, he prayeth;" and as of old it was asked wonderingly of the wicked king seeking innocent blood, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" so ere long both Jews and Christians are astounded to find this bitter persecutor among the disciples of Jesus. But what can have wrought so remarkable a change? Mere human power may measurably tame the savage lion, but it cannot convert it into the lamb; and so neither can it turn the heart of man from fierce enmity to love, or convert the intolerant, bloodthirsty oppressor of the saints into their devoted friend and comrade in suffering. For a task like this, nothing but the grace of God is equal. Well, therefore, has it been said that, "next to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gospel history has no testimony which equals the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. It has been felt in all ages; and many a reflective mind," (like that of Lord Lyttelton,) "hitherto unmoved, has yielded to the power of this page of the gospel." Without stopping to dwell upon the circumstances of this wonderful conversion, it is enough to



Young Men of the Bible—Page 113.

remark that, while upon his way to Damascus, still "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the Christians, he is arrested by a miraculous vision of the Lord Jesus, whose words strike conviction to his heart; and soon, with characteristic ardour, he is found preaching the doctrine that he had before so violently opposed.

It would be impossible that a man of such natural powers as Paul possessed, should fail to make his strong impress upon his age and country, whatever might have been his chosen calling; and now that these powers are sanctified by the highest motives to the noblest ends, and crowned with that *grace* which, more than anything else, exalts character, and gives efficacy and right direction to the life of a man, we may well look for the best and grandest results. Nor are we disappointed. With unwearying ardour, this new convert defends and promulgates the religion of the despised Nazarene, identifies himself with the hated doctrines of the cross, and through a long course of years, and through a succession of trials almost without a parallel, toils and suffers in the service of the Lord Jesus. His course through Judea and the vast Roman empire is like a track of shining light. Christian churches everywhere spring up in his pathway; and while upon the one hand Pharisaic bigotry quails before his vigorous assaults, so upon the other old heathen superstitions tremble at his approach, and almost ere he grapples with them, begin to fall. He performs, seemingly, the labour of a hun-

dred men; and when he gives to his life and doctrines the appropriate seal of his martyr-blood, he has, as God's chosen instrument, changed the moral aspect of the whole civilised world.

In our attempts to analyse a character made up not only of such *varied* traits, but of such apparently *opposite* ones, all harmoniously balanced and adjusted to each other, it is hard to select any particular feature in which to hold him up as our pattern. We might view him as a trophy of redeeming grace and yet as one of nature's noblemen; as a type of true moral courage, and at the same time of humility and self-distrust; as an example of lofty enthusiasm, and yet of rare prudence and discretion; as a pattern of the most consummate industry and activity, and yet of the most patient endurance and long-suffering.

Perhaps, however, we cannot do better than to include the more prominent qualities of his character under the one term, **MANLINESS**. And let it be understood at the outset, that by using this phrase in such a connexion, we would by no means so far degrade Paul as to apply it to him in its common acceptation, but would rather, if possible, exalt the idea of manliness above that which too generally prevails at this day, by exhibiting what we conceive to be its correct standard, as it is illustrated in the character and life of Paul.

It may be taken for granted that every youth aspires to be manly, according to his particular apprehension of the term, and there probably is not one

who has not in his mind's eye some ideal standard in this respect at which he aims. Yet there are few words that are used with such vagueness and variety of meaning as this one. With some it means to be magnanimous, great of heart, and fearless for the right; with others, to resent injury, to be deemed high-spirited, and to go blustering noisily through the world; with others, it is something pertaining rather to the baser instincts than to the brain or the heart, a glorying in what they call the "manly art of self-defence," or in low vice and dissipation. Thus one selects as his model a Howard or a Washington, another the duellist, and another, more depraved, the prize-fighter or the profligate, as their tastes incline. Alas, how few select a Paul, a John, or better still, Jesus himself.

And here, as the only way of getting at the truth amid this conflict of opinion, occurs the question, What really constitutes the man? Is it the life of the body, or the life of the soul—the baser part of our nature that we have in common with the brutes, or the nobler one that we have in common with the angels? Your own mind has answered the question, and has perhaps suggested the necessary truth, that mere physical strength or courage affords no measure of one's manhood. Paul was "in bodily presence weak;" will any say that he was therefore unmanly?

The truth is, the mind, the heart is the man; and the more exalted the qualities of these, the more the intellectual triumphs over the animal, and the moral

over the intellectual, and the religious over the simply moral: in other words, the more we struggle up from our fallen and corrupted, towards the original, uncorrupted type of humanity when it was the very image of God, the farther we are removed from the beasts that perish; and the nearer we are allied to the higher orders of intelligence, the more complete and noble must be our manhood. It consists therefore in no single trait, but in a union of excellences which, conjoined in symmetry, go to make up one's better nature; or rather, it is the best that there is in nature, crowned with grace. It is that which the most adorns and dignifies the merely human, enhanced and ennobled by the indwelling of the divine.

In no recorded life, save that of the Lord Jesus, do we find these varied elements of a genuine manhood more happily combined than in that of the apostle Paul.

I. The first of these that we shall notice is his *conscientiousness*.

If there is any one thing which more than others belongs to the very life and being of a man, it is conscience—that inward voice which shows that, however deserted, it is not wholly forgotten of its God—that vicegerent of Jehovah, whose presence in the soul indicates at once our intended grandeur of character and our fall. Never can he be called manly, in the true, original intention of the term, who habitually disregards it. He is rather allied to the fallen spirits,

or to those lower orders of creation, with whom mere appetite and instinct is the rule of action.

No doubt Paul was governed by a conscientious regard for duty, as well when persecuting as when defending the cause of Christ. He plainly comes under the prediction of our Lord to His disciples, "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service," for he himself declares that he did it "ignorantly;" and his acts of violence, though by no means excused, are at least seen to proceed from a blind sincerity, when he says to King Agrippa, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

And if a perverted, unenlightened conscience could so influence him to deeds from which his tender sensibilities must have strongly recoiled, how much greater its supremacy when it became illumined with heavenly light, and its voice echoed truly to his heart the voice of God. Henceforth it became a power indeed, not only in the bosom of Paul, but through him a power in the age to which he belonged; and to this day that clear, faithful, tender conscience of the apostle, embodied as it were in his life and words, is speaking to millions of other consciences, as once to that of Felix, the world over, and every candid reader of the Bible confesses its quickening power.

We recognise it in almost the first utterance which he was able to make, when he lay trembling and blinded under the dazzling vision, on his way to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

we see it in his straightway preaching Christ "in all the synagogues;" we hear it in that fearless discourse upon Mars hill, where, in the very centre and stronghold of idolatry, he proclaimed the unknown God; we read it in those words of tender consideration for the scruples of the weak, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth;" and in that laborious care to avoid "the very appearance of evil," which led him to toil with his hands "night and day," lest he be in any way chargeable for his support to those to whom he ministered; we see it in the fidelity with which, in his last imprisonment, the chained apostle gained new converts in the very household of the bloody Nero, and then sealed his faith with his blood. Indeed, next to his mighty faith and constraining love to Jesus, we may read the grand secret of his wondrous life in his own words to the Roman governor, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men."

Would that these words could be inscribed as a motto upon every young mind and heart, for they express a principle of action that lies at the basis of all desirable attainment in character and life—a principle without which there can be no security against temptation, and no real, abiding happiness either in this life or in the life to come; but animated with which, you will be able to "quit yourselves like men" in the conflict that awaits you.

And here we speak not of the natural, depraved conscience, but of that which is enlightened by the Spirit and the Word of God. To possess and obey this, is to be in a measure restored to the manhood from which we have fallen, and to be clothed anew with somewhat of the moral dignity that has so long lain trailing in the dust. It is not enough that our convictions of duty be honest; they must also be correct. Nothing is more false and fatal than the trite saying, that "it matters nothing what a man believes, if he is only sincere." In all the wide difference that you behold between the persecuting Saul, and the noble Paul earnestly deprecating his former course, you may see the distinction there is between a right and a wrong faith, though they be cherished with equal confidence.

Let the youth see to it that his conscience be rectified by a divine power. It is the very magnet of one's being, which, deranged and disorganised by sin, trembles, now in one direction and now in another, and so has ceased to be a reliable guide through the world. Only He who is its Maker can reconstruct it. Let it be placed in His hand, and thenceforth it shall point steadfastly, as Paul's did, to the bright polar star of duty, to God and to heaven.

And then shall be fulfilled the injunction of David to Solomon, "Be strong, and show thyself *a man*." A rigid conscientiousness is an essential element of true moral courage. It is the strong garrison within,

which renders one fearless of the foe without. The calm consciousness of being right and doing right, and of having the approval of God, whatever man may say, is of itself a tower of impregnable strength. It plants one's feet upon a rock, and braces him there for every onset, nerves the arm for all dutiful toil, girds the heart for all patient endurance, speaks out boldly in the voice, whether in confession of the right or in protest against wrong, and breathes in every action. It gives the truest independence, firmness, and decision ; while its absence is the most prevalent source of slavish vacillation and ignoble fear. It is astonishing what power even an unenlightened conscience will give to a man when its dictates are faithfully observed ; as, for instance, in the case of Pompey, who upon being remonstrated with against making a certain dangerous journey, replied, "It is necessary that I should go ; it is not necessary that I should live." How bravely this principle spoke in the reply of the Paul-like John Knox when he was summoned to the court of Queen Mary, and told that "silence or the gallows" was the alternative. "My lords," said the intrepid man, "you are mistaken if you think you can intimidate me to do by threats what conscience and God tell me I shall never do ; for be it known unto you that it is a matter of no importance unto me, when I have finished my work, whether my bones shall bleach in the winds of heaven or rot in the bosom of the earth." Who does not recognise in such words as these the ring of a true

manhood, as well as of a lofty Christian faith and zeal? Well was it said of this brave man by a nobleman at his grave, "Here lies one who never feared the face of man."

What a surpassing grandeur, then, there is in the conscientious life. How it clothes one with a moral dignity such as no art can counterfeit, and no outward circumstances degrade or tarnish. It gives strength and symmetry to character, consistency to deeds, an admirable unity to the whole being, and makes one "every inch a man." And as it is the noblest, so too it is the happiest and most prosperous life. Upon this subject the testimony of the distinguished Lord Erskine is weighty and to the point. "It was," said he, "the first command and counsel of my youth always to do what my conscience told me to be my duty, and leave the consequences to God. I have hitherto followed it, and have no reason to complain that any obedience to it has been even a temporal sacrifice. I have found it, on the contrary, the road to prosperity and wealth, and I shall point it out as such to my children." Thus, in the moral government of God, do duty and interest always coincide; and he is not only unmanly who trifles with conscience, but is also a trifler with his present peace and comfort, and with his eternal welfare.

II. The second trait of manliness illustrated in the character of Paul is *sympathy*.

And here again we are fully aware that we come in

conflict with the popular idea upon this subject ; for who has not heard it said that "it is unmanly to weep" or to exhibit emotion, whether in view of our own or others' sorrows? Probably the favourite conception of manhood is embodied in that description of one of Walter Scott's heroes :—

"He turn'd away, his heart throbb'd high,
The tear was bursting from his eye.

.
With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd."

There are many who attribute the finer emotions and sensibilities of the heart to weakness and the want of self-control ; but these surely do not reflect that it is far better to be controlled by a generous sentiment, than to crush it ; that it is more of a mark of weakness to repress the tear or feeling of sympathy, lest some one laugh at us, than to act out its lofty impulses ; and that he is really the stronger, the greater the more of a man, in every worthy sense of the term, who yields to and fulfils the better dictates of humanity, than the one who hardens his heart out of a mean subservience to the maxims and practices of others. The truth is, our sympathies are among the most hallowed and precious relics of the uncorrupted manhood we have lost, for they are among the most striking of the lineaments of the divine image in which we were created ; and it follows necessarily that he who the most cultivates and improves them in

a right direction, approaches the most nearly to the true, intended idea of manliness.

The life of the apostle Paul, like that of Howard, signally refutes the common fallacy, that the most tender sensibility to human woe is inconsistent with the greatest strength and energy of character. Did we know him only as a persecutor, we might indeed think otherwise ; but in view of his whole career, we can only account for the severity of his earlier manhood upon the principle that his *conscience* was, as it should have been, even stronger than his natural feelings of compassion. That, therefore, seems a true representation of him which is contained in a celebrated ancient painting in the Royal Gallery at Madrid, in which Saul is said to be depicted as walking "with melancholy calmness by the side of the martyr Stephen to the place of execution," the sad expression of his countenance "contrasting strangely with the rage of the Jewish doctors and the ferocity of the crowd who flock to the scene of bloodshed."*

Then, however, it was sympathy sternly expressed, and we must look to his after-life for its full, unhampered manifestations, and of these there was no lack. For whether we see him, as at Ephesus, "warning every one night and day with tears," or as when writing to the Philippians, "weeping" over the "enemics of the cross of Christ;" whether we look upon that parting scene at Miletus, where pastor and flock mingle their tears and sobs of mutual affection

* Conybeare and Howson's St Paul.

and regret, or read his friendly tributes to Titus, whose temporary absence so disquiets his loving spirit, and to Timothy, over whose interests he is so watchful, or contemplate his self-sacrificing generosity, first in the freeness of his arduous services, and then in his laborious efforts in behalf of needy Christians in Judea, we find that his was the very soul of sympathy for the distressed, grief for the unconverted, and tender love for all men, not excepting even his worst enemies.

In these characteristics, then, behold the man ; and rising superior to the common, selfish ideas upon the subject, throw open your heart to the full exercise and development of your higher sensibilities ; and in the practice of the pure charities of life, with an ear ever open to the tale of distress, a hand ever ready for those who need its help, and a heart to "weep with those that weep," both vindicate your manhood and become a blessing to yourself and all around you.

III. A third important attribute of true manliness is *patience*.

Great and noble as the apostle appears in his active exploits, he reaches the height of his greatness when calmly enduring affliction and privation for the good of others. It is often easier to *do* than to *suffer*, to *labour* than to *wait*. To bear up calmly under disappointments and delays in some good work that has enlisted all our enthusiasm, to endure with serene composure the opposition of the wicked and the

envious, to maintain the chafed spirit in silent self-mastery under neglect and scorn, and with steadfast, cheerful patience bide the hour of our vindication—all this calls for the very loftiest qualities of our nature, and requires, more than almost anything else, a brave and vigorous manhood, to say nothing of the aid of a *divine* power.

It is difficult to understand how a mind so ardent and impulsive as that of Paul could yet possess itself in such untiring patience. From the very beginning of his career as a Christian, he seemed to be a mark for the enemies of the cross, and whithersoever he went, insult and persecution were his almost inseparable companions. Hear his touching rehearsal of his sufferings: "In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned." See him going forth upon one of his journeys with the full conviction that "in every city" "bonds and afflictions" awaited him; and yet hear him add with a heroism that is not born of earth, "But none of these things move me." No bitter word or sigh of complaint escapes his lips; and as he sings in the prison at Philippi, so, afterwards, in all his tribulations he rejoices. Under the severest provocations to resentment he maintains a calm forbearance, replying to all his accusers with the same courteous dignity; and in short, furnishes himself one of the most complete illustrations of that "charity" which he so glowingly describes, that "suffereth long

and is kind," "is not easily provoked," "beareth all things, and endureth all things."

What a type of manliness, then, have we here ; nay more, of godliness. If such traits as these are not the native adornments of our poor humanity, they are nevertheless the jewels of our lost crown of universal love, which are restored through grace to the head that is bowed to receive them. And here we are approaching the truth, that our highest manhood is only to be found in that which allies us the nearest to our Maker, and that it consists not so much in natural gifts and endowments as in the pure graces of piety.

We all have occasion enough, in this respect, to "quit ourselves like men." And here our first work is to rise above those low, false, brutal conceptions upon this subject which so generally prevail. The impatient, passionate, resentful man is honoured by the multitudes ; and the meek, forgiving, and forbearing, they brand as cowardly and mean-spirited. But who does not see that it is nobler to conquer self and passion, than to crush an outward foe—that it is the character of the savage beast to fret and retaliate when injured, but of a reasoning, high-minded man to possess the soul in patience ? This is one of those particulars in which none are so manly as he who dares to be called by the unthinking crowd unmanly ; and none so brave as he who submits to be called by the weak a coward.

IV. Another feature of Paul's manliness was his *humility*.

The higher we ascend in the scale of being, the more conspicuously do we find this trait of character exhibited. The fallen Lucifer and fallen man are puffed with pride, and even mouth out unblushing blasphemy against their Maker; but the angels bow with veiled faces before the throne, and the divine Son, their Lord, from His loftiest height stoops to the lowest humiliation of all, and takes on Him the form of a servant. It follows from this, whatever may be the popular idea to the contrary, that the humblest man is ever the noblest, for he the most resembles the higher order of intelligences, while the proud and boastful are akin to the most degraded. He therefore is very far from being manly who plays the braggart. He who looks down superciliously and domineeringly upon his fellow-men, proves himself thereby to be, not their superior, but their inferior; and whatever may be the claims that any one may set up to greatness, his very claiming of it best proves his littleness. When has there been a truly great man who was not at the same time humble, or a weak man who was not vain?

Few men have possessed more, either of gifts or attainments, that were calculated to flatter pride, than Paul; yet few have been so proof against it. Preaching once at Lystra, and performing a miracle of healing, the people thought him to be a god, and brought

oxen and garlands with which to sacrifice to him; but his only expression was that of pain, as he rent his clothes, and made even their intended homage a text from which to preach boldly against idolatry. Learned, eloquent, and successful beyond measure, he yet exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross;" and calls himself "the least of all saints," "the least of the apostles," "not meet to be called an apostle;" and after reminding the Corinthian Christians how abundantly he had laboured, he hastens to add, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Ah, ye who would be *men*, seek not the robes of state or the trappings of earthly power, but put on this beautiful garment of humility, than which nothing can more ennoble you in the eyes of God and all true men.

V. A last and crowning feature of real manliness is *likeness to God*.

As it was in this that the chief glory of our first parents consisted, so manifestly it is only in proportion as this is restored to us, that we can approach to the intended grandeur and perfection of the human character. To this Paul aspired with a constancy of purpose which breathes through all his writings; the sum of his hopes and desires being this: to be like Christ in his life, like Christ in death, like Christ in the resurrection, and then "for ever with the Lord." We have beheld Paul as our pattern, but he himself

bids us follow him only as he "followed Christ." We turn away then from the servant to the Master, from the man to the God, and look up to the very perfection of the divine character, as the lofty height at which it is our privilege to aim in the development and completion of our manhood. What a worthy and sublime ambition to animate the mind of a poor weak creature ! How it should swallow up all lesser aims, and quench all baser motives, and fire the soul with a seraphic ardour, as it mounts up on wings of faith and love towards the infinite and uncreated One.

This, even this, is your privilege. Oh, improve it well. Seek Paul's union to God in Christ by faith ; throw your heart wide open to the blessed Spirit, who, it may be, now strives with you for your good, and who waits to renew you after the image of Him that created you ; aim to be like God in mind, in heart, in character, in life, and He shall help your struggling endeavours, and you shall soon recognise one feature after another of His image in your soul ; you shall walk forth arrayed in "the beauty of holiness," which is the very crown of manliness, for "the Christian is the highest style of man ;" the sceptre that sin has stolen from you shall be given back, and as you grasp it, all shall confess its marvellous sway. Then with firm step, uplifted eye, and unfaltering heart, you shall tread your path of life in kingly dignity, like that of Paul ; and with him and all saints, "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."



Jesus Christ,

A PATTERN FOR YOUNG MEN.


“Ye hearts with youthful vigour warm,
In smiling crowds draw near,
And turn from every mortal charm,
A Saviour’s voice to hear.

“He, Lord of all the worlds on high,
Stoops to converse with you;
And lays His radiant glories by,
Your friendship to pursue.

‘What object, Lord, my soul should move
If once compared with Thee!
What beauty should command my love
Like what in Christ I see!’”



JESUS CHRIST.

 HE painter who aspires to the highest success in his art will not only study the works of the great masters, but will also apply himself to that study of nature, in her original, inimitable beauty or form and grandeur of scenery, which has inspired them with their finest ideas and contributed to their best results. So he who aims at high moral excellence and power, will not be satisfied to contemplate even the best of imperfect men as his models, but will go directly to Him who is the original source and patterns of all their virtues. We have been holding converse with some of the great masters in the moral world ; but our series of examples will not be complete until we have studied the life and character of JESUS CHRIST. Indeed, it may be said that we have already looked upon these, as they were manifested in the persons of Joseph, David, Daniel, and Paul, whose highest excellences were not so much their own as Christ's shining through them and reflected by them. Yet it is better to walk in the beams of the sun than in those of the brightest planets—

better to turn from the clouded radiance that in the best of mere men struggles out through human weakness and frailty, to Him by whose light alone they shine ; for, while following them we might still walk in comparative darkness, the assurance is ours that he who followeth this " Light of the world " " shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

A sacred reverence well becomes us as we approach the study of this divine yet human model. Let it be with deep humility that we now sit together at Jesus' feet, and hear His words and note His spotless life, and try to imbibe as much as we may of His spirit and His character ; for it is only the lowly soul that is permitted to learn of Him, and that mind must be deeply in earnest that would gain any real insight into the mind and heart of Jesus. Well may we join in the prayer, " O thou blessed 'Light of life,' shine into our hearts, and reveal to us Thine excellences, and so help our poor endeavours, by thy Holy Spirit, that even while we now look upon Thee, our souls may be transformed into Thy likeness; and Thine shall be all the glory."

I. We remark first, that Jesus Christ is eminently adapted to furnish *a pattern for the young man*.

In our care to render due homage to the divine nature of the Saviour, there is danger lest we fail rightly to apprehend His human nature. The thought that *God* was manifest in His flesh, inspires us with reverence like that which we feel for the Father in

heaven ; and conscious guilt and unworthiness cause us to stand afar off from this majestic Being, as if He were simply to be adored. Far be it from us to lessen in any way this conviction of the divine glory of Him in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;" yet let us not lose sight of the fact that He also possessed a nature and lived a life as completely human, with the one exception of sin, as that of any descendant of Adam.

He was thoroughly a child in His mother's arms, thoroughly a boy and youth in the parental home, and thoroughly a man. The tears that He wept, the hunger that He felt, the toils of His hands, the slumber that refreshed Him, the joys and griefs that moved Him, the friendships He cherished, the blood He sweat, the life He yielded up,—all were those of a man ; so that He was not simply Deity humanised, nor, upon the other hand, humanity deified ; but while He was no less God for being man, He was at the same time no less man for being God.

And He was once *a young man*, standing where every youth now stands, upon the threshold of active life, His habits taking their form and colour, and His character being moulded and disciplined for the future. Ah, then He knows the heart of the young man, and can intelligently sympathise with all its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, for He has felt them. None know so well as Jesus what it is to stem the current of strong temptation, to maintain right principles in the face of difficulty, to dash from the lips

the brimming cup of seductive pleasure, to tremble under the accumulating responsibilities of a dawning manhood; and His great brother-heart is interested in the struggle going on in every young man's breast, and His strong brother-arm is stretched out to help him to the victory.

He is then qualified by an ample experience to become not only our counsellor and sympathiser, but also our pattern. His recorded life is pre-eminently the young man's guide-book through this world; and the light of His example, shining on the darkness of our path, is the true "Light of life." It is the standard of human excellence, written not in splendid precepts alone, as cold as the stone that contained the tables of the moral law, but transcribed into warm life and speaking deeds, its majesty in no way lowered, but rather attempered to our gaze by the humanity through which it appeals to us.

Nor is this all. The life of Jesus had to do with the ordinary, every-day current of human affairs; and whether we view it in its social, civil, or religious aspect, we find that it deals practically with all great duties. It is then just what we need—just what, if we had it not, every true man would be sighing after—a faultless life in human flesh and blood, a career in which manhood has attained, through the ordinary courses of discipline, its full, intended development and manifestation. There is no other pattern that will not, upon close scrutiny, be found defective. Great virtues are sometimes attended with great

vices; and he who copies after a faulty picture is likely to imitate the evil as well as the good. Here is the model upon which the youth may safely form his whole character. The life of Jesus is the mould from which our life should receive its shape; the footsteps of Jesus, which have left their print behind them, distinct and ineffaceable, are our most reliable waymarks through the wilderness which He has traversed before us; and the words and spirit of Jesus, dwelling in our hearts and producing in us the same fruits wherewith they clothed His life, furnish the best motives and aids to a blessed career through this world, and to the brightest destiny hereafter.

II. But secondly, *In what respects is Jesus Christ our pattern?*

It would be interesting to trace the marvellous outgoings of His *divine* nature in His contact with the world, to see God performing by His hand and voice His wonders of omnipotence, bidding disease depart, and at a word breaking the spell of death; but it is not under this aspect that we are now to view Him. In His divinity He is alone and unapproachable; in His tender, self-sacrificing, and consecrated humanity, our nature speaks from its loftiest height of attainment. Oh, for ears to hear and hearts to feel its impressive utterances!

1. The first, because fundamental feature of this perfect character that arrests attention, is, an entire *consecration to God*.

The key-note to His whole life is embodied in that saying of His early boyhood, when His astonished parents found Him reasoning with the rabbis in the temple: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Devotion to God—of mind and heart to God's will, of body and strength to God's work, of life and being to God's glory—this was the sum of His career, the ruling principle that gave oneness to all His purposes and consistency to all His actions. And this His consecration was no formal one, made up of words and professions—not that of the selected sacrifice, having only an outward, arbitrary relation to God, nor one merely partial, pertaining to occasional acts of service and of worship; but a conscious, entire, earnest self-surrender to the Father in heaven, a laying of the whole being, body, spirit, life, all, upon the altar, to do or to suffer, to be much or to be nothing, to be used or to be set aside, as best pleased the sovereign will. It was His meat and His drink to fulfil the will of the Father. "I came not," said He, "to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Now as with Jesus, so with us: the completest human life is that of consecration to God. It were better not to live than to live to no holy purpose—better to have the form of an irresponsible brute, than to wear the image of a man, which was originally the image of God, with all the powers and solemn accountabilities of manhood, and yet hold them with no reference to our Maker.

We are apt to think that we have a full right to ourselves, that we are at liberty to do what we please with both body and soul. It is not so. Our volitions are indeed free, and therein consists the essence of our responsibility; yet we really belong more to our Creator than to ourselves, and His are all our powers. And when we speak of consecration to Him, we simply mean the restoring of these powers to the direction in which they were originally intended to move. The stars in the heavens are only secure from ruin so long as they keep each one in the orbit where God placed it, reflecting back the light that it receives. Man is like a fallen star. His soul has strayed away from its true centre, God, and is plunging fast into the darkness. Nothing can save it from becoming a total wreck but a restoration to its true and intended course, which is the path of holy consecration to its Maker, revolving about His throne, and reflecting with clear light His glory.

We have held up the example of Jesus in this respect, yet we cannot forget that He was the Redeemer, not the redeemed—that His holy soul was not “bought with a price,” for it needed none, nor was His mind animated with motives drawn from deserved yet averted woe. Knowing as none else could know the Father’s love, He yet tasted not of His forgiveness. How much greater then *our* obligations; for with redemption held out to us, with a Saviour on the cross, and heaven opened anew to sinners who had forfeited it oh, what a double strength of motive claims our

double consecration to the Creator and Redeemer ! And thus, if the life of Jesus so powerfully commends to us this principle, how much more does His death, as it says to the souls that accept its benefits, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's."

Surrender your hearts, then, in solemn dedication to your Saviour God, and write upon all your faculties this consecrating tribute, "Holiness to the Lord." Not until you do this, will you truly begin to live ; for however earnest be your aims and efforts, you will, without this to exalt them, be all the time trifling in a lower sphere, when you might instead be moving in almost a seraph's orbit. Only feel that you are living for God, and you have at once the best safeguard against temptation, the most infallible guide to duty, the most essential element of a true and enduring happiness. Only live for God, and you are in a field for the unlimited expansion and development of your best enèrgies ; you breathe a purer air, you are braced with an unearthly strength, you eat of angels' food, and you begin heaven before passing the gates of death.

Do you shrink from the toils of such a life ? Yet they are pleasurable ones. Do you dread its trials ? Even these are sweetened by the grace that comes with them for their endurance. But with or without this principle, toils and trials are both before you. The sun of life's bright morning gilds even yonder

clouds with beauty; but though now "no bigger than a man's hand," they may soon and suddenly lower upon you, charged with terrific tempests of affliction. How can you so well endure their burden, so well bear up under care and anxiety, so well brave the shock of disappointment, reproach, poverty, death, as by imbibing the spirit of Him who, in His unflinching consecration to the wise and loving Father in heaven, said of the bitterest cup ever placed to mortal lips, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

2. One of the most marked features of this consecration, as exemplified in the life of Jesus, was His *self-denial*.

We know that this phrase falls harshly upon the unregenerate ear, and that it is one of those expressions of the gospel which awaken at once the prejudice of the youthful mind, unless it has imbibed something of the mind of Jesus. But let us look at it for a moment.

See the devotee of pleasure glorying in his fancied liberty, as he yields the reins to appetite and passion. Poor *self-denying* youth! if the cross that religion imposed were half as heavy as the one he carries, we might well shrink from it. For the sake of a few fleeting, soul-destroying pleasures, he is foregoing—what? The gift of pardon and the love of the Creator; denying himself the purest comforts of life, a hope in death, and an eternal weight of glory! His burden of unexpiated guilt is heavier far than

any that the Christian bears; and the sacrifices to which he submits himself as far outmeasure those of the follower of Christ, as the ages of eternity exceed the years of time. Upon the other hand, see the disciple of Jesus surrendering himself to His true and eternal blessedness, foregoing a few temporary gratifications, denying his perishable self those things that would wreck his imperishable spirit—denying himself the doom and woe of the unpardoned rebel. Now, which of the two gives up the most? And thus it is that, strange as it may appear, the self-denial of the gospel is in the end the truest self-indulgence; and he who fancies that in sinning he is gratifying self, is only accumulating food for the bitter upbraiding hereafter, “Thou hast destroyed thyself!”

Never was this trait more beautifully exhibited than in Him of whom it is written, “Even Christ pleased not himself;” and perhaps it was illustrated not less in what He forebore to do, than in what He did. For instance, there is something truly sublime and indicative of the completest self-mastery in the silence of Jesus until He was thirty years of age—the holding in reserve, during so many long years, energies that were all ablaze with consuming ardour for God’s dishonoured cause, calmly awaiting His appointed time for action. And when His real mission commenced, it was, from the beginning to the bitter end, one continuous sacrifice for God’s glory and the good of men. With the natural love of ease which all possess, and with full power to gratify it,

He yet had not "where to lay His head." Hungering, and able to turn the very stones into bread, and to feed five thousand by miracle, He yet preferred fasting to even a seeming distrust of Providence. His weary limbs craving their rest, He yet went unrefreshed, that He might pass the night in solitary prayer upon the mountain. Neither His tears of sorrow nor His smiles of joy, His labours, miracles, or agonies, were for Himself, but all for others.

Ah, how mean appears the votary of pleasure or ambition by the side of such a pattern ! Here surely is the very height of moral power ; here the soul shines out as never before nor since, in its truest dignity of character, as superior to the body, superior to suffering or shame, superior, as it ought to be, to life itself.

And need we say that this is the very principle that the young man needs, if he would make His life a triumph and not a defeat, a blessing and not a curse ? The one victory that underlies all others is the conquest of self, the placing of a strong curb upon lust and appetite, the keeping of body, mind, and heart in their true subjection to the right. Without this, one will be the weak slave of every habit, an irresolute, half-formed man ; his best purposes failing him in the hour of trial, and his most honest efforts doomed to disappointment and defeat. A miserable spirit of self-indulgence, yielding ever to the love of ease, to sensual appetite, or to dictates of passion, is what makes the sluggard, the drunkard, the murderer, and

fills our almshouses and our prisons. Its opposite, self-denial, makes the man of power, the industrious and the active, the noble and the great. Best of all, as a religious principle, it contributes to the highest moral strength and courage, and furnishes the heroic stuff that martyrs are made of. It seems a low and narrow gateway, but it stands at the vestibule of all that is truly good and desirable in life, and admits to the paths where angels walk.

3. Closely connected with this spirit of self-sacrifice was that of *beneficence*, in Him who, more than any other, "went about doing good." To rehearse His deeds of kindness would be to repeat His daily history; for what is the whole record of His life but the tracing of the one continuous stream of His compassion, that flowed through deserts of human wretchedness and want, making them to "blossom as the rose?" As regardless of Himself as most men are of others, He yet felt more tenderly for others than most do for themselves. He was peculiarly the Friend of the needy and the sorrowing; and who was there that ever appealed in vain to His sympathy?

Behold here another feature of the consecrated life. Devoted first and chiefly to God, its object is also humanity at large; for the path of serving our Maker, while ending, as it begins, at the foot of the throne, winds through and around the walks of human life, leading now to the hovel of the destitute with gifts of substantial relief, now to the house of mourning with sympathy and succour for the bereaved, now to the

abode of iniquity with kind effort at reclamation, now to the treasury of the Lord with means to extend His kingdom.

Who does not inwardly confess the beauty and the blessedness of the life of love, the real glory that there is in even a single act of true-hearted beneficence? The great bane of the world, and the essence of its pride and crime, is selfishness; but so strongly is it rooted in our nature, and so artful are the illusions that belong to it, that it is hard indeed for any to see it in its true light, or to realise its awful tendency. Oh, how stealthily it preys upon the soul, like a concealed worm, devouring everything that is beautiful in human character; or rather, how, as by some subtle, unseen process, it petrifies the heart of a man, until he carries a stone in his bosom instead of a heart, and his whole nature, hard, flinty, unfeeling, becomes as indifferent to the tears and woes of humanity as is the cold rock to the rains that fall on its surface. Such a man must despise himself almost as much as he is despised by others, and is himself a greater sufferer than any of those whom he refuses to commiserate.

In none does this miserable trait appear worse than in the young, and in none does a generous spirit shine with so pure a lustre. Oh, avoid the one as you would a plague, and foster the other as a means of godlike blessedness. The interests of humanity and religion, the cause of the needy and the perishing, call loudly, earnestly upon the conse-

crated benevolence of this generation. You who are favoured with an opening manhood in this era of the Church's dawning glory, possess such opportunities for usefulness as never were known before. Oh how a Paul, a Peter, a John would have revelled in these boundless fields that invite your efforts. Go forth then, and "sow beside all waters" and in all furrows, until your life is made blessed by the benedictions of many grateful hearts, and your crown of glory sparkles with many jewels that your patient hand has plucked from the mire of earth, and which, by the grace of God, shall shine as stars for ever and ever. Try thus to fathom the divine philosophy of that saying which the world is so slow to accept, but which has never yet been falsified in the experience of any: "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and know that—

"The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruit divine in heaven's immortal bowers."

4. There are other traits of this perfect life upon which we should love to dwell, but we hasten to the consideration of the one which renders the Lord Jesus peculiarly a fitting pattern for the young—His *early piety*. Eager to be about His Father's business when only twelve years old, that self-consecration to God which so marked His maturer years equally characterised His boyhood and His youth.

We scarcely know in what terms of tender earnest-

ness to commend His example in this respect ; for while this is by far the most vitally important subject that has yet engaged our attention, and one in regard to which we cannot be earnest enough, it is perhaps at the same time the one which many will be disposed to heed the least. As we enter upon it, the awful realities of eternity, with the retributions of the judgment-day and the scenes that follow, in which we shall each take part, come thronging upon the mind, and heavily oppress the spirit. By the light of the invisible world we behold in every youth an heir of immortality, and anticipate the period when his soul shall be pursuing its endless career of glory and bliss unutterable, or of shame and woe ; and well may every other consideration be forgotten in this one, which includes all, the absolute, indispensable need of salvation by the blood of Christ.

How can we adequately describe it ? To say that you need it more than the starving need food, or the sick need health, or the dying, life, does not half express the urgency of this great want. Oh, it is not necessary that you be rich, or learned, or honoured ; but it is necessary that you be saved. It matters but little whether the coming years shall bring you prosperity or adversity ; but everything depends upon what the coming ages of eternity shall bring to you.

Oh the soul ! more precious than all worlds—the lost, ruined, yet immortal soul, that lies under the frown of its Creator, and yet must live, though it be

amid the pangs of the "second death"—"what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And yet can it be possible that you are trifling with it, and that these gilded mockeries of so-called pleasure are successfully tempting you to wreck its everlasting interests and imbitter its immortality? What fatal delusion possesses you? What dreadful spell is locking your spirit in soft slumbers, that with death at the door—with heaven bent earnestly upon your salvation, and hell compassing your ruin—with the Saviour knocking at your heart, a patient suppliant, whose importunity betokens your peril, you can still remain unaffected? Ah, it is the spell of the tempter: yield to it a little longer, and you perish. Arouse thyself; shake off this stupor ere it become the sleep of that death whose only waking is to the resurrection of the lost.

But perhaps some assent to all that we say, and reply, Yes, I must bestir myself, and I will by and by. Ah, this is just what yonder gray-haired sinner has been repeating to himself for nearly threescore years, "By and by;" and to-day he is farther than ever from the kingdom of God. To-day he sighs over vanished youth, and bitterly laments that he did not then yield himself to Jesus. It was the turning-point where many a one, now lost, has sealed his wretched destiny.

But why put it off? Think you that repentance will be any easier when the burden of your sin has

grown to heavier proportions—when the current on which you now float has become stronger and swifter as it nears the final plunge? Think you that Christ will the more readily receive you when you have wearied His long-suffering patience with yet added rejections of His love; or the Spirit be more ready to renew you when you have again resisted His strivings?

Ah, while to all “now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation,” to none is it so peculiarly the favoured season as to the young. Most impressively is this truth illustrated by some statistics gathered with care by an eminent American divine, in which he was at the pains to ascertain the different periods of life at which a thousand persons became converted to God. “Of these, five hundred and forty-eight, or more than one-half, were converted when under twenty years of age; between twenty and thirty, there were three hundred and thirty seven; between thirty and forty, eighty-six; between forty and fifty, fifteen; between fifty and sixty, three; and between sixty and seventy, *one*: only one out of a thousand!” What an awful demonstration of the folly and danger of delay; and how rapidly is the probability of one’s becoming a Christian seen to diminish as the years roll on. Do not facts like these give point and emphasis to the gospel’s tender call upon the young, and clothe with a weighty significance the earnest appeal, “They that seek me **EARLY** shall find me?”

But what youth has the promise of reaching the thirty, forty, fifty years of life? One may say to the entreating Spirit, "Go thy way for this time;" but can he say it to Death; can he say it to the Judge of all when he suddenly appears before Him? Ah, no! Then it will be His prerogative to say, "Depart!"

Fly now to Jesus, nor longer put from you His bleeding love. He who is your pattern offers to become your Saviour; and while in His holy humanity He has marked out your only safe course through life, He is able in the power of His divinity to uphold you in it, for He has both sealed His example and rendered it effective to all who will believe on Him, by offering up Himself as your sacrifice.

And here, at the cross of the Redeemer, which we have been steadily approaching through this whole series of life-studies, and under whose shadow we have passed and repassed in the goodly company of ancient saints, and where now we may well rest, we close, well satisfied to cease addressing you, if your ears and your heart can but be left open to the voice of the bleeding Saviour as it pleads with you for the love of your heart, the faith of your mind, the service of your life, beseeching your acceptance of His gift of pardon and eternal glory.

We have seen in the history of Joseph the importance of the season of youth in its position and its momentous bearings; in that of David, the weighty responsibilities, social, civil, and religious, of the young man; in that of Absalom, the dangerous

temptations that assail him ; and in that of Daniel, his best safeguards and aids to duty. In Paul we have beheld a type of lofty manliness, crowned with earnest godliness ; and now, in the blessed Jesus, we see both the perfect pattern of early consecration to the Father, and the Saviour and Redeemer of the young.

With JESUS as our theme, we have reached a point beyond which none can go. We leave you with Him, His dear name the last to linger on your ears. Oh that His Spirit may write it indelibly upon your heart—that it may be your joy and strength in life, your hope in death, your song and your glory throughout eternity : for “ there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved,” but the name of JESUS.



Samuel:

"ASKED OF GOD."

"PRAYER is the soul's sincere desire;
Utter'd or unexpress'd;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
Returning from his ways,
While angels in their songs rejoice,
And cry, 'Behold he prays!'

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer."



SAMUEL.*

THE Word of God is a book of universal direction; inasmuch as it suggests suitable counsel to men of all ranks, and in all the various situations of life. If we possess sincerity of heart toward God, and an unfeigned desire to please Him, it will not be difficult to discover, from the different examples as well as precepts of holiness, what He would have us to do, in that particular place which He has assigned us. But if we are destitute of such a disposition, it is not probable that we shall receive any real advantage from the reading of the Scriptures. While, therefore, we are engaged in this employment, let us not forget to lift up our prayer, that we may learn, from the conduct of ancient saints, what is incumbent upon ourselves, and, even by this dis-

* It is proper to mention that the following chapters are not by the same author as those preceding.

tant converse with them, may contract a measure of their various excellences.

A character is now to be exhibited, which may at the same time humble us for our sad deficiencies, and excite us to greater fervour and activity in the service of God. SAMUEL will appear in an amiable light, on whatever part of his life we fix our attention: for we shall find him upright, meek, and devout from his very childhood, and discharging, even to old age, with diligence and fidelity the important offices which he sustained. Perhaps we may not be called to so exalted a rank, to so conspicuous a station, or to such extensive usefulness, as he was; but if we be influenced by the same spirit, like him we shall be a public blessing in our place and generation.

He was descended, by his father Elkanah, from the tribe of Levi, which was set apart for the work of the sanctuary. There were some circumstances attending his birth which raised the expectation of his being an extraordinary person. He was a child of prayer, granted in answer to the fervent supplications of his pious mother, Hannah, and named SAMUEL, which is interpreted, "ASKED OF GOD," in remembrance of the Divine condescension to her requests. He was, also, dedicated as a Nazarite to the Lord, from his infancy, according to his mother's vow: for as soon as he was weaned, it is supposed about three years old, he was presented to the Lord in His tabernacle at Shiloh,

with much religious solemnity, and there left to be employed in His service, under the care and direction of Eli.

What could be his peculiar work, at so tender an age, we are not told. He was instructed in good principles, and taught to call upon the Lord. In some way or other he assisted in the offices of public worship, according to his abilities, constantly attended upon the aged priests, and observed their commands. This ready obedience, in however small concerns it was made use of, being performed from a regard to God, and a desire to please Him, was graciously accepted even from a child ; and, in consequence thereof, the Divine blessing rested upon him in a very remarkable manner. His delight in the ordinances of God was manifest to all ; his strength of body and vigour of mind probably surpassed his years ; he enjoyed the friendship of his God, and his very amiable temper conciliated the esteem of men. With a superior understanding, and much ardour of devotion, he was not forward or assuming, but meek and teachable, diligent in his appointed work, respectful and submissive in his deportment to his tutor, whom, for his infirmities and remissness in duty, he might have been tempted to despise. He was surrounded by bad examples, and from his situation necessarily connected with the sons of Eli, through whose profaneness, "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." Yet, untainted by the general contagion, he ap-

peared eminently holy; and a very striking contrast is pointed out between him and those wicked ministers. While they were advancing from one degree of impiety to another, he "grew on" in knowledge, piety, and zeal, "and the Lord was with him."

At an early period, he received unequivocal marks of the approbation of Heaven. He was favoured with an express revelation, and not only preferred to the high priest, but even commissioned from God to carry a most solemn reproof to him. While the young man was ready to attend to the call of Eli, by night as by day, the Lord condescended to address him by an audible voice, and to inform him of those tremendous judgments which were soon to be executed on the family of that very person to whom he ministered. Such a communication must have been considered as a peculiar honour put upon him; but he seems not to have been elated with it. He still maintained a constant regard to the work of his station, performing the necessary services of the tabernacle: and so far was he from showing any contempt of Eli, for the heavy charge brought against him, that, through tenderness and veneration for his office, he was extremely unwilling to relate the substance of the vision. Yet his modest reserve gave way to a sense of duty, and, when pressed to it by his aged master, he was faithful and impartial in acquaint-

ing him with every circumstance in the divine threatenings.

How much have we to learn from this part of the example! Young persons, in particular, are requested seriously to contemplate the piety of Samuel, and they will be instructed from him to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth." It is often supposed that children are incapable of religion. But many cases of indisputable authority contradict the notion. Jeremiah, Daniel and his three companions, Timothy, and Samuel, were all eminent for a spirit of devotion at a tender age: and instances of a similar kind may also be produced in modern times. We should, therefore, be encouraged to apply to God for our infant offspring; bring them, as soon as may be, to His house, and dedicate them to Him. They can understand and retain some of the most important principles in which they ought to be instructed, and they are susceptible of good impressions at an earlier period than is commonly imagined. They should be taught to worship the Lord, as far as their faculties will permit; and, while they are presented to Him, His blessing may rest upon them, and engage their hearts to enter with ardour into His service.

From that period Samuel continued to receive such Divine communications as fully proved to the whole kingdom of Israel that "he was established to be a prophet of the Lord." These re-

relations, confirmed by the strongest evidence, he delivered to the people, and thus performed among them the office of a preacher, with great zeal and usefulness. Yet he lived in a time of extreme degeneracy. He saw the ark of God carried into an enemy's land, Shiloh deprived of the public ministrations of religion with which it had been favoured for three hundred years, and the ordinances interrupted for a long season. In that dark interval, the nation seemed to be sunk in ignorance and profaneness. But at last a glorious and extensive revival took place, probably through the unwearied labours of the prophet.

“All the house of Israel” being brought to a deep sense of their loss, “lamented after the Lord:” they mourned for His departure, and earnestly wished for the restoration of their former privileges. This was the very effect which Samuel had endeavoured to produce; and with great eagerness he seized the opportunity of pressing the matter upon their consciences, that they should not rest in professions, but evidence their sincerity by an immediate renunciation of idolatry, and a solemn dedication of themselves to the true God. Nor did he preach in vain: the whole kingdom seemed unanimous in returning to the pure worship of God. But Samuel was desirous to confirm their vows, and to bind them still more closely by a peculiar solemnity. A general congregation, therefore, was called together at Mizpeh,

that they might enter into an express engagement to serve the Lord alone, and might seek His blessing, by sacrifice, fasting, and prayer.

When the people were assembled, agreeably to his wishes, he conducted their devotions. He was then also acknowledged as their supreme civil magistrate, and, from that time at least, presided over them as their judge. But in the midst of these religious transactions, they were suddenly attacked by their adversaries the Philistines, and filled with terror. Their very distress, however, convinced them of the worth of Samuel, and of the advantage of relying wholly on the Lord. They were urgent with the prophet to intercede for them; and, while he appeared as their mediator, with a burnt-offering and with earnest supplication, deliverance was vouchsafed to them, and in such a way as to prove that their salvation was of God. The Philistines, confounded by a most remarkable storm of thunder from heaven, fell an easy prey to the Israelites. The memory of this very signal victory was preserved by a monument, which Samuel erected, and to which he gave the significant title of EBENEZER, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Under his care and government, the Israelites were secure, happy, and prosperous. For, during his administration, their enemies no more dared to renew their hostilities; and, according to the power he possessed, he was invariably and strictly atten-

tive to their interests. As a judge, he conducted their civil affairs with fidelity and diligence, and by regular circuits executed justice, and preserved good order through the land. And as the minister of religion, in the place of his stated residence, he called them to the worship of the true God: for "there he built an altar," at which, doubtless, public ordinances were celebrated, though Shiloh was deserted.

We are constrained to acknowledge, that a character like Samuel must be a blessing to any nation, and merits universal regard. Yet we observe from this instance, that the best of men, with the most eminent abilities as well as zeal and integrity, may seem to labour in vain, during a long season, for the advancement of truth and righteousness. Notwithstanding their continued exertions, the state of things around them may rapidly advance from bad to worse. But, even in such dark and distressing times, let them not remit their diligence, or abate their ardour: as spiritual husbandmen, they should still "sow in hope." Let them water their seed with much prayer to God, and it shall not be lost. They themselves may live to see it spring up, and produce a glorious harvest; or, if not, posterity may reap the benefit. Their work is with the Lord; and they may cheerfully expect that, in answer to their fervent petitions, He will arise to plead His own cause. The ministers of Christ, especially, should watch the

favourable moment when good impressions appear, and then redouble their assiduity, in order to confirm and establish any serious convictions and desires in their people. Thus, perhaps, a real change may be effected amongst them, and their professions of religion rendered solid and abiding.

We return to Samuel, and behold him, at an advanced age, much tried and distressed. On account of his own infirmities, he had taken his two sons to be his assistants in the government. But these were very unlike their father, having no fear of God or concern for the general good. Through covetousness and other base principles, they perverted justice, were venal, and oppressive. This must have been a painful affliction to the prophet; and yet we have no right to ascribe it to any blamable conduct in him. We are not told that he had neglected their education, or acted improperly in putting them into their office. Perhaps they had appeared hopeful in earlier life and in a private station, and, seduced by the temptations of power and of wealth, had departed from former professions, and deceived the expectations of their pious parent. This, at least, we know to have occurred in other cases. Some of the most excellent characters have had the extreme calamity of seeing their dear children, unmindful of all their instructions, prayers, and examples, turn out dissolute and abandoned, even after having discovered very promising signs of real religion. The Lord is not accountable to us for the disposal of His favours

But, from His general providence, and the gracious declarations of His Word, you have reason to look for His blessing upon your offspring, while you are faithfully discharging your duties. And, though you should seem to gain no advantage with them for the present, they may hereafter remember your admonitions and entreaties to good purpose, and, through the prevalence of your intercessions, may be recovered to God, when you are sleeping in the dust. At any rate, you must exert your utmost endeavours, and then be satisfied under this persuasion, that "The Judge of all the earth will do right."

The people, disgusted by the misconduct of Samuel's sons, desired a change of government, and petitioned that a king might be set over them with the same pomp as in other countries. They had some cause for complaint; but their request probably arose from a discontented and ambitious spirit, and discovered much ingratitude towards Samuel, under whose administration they had enjoyed peculiar blessings. He considered it as a contempt put upon himself; but instead of reproaching them, he made known his distress unto the Lord. The prophet, however, was reminded, that Israel had rejected, not him only, but the God of heaven, by whose immediate appointment and continual direction their polity had been conducted. He was therefore instructed to yield to their desires, after having solemnly protested against their plan, and warned them of the consequences. His admonitions were heard with attention

and respect; but when he saw them bent upon a change, he no longer opposed their wishes.

This history may tend to lower our proud expectations, and teach us not to depend upon human favour. For we observe, that men of the first abilities, of eminent piety, and of extensive usefulness, may live to be neglected, and be set aside by the very persons who have derived singular advantages from their labours. But let those who lament that they are injuriously slighted by their fellow-creatures, like Samuel, commend their cause to God, and He will counsel, support, and comfort them.

A distinguished honour was still put upon the prophet, even in the sight of the people: for their very king received his appointment from him. It was intimated to him by revelation, that Saul, who was in a wonderful manner conducted to him, was to be invested with the government; and therefore, without hesitation, he anointed him to the regal office. It is pleasing to behold his disinterestedness, his respect, and kindness toward the man, to whom he was about to resign his authority. He entertained him, gave him all necessary instructions for discharging the duties of his exalted station, and, pouring the consecrating oil upon him, kissed him, in token of his unfeigned submission and affection. What had been done in private, was soon afterwards ratified in public. He solemnly assembled the people at Mizpeh, and, after he had faithfully reproved them for their ingratitude in rejecting the divine administration,

he pointed out their king to them, and declared what should be the form and the rules of their civil constitution in future.

Upon another occasion, also, after Saul's conquest of the Ammonites, when the nation was better affected towards the new ruler, Samuel took the opportunity of establishing the kingdom in his hands, and of binding his subjects to him by the sacred rites of religion. Then likewise, in a most animated address, he called upon the whole congregation to avow their objections, if they had any, against himself; but, to a man, they were all compelled to acknowledge his integrity. This appeal, it should seem, was made, not merely to vindicate his own character, but that he might thereon ground his accusation against them, for having cast off the government of God, through a proud unbelieving spirit. To fix a deeper conviction of guilt upon their minds, and to show that he was acting as the minister of Jehovah, he spake the word, and a most tremendous storm of thunder, uncommon at that season of the year, excited a general terror among them. They confessed their sin; they revered the prophet, and entreated his charitable intercessions, that they might not perish in their iniquity. His purpose was answered; and therefore he proceeded to encourage them by promises of God's unalterable support and protection, so long as they should cleave unto Him; but he warned them also that their disobedience would bring down utter destruction both upon them and their king. As to himself, he assured them, that, though he was

retiring from the management of their public affairs, he could not but have their interests at heart, and would never cease to offer up his prayers for them, or to instruct them in their duty. Thus was the highest deference secured to him: and though he had resigned the supreme authority, he continued to act with some degree of power, in his judicial capacity to the end of life.

The Lord, we perceive, will honour His faithful servants; but perhaps not in the very way they would have contrived or wished. They should be content to leave to Him the justification of their integrity, even when they seem to be sinking into neglect and contempt. Let them be anxious only to fulfil their trust, whatever may be their acceptance with men. In the conduct of Samuel is exhibited a pattern of holy zeal, disinterestedness, and fidelity, which they should ever keep in view. It is well when we can boldly appeal to our despisers and persecutors as to our sincerity, and they are constrained to bear witness in our favour. Yet we should beware, in speaking of ourselves, lest we be influenced by pride and resentment. For our motive should be, not that we may rise and triumph by the confusion of our enemies, but that God may be glorified, the cause of religion vindicated, good men confirmed in their principles, and sinners converted unto righteousness. But, whatever be the event, though we be deprived of that rank we once possessed, and of those opportunities of extensive usefulness we once enjoyed, we should still endeavour

to serve God and our fellow-creatures, according to the talents which are continued to us. No contemptuous or injurious treatment should provoke us to cease from our pious labours, so long and so far as we are permitted to exercise them.

We have seen Samuel yielding up the civil power into the hands of Saul: but the minister of religion will still appear, in the sequel of this history, superior to the prince.

On another occasion we behold Samuel, with the same dignity, giving directions to the king, and passing judgment upon him. He delivered the divine commission to him, for the utter extirpation of the Amalekites, and solemnly charged him to execute it punctually. But how great was his distress, when he heard that Saul had again provoked the anger of the Lord by his hypocrisy, and that he had not fully performed the command! Deeply affected with the ungrateful, rebellious spirit of the prince, and with the calamities coming upon him, he cried unto the Lord with most importunate intercessions for him. But the sentence against him was determined in the court of heaven; and the painful task of declaring it was committed to Samuel. The man of God, therefore, with all the majesty peculiar to his sacred character, "not fearing the wrath of the king," arraigned him as a criminal, convicted him of covetousness, pride, and dissimulation, very sharply reprov'd him for his disobedience, and pronounced his condemnation. He was then departing from him with a holy indignation

but was detained a while, in compliance with the earnest entreaties of Saul, that he might not show him any open disrespect, or excite the contempt and opposition of the people against him.

With the same authority, as the servant of God commissioned for that very purpose, he proceeded to execute the sentence of death upon Agag, the king of the Amalekites, whom Saul had presumptuously spared.

This was the last visit which the prophet paid to the rejected prince of Israel. Yet let it not be thought that he was influenced by resentment, arrogance, or cruelty. The very conduct, which a faithful discharge of his office required, was extremely afflictive to himself. Notwithstanding any appearances to the contrary, he maintained, throughout, a most disinterested affection for Saul, and, after he had utterly withdrawn from him, continued to mourn for him in secret.

The ministers of religion may perceive in Samuel, with what firmness, zeal, and courage they should speak and act. Though in their private capacity they be meek and benevolent, and know how to make concessions, yet when supporting their high and sacred character, as ambassadors of Heaven, they must "set their faces like a flint," and have no "respect of persons." They are not exempted from allegiance to government; but, if they are called to address kings and princes, they should do it without fear or partiality, though with proper deference. On many occasions they are under the necessity of declaring the

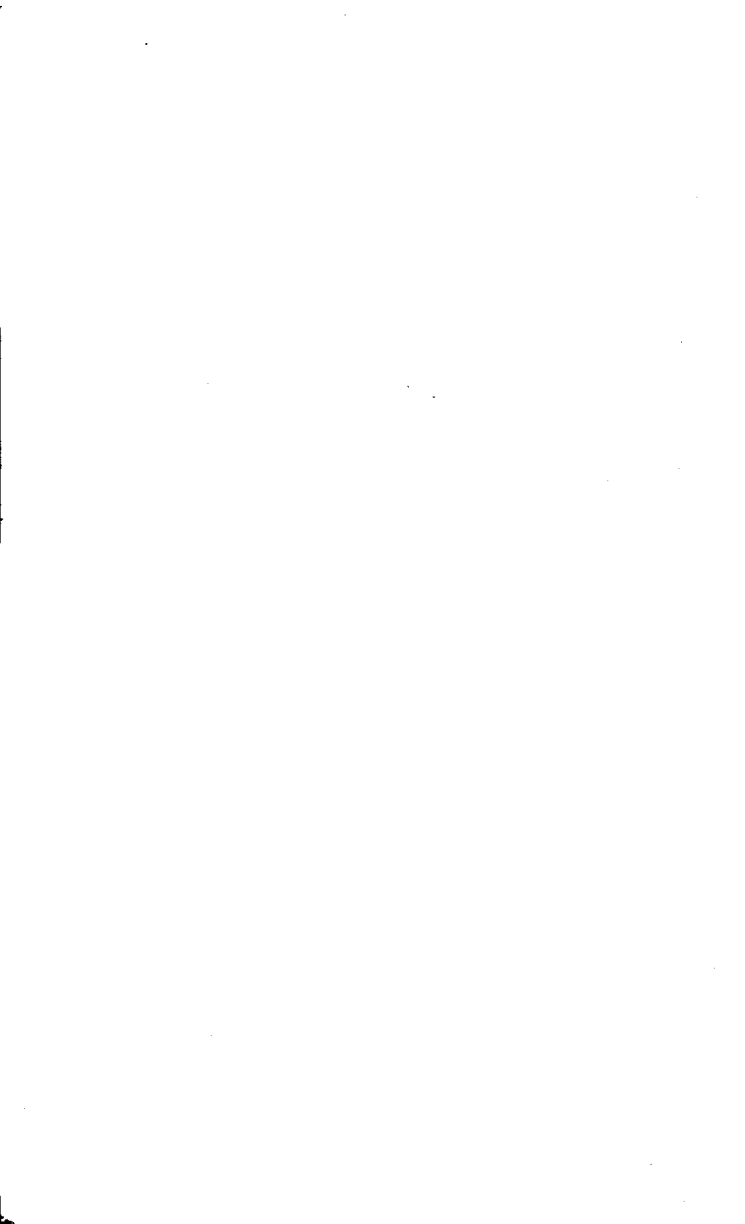
most offensive truths, which may subject them to the charge of pride, uncharitableness, and severity, at the very time that they suffer the utmost distress by the delivery of their message. They will not only labour in public, but weep and pray in secret, for the salvation of those, whom they are supposed to condemn with bitterness. Yet, while they feel for the awful case of impenitent sinners, they should beware of countenancing their practices by any intimate connexions, and should therefore withdraw from their society.

Samuel was now advanced in years, and retired from public business; and yet he was actively employed in promoting the great interests of religion. He is supposed to have founded those seminaries of pious education, "the schools of the prophets," which tended to preserve the purity of revelation, and to provide proper persons for the service of the Church. The institution evidently promised the most extensive advantages, and, through the divine blessing, it continued to prosper for many generations. In these schools, probably, the man of God spent the close of his life: for when David fled from the persecution of Saul, he took refuge with Samuel, who, it is remarked, was, "standing as appointed, over the company of the prophets." Thither the murderous rage of Saul pursued the trembling son of Jesse, and seemed likely to have destroyed both him and the aged prophet together. But they were miraculously preserved: for the spirit of God came upon the furious king, as

well as upon all his messengers; and he was confounded in his purpose.

Thus we should labour to the very last, and be zealous for the cause of God, whoever may decline. Dangers perhaps may threaten us; but let us attend to our proper work, and the Lord will defend us. "He knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." By various methods He defeats the designs of His enemies, and not uncommonly, by an immediate impression upon their minds, which constrains them, unaccountably to themselves, to abandon their schemes.

After a life of eminent usefulness, Samuel departed in peace, and his death was much lamented by the whole nation of Israel. How honourable does the good man appear, even in a private station! Though he may be neglected by many who once professed to revere him, his worth will be acknowledged when he is taken away, and his loss will be felt by the Church. But while we contemplate those excellent personages who are now removed from the earth, we rejoice that the "residue of the spirit" is with God. May He raise up, among ourselves, faithful witnesses for His name, endued with the same wisdom, diligence, and ardour in religion, which His prophets and messengers of old possessed! By their ministry may He "revive His work," establish His own kingdom in righteousness, and "make our Jerusalem a praise in the earth!"



S o l o m o n :

THE WISE KING OF ISRAEL.

“O HAPPY is the man who hears
Instruction's warning voice ;
And who celestial Wisdom makes
His early, only choice.


“For she has treasures greater far
Than east or west unfold ;
And her rewards more precious are
Than all their stores of gold.

“In her right hand she holds to view
A length of happy days ;
Riches, with splendid honours join'd,
Are what her left displays.

“She guides the young with innocence,
In pleasures paths to tread,
A crown of glory she bestows
Upon the hoary head.”



SOLOMON.

HE Scripture history debases the pride of all human glory, and exhibits, in each character we contemplate, sufficient cause for the deepest humiliation. The person whose life comes next in order, represents our nature at one time in a state of the highest advancement, and at another reduced to extreme infamy. Here we behold a man, who was raised above the level of his species, not only by his rank, but by the excellency of his understanding, who yet degenerated to a degree of folly and wickedness, which, in such an instance, we should have supposed impossible. Where, except in our first parent, have we met with a similar example; the most eminent wisdom disgraced by the basest apostasy? Perhaps we may be at a loss to pronounce concerning the final condition of Solomon, nor is it necessary. The instructions to be derived from this awful case are neither doubtful nor uninteresting to any one. Let us set ourselves to the consideration of it with true seriousness of mind, and with earnest prayer, that, whatever might be the state of Solomon,

we may not be "of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Our expectations concerning this illustrious personage are raised, antecedently to his birth, while we observe that he was the subject of a remarkable prediction delivered to his father David. "Behold," said God, "a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be *Solomon*,* and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever."

As soon as he was brought into the world, a prophet was commissioned to declare the divine favour towards him, and to give him a name expressive of this regard. "The Lord loved him, and sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and called his name Jedidiah,† because of the Lord." After such information, we cannot but inquire, "What manner of child shall this be?"

He was appointed to the throne by the direction of God; and on that ground, David caused him to be publicly consecrated and admitted to the regal office, before his own death. An opposition was made to his accession by the elder brother Adonijah, but soon defeated; and the kingdom was fully established in

* That is, "*Peaceable*."

† "*Beloved of the Lord*."

the hands of Solomon. He came to the crown with every conceivable advantage, and the most hopeful appearances. The beginning of his reign, indeed, seems to be stained with blood; and we might apprehend the most sanguinary and tyrannical proceedings in the sequel, from some of his first acts, which yet might be a proper and necessary exercise of justice.

Adonijah, who had endeavoured to seize the reins of government, and had been pardoned only conditionally, probably still entertained treasonable designs. It was therefore a matter of political expediency at least to frustrate the plot by instantly removing the rebel.

Abiathar, the high-priest, had deserved to die, for taking part with conspirators: but, from a regard to the services which he performed for David in his affliction, the punishment was mitigated: he was thrust out of his office, and banished to a retired situation.

Joab, that turbulent and factious general, had long merited the severest vengeance of the law, and still remained disaffected to the reigning prince. Solomon, therefore, commanded him to be dragged even from the sanctuary, and slain: and herein he acted agreeably to the Word of God, as well as consulted the peace and security of the state.

Shimei, too, was a dangerous character. He experienced the royal clemency for a time; but at length he violated his oath, and proved by his perfidy;

that he could no longer be confided in ; and therefore he also fell by the hand of justice.

In these instances we perceive no good reason for censuring the conduct of Solomon. He was intrusted with the supreme authority "for the punishment of evil-doers ;" and it is required of civil magistrates, that they "bear not the sword in vain." Thus the Lord God fulfilled His own promise, confounded and destroyed every enemy to the succession which He had appointed, and confirmed Solomon in the complete and undisputed possession of the regal power. The hearts of the people were firmly attached to their new prince. They obeyed, they loved, they revered him. This also was of the Lord, who "magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty, as had not been on any king before him in Israel."

Solomon was distinguished by the splendour of his majesty ; but it is a higher recommendation of him, that "he loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father." He appeared mindful of the many pious exhortations he had received from his aged parent, and began his reign with such a serious attention to religion, and to the sacred ordinances, as seems to warrant the conclusion, that he was truly devoted to the service of his God. It is remarked, indeed, as an objection to his character, that he complied with the custom, to which the people were extremely addicted, of sacrificing and performing other rites "in high places," after the manner of the heathen

nations. Whatever might be his motive, the action itself was wrong, and of a dangerous tendency. It becomes us to take care, that our very good be not evil spoken of; and therefore we must "abstain from all appearance of evil."

Soon after his accession to the throne, he held a festival of peculiar solemnity, at the head of all his nobles and the elders of Israel, before the ancient tabernacle of Moses, which was fixed at Gibeon. There he worshipped the Lord according to the regular and instituted mode, supplicating the divine blessing upon himself and his people; and there he received a singular manifestation of the favour of Heaven. God appeared to him in "the visions of the night," and proposed to give him whatever he should ask. Solomon abused not the gracious and extensive offer; for his mind had been previously prepared to ask aright. What, then, was the choice of the young prince? Not an increase of wealth, or power, or honour, but wisdom and understanding, that he might discharge his important trust, to the glory of God, and the benefit of his subjects. In humble adoration of that goodness which had raised him to the most elevated rank, under a deep sense of the weakness and inexperience of his youth, and from an apprehension of peculiar difficulties in his arduous situation, he earnestly besought the Lord to inspire him with such knowledge, that he might "minister judgment to the people in uprightness." The petition pleased the Lord, who therefore declared, that his utmost desires

should be satisfied, and that, even what he had not solicited, additional riches and dignity, far beyond the possessions of other kings, should be granted him. Length of days, also, was promised to him, on condition of his persevering obedience. From this solemnity he returned to Jerusalem, and there again, with fervent gratitude, he offered many sacrifices, and sealed his vows before the ark of the covenant. Such a public testimony in favour of religion could not but produce the most beneficial consequences throughout the nation.

That eminent degree of wisdom which was bestowed upon Solomon, soon excited general admiration, and promoted the public good. A very difficult case occurred, which was referred to the decision of the king, and proved his acute discernment in the administration of justice. Two women who dwelt together, had each been delivered of a son; and, upon the death of one of the infants, both demanded the living child as their own. Their pleas seemed equally valid, their claims equally strong; and no evidence could be adduced to determine the conquest. "Divide the living child in two," said Solomon, "and give half to the one, and half to the other." The sentence immediately discovered the real mother, who, when she saw the sword prepared for the execution, yearned over her infant with the tenderest affection, and prayed that it might be spared; willing rather to resign it to the false claimant, than to be witness of its destruction.

The depravity of human nature has rendered the province of judges and magistrates extremely difficult indeed. Such persons, therefore, have special need to beg of God, that He would direct their inquiries, and give them a quickness of perception "to search out a matter." Thus will they be a peculiar blessing to the state, when they are careful to "judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him." And "the king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever."

Those also, who preside in spiritual concerns, should learn from Solomon, to seek the proper qualifications for their office by fervent prayer. Are they called to "go out and come in" before a numerous people, and to distinguish between the different claims of religious professors? How arduous and important the work! Even such ministers of Christ as possess the most eminent abilities, may well cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things? Oh give thy servants an understanding heart!" They should not despise human literature, but diligently improve it for the service of the sanctuary. Yet, with the best advantages of education, they may be "blind guides," and mislead those immortal souls who trust to their judgment. Oh that God would therefore pour out "the spirit of understanding" upon all the pastors and governors of his Church, that they may "discern between good and bad!"

The reign of Solomon is celebrated for its peace

and prosperity, as well as for the wisdom and equity of his administration. His subjects were firmly united together, and undisturbed by any foreign assaults; so that they multiplied exceedingly, and enjoyed the fruits of their labour in quiet and security. His dominion, also, was enlarged to an extent unknown before: in consequence of which, his wealth and magnificence received an amazing increase. But the part of his character for which he has been most admired, is the peculiar eminence of his understanding. He was endued with an unequalled discernment in other sciences, as well as in divine things and the art of government. Nor was his learning useless: much did he speak, and much did he write for the instruction of mankind, particularly on the subject of morals and natural philosophy. Many of his compositions are now lost; but we are favoured with three specimens, which have a distinguished place in the sacred canon, and are a valuable treasure to the Church of God. We do not wonder that such uncommon abilities procured him so high estimation in the world.

But we turn our eyes from Solomon, to observe the hand of God in the gifts bestowed upon him. Let us not forget, that riches, power, peace, and prosperity are dispensed among the sons of men, even as He, the almighty Sovereign, pleaseth. He alone appoints the difference we perceive in all attainments: for "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." It is manifest, that Solomon's pre-eminence was granted him in answer to prayer, and in perform-

ance of the divine promises. We do not expect or need the like superiority; but an "understanding in the way of godliness" is absolutely necessary for all: and this also "cometh from above." We are encouraged to apply for it with fervent petitions; for a gracious voice declares, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him."

The building of the temple was one grand object, to which Solomon directed his attention. For this particular purpose he was raised up of God, and blessed with peace and prosperity. He had been appointed to the work by express prophecy before his birth, and charged to undertake it by the solemn injunctions of his dying father. Nor was he unmindful of his commission; but with great ardour he proceeded to the execution of the plan, as soon as the preparations requisite could be made. We stand in admiration of his zeal for the honour of God, while we observe, that for seven years together he was vigorously employed in erecting that splendid edifice, for the administration of the divine service, and that he was not unwilling to devote his wealth to the sanctuary. It pleased God to give him the friendship of a neighbouring prince, the king of Tyre, who was, in a remarkable manner, disposed to lend his utmost assistance for the accomplishment of Solomon's design. How wonderful are the ways of Providence! The Lord appoints to each of us our proper work, and He will not fail so to order our circumstances, that we

shall be furnished with every thing needful for the right performance of it. Only let us be faithful and diligent, and exert all our abilities in obedience to Him. Whatever riches we possess, whatever alliances we form, let us keep in view the end of our calling, and use every advantage, which our situation may put into our hands, in a subserviency to His glory.

We cannot here enter into a minute description of the very magnificent house, which Solomon erected for the name of the God of Israel, or point out the design of its various parts and utensils. Suffice it to say, that the whole was executed agreeably to the directions which David had received from heaven, and delivered to his son. When the temple was completed, the king himself, with the greatest solemnity and most ardent piety, dedicated it to God, and implored His blessing upon it. Then indeed he shone in his brightest lustre; nor can we conceive anything upon earth more grand and majestic, than his behaviour upon that sacred occasion. We are compelled to revere the character of the monarch, who with an uncommon zeal stood before his nobles and all his princes, as a preacher of righteousness, and as a priest of the most high God.

Having assembled together the elders of his people he conducted the ark of the covenant into the most holy place appointed for it, with loud thanksgivings to God; and immediately "the glory of the Lord filled the house," as a token of His gracious presence.

Then the king, in the audience of all the congregation, declared the purposes for which the temple was erected, and praised God for the completion of His promises concerning it. Upon an eminence, which was raised in the midst of the court before the altar, he kneeled down, and, spreading forth his hands towards heaven, he poured out the devout emotions of his soul. He acknowledged the faithfulness and goodness of God in putting such an honour upon him, and prayed that the further engagements of mercy, on behalf of his posterity, might be fulfilled. Considering the immensity and majesty of Jehovah, he seemed to shrink back from the idea of expecting His residence within those consecrated walls; but, encouraged by His gracious assurances, he implored His favour toward all who should worship in that house. His petitions being ended, he arose from his knees, and pronounced his benediction upon the people. He entreated, he charged them, to dedicate themselves to God without reserve, and to persevere in their obedience with an unshaken integrity. He then called upon them to join with him in offering sacrifices, and in other solemn rites, which were continued for fourteen days together. This was indeed a sacred festival to the Lord; in which, probably, more fervent piety appeared, than on any occasion we have ever heard of. The very numerous congregation were deeply impressed by the prayers and exhortations of their sovereign. They saw the Divine glory descending upon the temple, and the fire from heaven consuming

their oblations, and were constrained to bow before the Lord in adoration of His mercy. At length they were dismissed with sentiments of love and admiration toward their prince, and of holy joy and gratitude toward God, who had bestowed such favours upon them.

But what do we learn from the example before us? Let us not suppose that "the great men of the earth" are the only persons who are bound to exert themselves for the honour of God. It is a common cause, which requires the united influence of all ranks and conditions. What, then, are we doing to promote this end? Are we joining in the worship of God with real ardour of devotion? and are we exciting others to it? Ah! what mean that languour and indifference, which we observe to be generally prevalent in all religious concerns? The temple of Jerusalem, so set apart as we have seen, was the place where all the Jews were commanded to offer up their sacrifices. But now the Lord will manifest His gracious presence in every place where His faithful people meet, will hear and answer their petitions. O be thankful, you who enjoy those ordinances to which the divine blessing is promised! Consider their value; be constant, be serious, be fervent in your attendance upon them. "Wait on the Lord," in His instituted means, and you "shall renew your strength."—"Enter into His courts," and "worship at His footstool," with faith and love, and you also shall behold His glory.

Various and important are the advantages which

attend the practice of piety. It promotes the present as well as eternal happiness of individuals, and brings down the blessing of God upon families and kingdoms. Solomon could testify from his own experience, and the universal history of mankind confirms the observation, that "righteousness exalteth a nation."

The reign of this prince was distinguished by its uninterrupted prosperity, so long as he faithfully adhered to the covenant of his God. For many years together, while his wealth and magnificence increased, he was employed in erecting stately palaces and other edifices, for the honour of His majesty, as well as for the purposes of government. Several strong and fortified cities were built in different parts of his dominion, with a view either to utility or grandeur; and the heathen nations around him became tributary to him. By means of his alliance with the king of Tyre, he acquired the knowledge of navigation, extended his commerce, and imported into his kingdom the riches and commodities of distant lands. Yet, amidst all his splendour, and the necessary attention to state affairs, he was not unmindful of the divine service. For a long time he continued to frequent the public ordinances, and was found among the most constant worshippers of God.

A character so remarkable, placed in such eminence of rank, and possessed of such an uncommon degree of moral excellence and religious zeal, could not fail of attracting the notice and admiration of the neighbouring princes. Many came from afar, with valu-

able presents, that they might be instructed by that wisdom "which God had put into his heart." Among other instances of this kind, the visit of the queen of Sheba has been most minutely recorded. Much she had heard of the reputation, and very highly she had conceived of the extraordinary abilities, of the king of Israel. With an earnest desire, therefore, to consult him upon certain difficulties concerning "the deep things of God," she undertook a long, tedious, and expensive journey. She obtained the wished-for interview, and received from him the most satisfactory information. When she beheld the order and the beauty of his institutions, both civil and ecclesiastical, she was constrained to admire his singular attainments, pronounced his attendants happy, and praised God for placing so eminent a prince on the throne of Israel. ●

The king of Israel continued to increase in power, wealth, and magnificence, the envy and admiration of all the surrounding kingdoms. But at length an awful change in his moral and religious character appeared. As we advance towards the close of his reign, we behold a sad reverse of his former exemplary conduct. We cannot but be affected with distress and horror at the sight, and ask, Where is that knowledge and zeal which raised universal astonishment? "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!" Here, then, we are called to weep over the ruins of that stately edifice, which we have been contemplating in all its glory.

Had the temple, which he built, been utterly demolished, till one stone had not been left upon another, the calamitous event would have been nothing in comparison. A far more afflicting scene is now to pass before us: the excellency of Solomon debased by the vile apostacy of his declining years!

From his beginning, we expected the most happy conclusion. Some transactions, indeed, may deserve censure, in the early part of his reign. He had made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and taken his daughter to wife; which was, doubtless, a connexion of a dangerous tendency, as it might gradually weaken the strength of his religious principles. Nor do we represent him as a spotless character in any period of his life. But, on the whole, we have seen him so ardent in the service of God, so uniformly attentive to the duties of his high station, that we were ready to pronounce him the most eminent of his species. Alas! how often are the husbandman's hopes disappointed! How often are the gay and promising appearances of the spring suddenly blasted! And how awfully are our expectations frustrated in the close of this history! "King Solomon loved many strange women, (together with the daughter of Pharaoh,) women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his

heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father."

Solomon, probably, little thought of advancing so far as to practise or countenance the stupid idolatry of his wives, and might conclude that his superior understanding would be a sufficient security to him. But one sin paves the way for another; and especially, when the reins are given to our lusts, who can tell where we shall stop, or what will be the consequence? We behold even Solomon admitting and supporting the worship of false gods in his kingdom. He, who had built a most magnificent house for the God of Israel, erected temples for the gods of the heathen, and, it should seem, attended at their sacrifices, and bowed before their altars.

There were some peculiar aggravations in Solomon's declension; and these very considerations will teach us to watch and pray.

He was not young when his passions broke out with such violence, and effected the awful change. This came to pass "when he was old," when we should have imagined that the fire of lust had been extinguished. But, alas! no age is secure. Not merely young persons, but even those of advanced years, have need to "keep their hearts with all diligence," and to seek protection in the grace of God alone.

We might have thought that his good sense and enlarged intellect would have been a sufficient preservative from the fooleries into which he was led.

Many of the meanest capacity, we apprehend, would have abhorred what the wisest of men committed. It will become us, therefore, not to overrate or envy the most splendid abilities, or the most improved understanding. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom," or forget his dependence upon the God of heaven. The religious professions of Solomon, and the warnings he had received, greatly enhance his guilt. When we view him bowing among the worshippers of idols, we are ready to ask, Is this he whom David had instructed to serve the true God? Is this the pious youth who sought the Lord in Gibeon? Is this the zealous king who had prayed so fervently at the dedication of the temple, and delivered the most excellent precepts to the people? Is this the man with whom Jehovah had vouchsafed to hold the most intimate communications, and whom He had expressly charged to beware of this very sin? Alas! how desperately wicked is the human heart, which can break through the strongest barriers to gratify its beloved lusts! Remember your weakness, though you are ever so strenuous in the cause of truth and righteousness. Depend not on your good education, your supposed firmness in right principles, your envied privileges, comforts, or attainments in religion. All these may fail you in an hour of temptation. Nay, probably, your superiority over others may prove a snare to you; as hereby you may be rendered less circumspect, and Satan may be more desirous to cast you down.

Are we not anxious to know the issue? Alas! the sun, which had risen with uncommon splendour, at last set behind a cloud. Was not Solomon, then, recovered? We are almost at a loss to answer. His recovery is not expressly declared; and perhaps the less notice is taken of the state in which he died, that we may be the more afraid of apostasy. His backsliding, which was very offensive to God, brought extreme distress upon himself. "The Lord was angry with him," and, by an immediate revelation, He testified His displeasure, and His determination to rend a large share of the kingdom from the hands of His successor. Various temporal calamities, also, embittered the decline of his life. Opposition was stirred up against him in different parts of his dominion, through the righteous judgment of God; and he received the painful information, that his own servant Jeroboam, by the divine appointment, would shortly rule over ten of the tribes of Israel. His envy and resentment were therefore kindled against Jeroboam; and he sought to kill him: so that, for some time at least, he did not show any proper contrition for his offence, since he quarrelled with his punishment.

Yet it is generally supposed, that he died a true penitent. It is presumed, that one, who was named "Beloved of the Lord," would not be finally abandoned to the machinations of Satan. It is thought, that his very case was foretold, when the Lord said to David, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my



Young Men of the Bible—Page 93.

son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

The strongest proof of his repentance is the book of Ecclesiastes, which was evidently written in his old age; after a long experience of sin and folly. Here he confesses and deplores his madness; and, in the character of "The Preacher," warns others by his own example against the inordinate love of present things, and particularly against fleshly lusts, which had brought him to the very gates of hell. Let us seriously attend, then, to this awful case, as described by himself. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labour, and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour, that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." Indulge no longer the vain expectation of obtaining happiness from any sensual gratifications. If the world, with all its advantages, were able to satisfy the soul, and afford real joy, Solomon would have found it so. For he gave full scope to his desires, and tried every possible scheme of pleasure; yet he was disappointed in all; and, for our admonition, he has left this inscription on all earthly enjoyments, "VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT."

We cannot conclude our account of Solomon, without adverting to the more glorious Personage whom he typified in a very eminent manner. The New Testament declares, that One greater than Solomon is come to reign over us, and to possess the throne of his father David. May we not see something of His excellency, faintly represented to us in this figure ?

The Saviour was, in a more exalted sense, the child of promise ; and, by express direction from heaven, He received an appellation, which implies He was "chosen of God and precious." He also was consecrated to the regal office ; and, like the king of Israel, though He be ready to spare, He will finally execute and destroy every obstinate rebel against His government. He cannot be imposed on by any specious tales, but most accurately discerns between different characters, even as Solomon distinguished the real from the pretended mother. "An hypocrite shall not come before Him." Let us not dare, then, to put on a counterfeit appearance of piety. The remarkable tranquillity, as well as equity of Solomon's reign, prefigured that of the Redeemer. He is, in the highest sense, "The Prince of peace:" and happy indeed are His faithful subjects, who, under His protection, "dwell safely, and are quiet from fear of evil." He says to us, "Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The most prominent feature in Solomon's character, we have seen, was his wisdom ; and here again we discover the similitude of Him "in whom are hid all

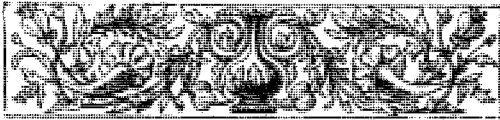
the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." This wisdom He possesses without any limits, and displays throughout the administration of His government: a measure of it also He imparts to all his people. Let us attend to His solemn address: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.—Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death."



Job,

THE MAN OF PATIENCE.

- “**FAR** from mankind, my weary soul, retire,
Still follow truth, contentment still desire.
Who climbs on high, at best his weakness shows,
Who rolls in riches, all to fortune owes.
Read well thyself, and mark thy early ways,
Vain is the muse, and envy waits on praise.
- “**Wav’ring** as winds the breath of fortune blows,
No power can turn it, and no prayers compose.
Deep in some hermit’s solitary cell,
Repose and ease and contemplation dwell.
Let conscience guide thee in the days of need,
Judge well thy own, and then thy neighbour’s deed.
- “**What** Heaven bestows, with thankful eyes receive ;
First ask thy heart, and then through faith believe.
Slowly we wander o’er a toilsome way,
Shadows of life, and pilgrims of a day.
‘ Who restless in this world, receives a fall ;
Look up on high, and thank thy God for all ! ’”



JOB.



HE excellency of Job's character is brought at once into view, in the very opening of the book ; and it is declared, that he was "perfect," without guile and hypocrisy, "and upright," possessed of, and actuated by, pure and holy principles, "one that feared God," confessing and worshipping the true God ; in the midst of idolaters, zealous for religion ; "and he eschewed evil," keeping at a distance from sin, and thus recommending his profession by the consistency and integrity of his practice. We shall observe the justness of this description, while we accompany Job throughout the different circumstances of his life.

He is represented to us, in the former part of the history, as one of high rank, and abounding in all worldly possessions. An estimate is made of his substance, according to the simplicity of those times, from his very numerous flocks and herds, whereby it appears that he had exceeding great riches and a most extensive household, and surpassed in opulence "all the men of the east." His wealth might entitle

him to respect: but he was also a principal magistrate, if not a ruler, in the place where he dwelt. For thus he speaks of his own exalted situation: "I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; I went out to the gate through the city, I prepared my seat in the street; the young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up: the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth:—I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners." He was likewise blessed with domestic comforts, having seven sons and three daughters, who were settled around him, and lived together in prosperity, peace, and love. What could have been desired more?

But, alas! how frequently are the bounties of Providence a snare to the soul! Who forget God so much as those intrusted with riches and power? Perhaps our integrity is put to a severer trial when all things succeed to our wishes, than when the heaviest troubles assail us. We therefore pray, "In all time of our tribulation, and in all time of our *wealth*, Good Lord, deliver us!" (Litany.)

Under the influences of religious principles, Job was enabled to stand against all the allurements of greatness. His piety and zeal were most eminent. He watched over his offspring with a tender concern for their spiritual interests, and offered up continual

intercessions for them. It is observed, more especially, that whenever they had any convivial meeting among themselves, he called them to join with him in prayer, that they might seek forgiveness, lest something in their tempers or manners should have been displeasing to God. Behold here, then, the devout father, the pious master of a family ! Job was the priest of his own house, and taught and required his children to worship at his altar. It appears also, that in the midst of his affluence he maintained sweet intercourse with God, and that his experience of divine comforts was the chief ingredient in his happiness. Such is his own description : “ In the days when God preserved me, his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness : the secret of God was upon my tabernacle : the Almighty was with me.”

Nor did the piety of Job consist in words only, or in mere external forms of devotion. Its purity and excellence were manifested, by his vigorous exertions to render himself as extensively useful as possible, and by the whole of his amiable deportment. For the proof of this, indeed, we are indebted to his accusers, who compelled him to speak in vindication of his own character. With all the confidence of an upright man he declares, not in the spirit of boasting, but in reply to the false charges brought against him, “ I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him : the blessings of him that was ready to perish came upon me ; and

I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy : I put on righteousness, and it clothed me ; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem : I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame : I was a father to the poor ; and the cause which I knew not I searched out : and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Did I not weep for him that was in trouble ? Was not my soul grieved for the poor ? I have not withheld the poor from their desire, nor have caused the eyes of the widow to fail : I have not eaten my morsel alone, but the fatherless hath eaten thereof (for from my youth he was brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb :) I have not seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering ; but his loins have blessed me, and he was warmed with the fleece of my sheep." Nor did his abundance minister to the purposes of pride or sensuality. His heart was fixed upon a better portion than all his affluence could give him ; and in his most prosperous days he was humble, meek, and spiritual. " He made not gold his hope, nor said to the find gold, thou art my confidence ; he rejoiced not because his wealth was great, or because his hand had gotten much."

Who does not confess that a rich man of such a character is a public blessing ? The more exalted his situation is, the more enlarged will be his usefulness. His piety will add the brightest lustre to his high rank ; and his wealth and power will enable him to do more than others can for the glory of God

and the benefit of his fellow-creatures. But have we not cause to lament the arrogance and dissipation, the covetousness and oppression, of the great? How few are proof against "the love of money!" How few, who are not abusing the gifts of God to the purposes of intemperance! Where are those who live in affluence, and yet maintain a humble spiritual mind? Where are they who possess authority, and are not betrayed into haughtiness, cruelty, and injustice? Be it our concern, as faithful stewards, to improve our talents. Though we have not the property or the influence of Job, may we not, in various respects, be "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy?" But the large expenses of many around us, who study only to gratify their vanity and sensuality, while they "withhold the poor from their desire," will be "a swift witness" against them. As to those also, who are heaping up useless treasures, "the rust thereof will eat their flesh, as it were fire." For "riches profit not in the day of wrath;" but then it will be found, that the covetous are those "whom God abhorreth."

We shall not wonder to hear, that a person, so eminently holy as Job, was very dear to God. He considers His people as his portion and His glory; and, therefore, He pleads their cause, defends them from dangers, and rejoices over them to do them good. This will appear from the circumstance which next demands our attention.

An account is given us of a remarkable conference, respecting the character of Job, between the most High God and the prince or leader of the fallen angels, who is called Satan or the Devil. It may safely be granted, that, as this is a poetical description, the matter is represented with something of that fictitious colouring which is always allowed in compositions of such a nature. But it does not, therefore, follow that the whole is a fable. So much is clear: There is an evil spirit, the enemy of God and of all righteousness, who is continually seeking to distress, to seduce, and, if possible, to destroy, those who love God. He is their accuser and tempter; ever bringing against them false and malicious charges, insinuating that all their services proceed from a selfish principle, and laying snares for them, that he may draw them aside from the path of duty. He is, indeed, under the restraint of an almighty power, and all his devices are overruled; but he is permitted to show his malignity, and to exercise an influence (in a way we pretend not to explain) over the minds of the righteous, as well as of the wicked. How far this influence may extend, we do not determine: but, probably much of the unsteadiness and unhappiness of Christians is to be ascribed to his agency.

Job, we have seen, was placed in an elevated situation, with great riches in possession: but in the short space of a day, without any previous warning, he was deprived of all his substance, and reduced to a state of contempt and indigence. One messenger trod

upon the heels of another, with tidings of distress, declaring his numerous flocks and herds, his oxen and asses, his sheep and camels, to be taken away by rapine, or consumed by lightning from heaven. Will it not be allowed that so sudden and so entire a change of circumstances must be peculiarly painful? The dread of want is very frequently more than the human mind can endure; but in general, it should seem, the anguish on this account will be felt most severely by those who have always enjoyed abundance. Shall we, then, murmur at, or even mention, our own trifling losses and disappointments, when we behold Job reduced much lower than ourselves?

He had been happy in his children, whom he had esteemed his glory, and as a crown upon his head. But in the very same day, while he listened to the sad tale of his other misfortunes, the still more melancholy tidings were carried to him, that the house, wherein his sons and daughters were assembled for the purpose of a convivial meeting, had been suddenly blown down, and buried them all in one common ruin. Thus were his expectations of support and comfort from his offspring instantly defeated. Are not many pining away with excessive sorrow for the death of a beloved child, or of some tender relation, and complaining against God because he has removed "the desire of their eyes?" But will you not dry up your tears, and restrain your murmurs, while you are witnesses to such a universal desolation in the family of Job?

And now the wish of Satan was gratified. According to his request, he saw this saint of God brought down to a most abject condition. But was his end answered? Did Job renounce his religion, or curse his God? No; the devil's insinuation against him was most base, and the falsehood was evinced. Are we not solicitous to be informed how he endured his trials? We have observed, that his conduct was exemplary, his character unblameable, during his prosperity. But we have known many, who have appeared to pay a serious and consistent regard to the profession of godliness, as long as they have enjoyed their ease and succeeded in their worldly schemes, and yet have been unable to stand the shock of severe afflictions, have given up their boasted confidence in God, and "concerning faith have made shipwreck." If we search the habitations of the wretched, we shall not find in all, nay, not in the most, a meek submission to the will of God, and humble dependence on His promise, and a cheerful waiting for deliverance in His time and way. But "ye have heard of the patience of Job." He is held forth as an eminent example of entire resignation to the divine appointment, and of that unshaken reliance, which can trust God as much in darkness as in light, from an assurance that He doeth all things well. At the beginning at least of the sharp conflict, we perceive an uncommon exercise of these principles; and from this part of the history, we apprehend, he has been celebrated as the most patient of men.

Behold him, then, stripped of all his possessions, no longer the father of a numerous offspring, but rendered childless at one stroke! He felt the weight of the calamity; he could not abstain from expressions of his grief; but he acquiesced; he justified God, and surrendered up all to Him. He arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

The sacred history remarks, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." So far, then, the temptation did not succeed: the purpose of Satan was defeated. And did the malicious adversary desist from any further attempts? No; another and a much more violent onset was made upon Job, under the permission of a gracious God. And we ought not to forget, that, though we may have gained one conquest, we are not therefore secure from all future assaults, but probably we shall soon be attacked again in some other quarter.

It was permitted, in order to manifest the sincerity and strength of his faith, that he should be tried in the very way which Satan himself had proposed: and accordingly a most painful and loathsome disease, affecting the whole frame, was immediately laid upon him: and he became at once a burden to himself, and an abhorrence to every one around him.

But had he none to administer consolation? Where

were his numerous domestics, his friends, and relations? Alas! we cannot mention one circumstance but we therein perceive an aggravation of his sufferings. Let us hear his own account: "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth. My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body. Yea, young children despise me; I arose, and they spake against me. All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me."

When contending powers are preparing for war; when the soldier is girding on his armour; and when the battle is already begun; a general attention is excited, and all around are anxious to know the decision, and on which side victory will declare.

We have seen Satan, the grand adversary both of God and man, like the great Goliath, vaunting himself against the armies of the faithful, and challenging Job, who was therefore called out to single combat, even as the stripling David went forth against the proud Philistine. We have beheld the formidable attack, which was made upon the servant of God, sufficient, we might have supposed, to have confounded the strongest. Both the first and the second onset were borne with a vigorous courage; but, as the conflict was not then ended, we are solicitous to

be informed what was the issue, and in what manner the champion continued to acquit himself in so remarkable an engagement. This is a contest of great importance to the whole Church of God, who may hereby be instructed and encouraged to "resist the devil, steadfast in the faith." Let us consider it, then, with all serious attention; and, while we "hear of the patience of Job, and see the end of the Lord," we shall be animated to stand forth in the spiritual warfare, and learn what temper we should possess, if we hope to be crowned with victory.

Job was oppressed with calamities of the heaviest kind; but, amidst them all, he maintained his principles, and, at the first, did not appear shaken in his confidence towards God. But we have known instances of those, who have manfully repelled one or two violent assaults, but who, when the mode of attack has been varied, or merely by the continuance or frequent repetition of the temptation, have been at last overcome. How then was the conflict supported on the part of Job, in the sequel of the history? We shall still perceive him, even to the end, truly upright before God, and never relinquishing his dependence or submission; but we shall have occasion to point out and lament a difference in his spirit and temper. Satan, doubtless, gained some advantage, by stirring up the depravity of his heart, but failed in his attempt to prove him a hypocrite.

Job, though forsaken by many, was visited by three friends, who, it should seem, were men of considerable

rank and wisdom, as well as of real piety, and who came to participate his grief, and to administer consolation. Their design was excellent; but instead of alleviating, they greatly aggravated his distress: "Miserable comforters were they all; physicians of no value."

The three friends of Job sat with him upon the ground, in pensive silence, for many days, expressing, by their actions at least, their condolence with him: and perhaps, through excess of sorrow, upon their first meeting, they might be as unable to suggest any suitable counsel, as he to receive it. "AFTER THIS," (after he had for some time manfully endured the sharp struggle,) he betrayed a different spirit: "he opened his mouth, and cursed his day." He did not, indeed, comply with Satan's temptation so far as to curse his God; but, he complained that he had ever been born. We do not follow him through all the bitter lamentations which he uttered; but we must observe, that herein a most grievous change appeared, and that, instead of his former meekness, composure, and resignation, we perceive sad symptoms of pride, fretfulness, and impatience. Upon this commenced the long disputation between him and his visitants, which occupies the chief part of the book. We enter not into the particulars of that warm contest, remarking only the principal subject, and the behaviour of Job.

The grand question on which they debated was, whether any one of real piety ever was, or could be,

so given up of God to the most extreme suffering, as Job seemed to be; or, in other words, whether he had not been hitherto deceiving himself and others in his professions of godliness. They were clearly mistaken in their hasty conclusions against him, though their sentiments of religion, upon the whole, appear to be just and consistent. They insinuated that, from the circumstances in which he was placed, he must have been a hypocrite; and from this general censure they descended to special charges, and directly accused him of the very crimes he had always abhorred—injustice, oppression, covetousness.

In reply to these groundless imputations, it was not wrong for Job to vindicate his own character. Like St Paul, in latter times, he was compelled by his accusers to speak what he would otherwise have suppressed. To the very rash judgment passed upon him, we must ascribe much of what he advanced in commendation of himself; which should not be censured as vain glory, but considered rather as the honest confidence of one conscious of his integrity, and pained with the unjust reproaches of those he loved. He could not allow that he had been a deceiver; and therefore he could say with sincerity, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked. I will maintain mine own ways before him. My step hath not turned out of the way, nor mine heart walked after mine eyes, nor hath any blot cleaved to my hands." But perhaps he went too far, even in his own defence; and we grant that some of his expressions are incon-

sistent with that humility which marked his general character.

He was not ignorant of his own depraved and sinful state, and at times he made a suitable acknowledgment of it: "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O Thou preserver of men? Though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge." But he certainly forgot his proper place, both as a creature and a sinner, when he so confidently appealed to the tribunal of God, and challenged Him to dispute the matter: "Let him take his rod away from me: and let not his fear terrify me: then would I speak, and not fear him. Surely I would speak to the Almighty; and I desire to reason with God. Call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me. Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me."

We discover in Job the most evident marks of meekness and resignation; and hence he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.—All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." But we cannot reconcile it with due submission that he should dwell upon his sufferings with loud and continual complaints: and we feel a mixture of grief and horror when we hear him expressing his wish to be destroyed and charging God

with cruelty: "Oh that I might have my request! and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth: mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me."

In the midst of his distresses we perceive him to be supported by a lively dependence upon God, and "a hope full of immortality." He prophesied of the Redeemer's coming; and, as if he were favoured with clear views of gospel light, he testified his firm expectation of a resurrection to life eternal, and of the beatific vision of God, through the merits of his Saviour. We almost envy his situation, when we hear him cry out, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." But how short the consolation! How sad a difference do we discover! At other times the very foundation of his faith was shaken; his mind was filled with horror and confusion, and distracted with black, melancholy, and despairing thoughts. What else is implied in such complaints as these? "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. He hath

also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him."

Are there not those, at this very time, who, with the sincerest piety, are yet tempted to give up all expectations of mercy, and often distracted with thoughts, distressing to themselves, and dishonourable to God? This is indeed a "fiery trial," of all others the most painful. But let them not be surprised or staggered, "as though some strange thing happened unto them." While they behold one, so excellent, and so dear to God, as Job was, in a similar situation, let them not despond, but hope for a happy issue.

When the fruitless altercation between Job and his three friends had continued for a long time, another person is introduced to our notice, Elihu, who, as a moderator between them, takes up the debate with great wisdom, and condemns both the parties. He freely censures Job for the very failings which we have noted in him, but does not therefore charge him with hypocrisy, as the others had done.

At length the God of heaven interposed, and decided the controversy in favour of Job, but not till He had first very sharply reproved the good man for his folly. With awful solemnity, the Lord summoned him to His tribunal, there to answer for his presumptuous expressions. Such an opportunity of speaking for himself Job had often solicited, boasting that he could order his cause before Him. But

it is not so easy as sinners may imagine, to contend with the Almighty face to face. The most holy persons, if called to a strict account, would be confounded in His presence.

The address of the Lord God upon this occasion was most remarkable. To silence and to humble Job, He represented His own glorious majesty, His unsearchable wisdom, His irresistible power, and uncontrollable sovereignty, as the Maker, Preserver, Governor, and Judge of His creatures. How small a part of what He does, both in creation and in providence, do we understand! and that little is enough to show us our own utter ignorance and weakness. We perceive from His works, which are most stupendous, how great a God HE is! "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Shall we, then, undertake to instruct Him, or quarrel with His dispensations, as if we could have contrived or managed matters better? Oh, the sin and the folly of pride and impatience in worms and sinners! The same argument which is here pressed upon Job, St Paul makes use of, in order to obviate at once all our vain objections to the righteous government of God: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Job could not stand upon his own defence, or maintain a contest with the Almighty God. He was instantly ashamed and confounded, for having dared

to complain of the Divine conduct ; he confessed his guilt, and presumed not to utter one word more.

“ Behold,” said he, “ I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer : yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further.”

This was a suitable submission, becoming a fallen creature. But, to fix this temper more firmly in the mind of Job, the Lord God went on with the representation of His own stupendous works, which are far beyond our power to control, or even our understanding to comprehend. The design was, to convince Job more fully of his impotence and insignificance ; and at length it appeared that the end was obtained. He acknowledged the sovereignty of God, and his own baseness in having spoken things which he knew not. Now he perceived, more than ever he had done before, the glorious character of God ; and the consequence was, the deepest abasement of soul, under a sense of extreme vileness : “ I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth Thee : wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Thus was Job effectually recovered to his obedience, and established in a right frame of mind. Nor are we, under our severest trials in the way, to be delivered, till we be laid low with profound humility, till all our boastings and complaints be silenced : “ For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” Shall we not, then, inquire, what

spirit are we of? If even Job failed in the judgment, shall any of us undertake to justify ourselves, or dare to contend with the God of heaven? Are we aware of the greatness of His majesty? "Have we an arm like God? or can we thunder with a voice like him?" Have we not yet to learn what is our own character? Or are we willing to adopt the confession of this righteous man, "Behold, I am vile!" Would not such language be thought too mean and degrading for us? And yet it suited the most eminent saint that was then upon the earth, at the very time when he was evidently under the highest influence of divine grace. Will it not, therefore, be the most horrid presumption for us to indulge the vain conceit of any native goodness, or meritorious obedience?

It will become us also to examine, what have we understood of the holy nature of God? Has not all our knowledge of Him hitherto been only like "the hearing of the ear?" What have we seen of His glory, or discovered of His excellency, for ourselves? Is it not owing to our ignorance of His perfections that we do not more unfeignedly "abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes?" "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

No sooner was Job made truly sensible of his offences, than the divine favour was manifested towards him. The Lord himself pleaded the cause of His servant against those who had accused him,

asserted his integrity, and sharply reproved them for their rash judgment. They were even referred to the man whom they had condemned as a hypocrite, that he might offer sacrifice, and pray for them. Thus the very dark cloud, which had long hovered about Job, began to disperse; and the prospect brightened around him.

Perhaps many of God's dearest children may lie under the most unjust reproaches, which they are unable to remove. But it will become them to be more solicitous to preserve a proper temper in themselves than to confute their adversaries. Their cause is in good hands, where they should be content to leave it, till God himself shall "make manifest the counsels of the hearts." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." But does not the thought of that day strike a terror into the consciences of sinners? What transactions of iniquity will then be disclosed before the assembled universe! And how base will many characters appear, which may now be admired amongst men!

It was an honour put upon Job, and likewise a testimony of his meek and loving spirit, that "he prayed for his friends." Nor can we have a stronger proof that prayers and intercessions for each other, especially for our offending brethren, are peculiarly acceptable to God, than what is here related. For then "the Lord turned the captivity of Job," when his resentment against his accusers was extinguished,

and he put up to heaven his charitable petitions for them. The poor sufferer was restored to great abundance and prosperity: he received even twice as much as he had before possessed; so that his latter end was better than his beginning. The Lord gave him favour amongst an extensive acquaintance, a very large property, a numerous issue, and an honourable old age. "He brought him out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake his bands in sunder. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

What cannot He do for His people, since "the earth is His, and the fulness thereof?" We do not, indeed, expect the same kind of interposition as Job had, but we look for a still happier restoration in the world above. Thither let us direct our views, "and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." What, though we should suffer to the latest hour? If we suffer with Jesus, we shall be also glorified together. After a few years of disease and poverty, Lazarus was conveyed into Abraham's bosom; and very soon shall all the faithful followers of the Lamb, "who come out of great tribulation," share in the same exalted honour and felicity, "when the Lord shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

Be encouraged, therefore, you afflicted, despised, and tempted believers! Learn from this history, with what meekness and submission you should bear

your trials. Wait, and trust, and rejoice; and you shall not be disappointed of your expectation. In the meantime, let the prospect of the kingdom prepared for you, enliven and animate your souls.

But may we not warn careless sinners of approaching destruction? Some, who may cast their eyes upon these pages, may know nothing of the temptations of Satan, of which we have been speaking. Are you therefore, we would ask, in a safer state? It is the usual device of the devil to stupify and lull to sleep, not to alarm by any violent assault, those whom he leads captive at his will. But, though you may not be tempted, it is not probable, in the common course of providence, that you will avoid afflictions: and, when your most beloved enjoyments are taken from you, have you any principles from which you can derive support and comfort? Or, what deliverance do you look for? May you not justly fear that yours are only "the beginning of sorrows?" And how terrible a case,—to suffer both here and for ever! Oh, be alarmed for your danger, you that forget God! "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."



GIDEON,

WHO FOUGHT IN THE FEAR OF GOD.

THE descendants of Israel were under the arms of the tribes of the east of Canaan. They had grown peaceful, and had forgotten their Protector during the forty years of prosperity and tranquillity that had been vouchsafed them. Every time of harvest, the Midianites or other robbers collected their fighting men and made inroads upon Israel. The Hebrews fled into secret caves, where they hid also their goods and grain. By degrees, as they encountered no opposition, the Midianites brought with them their camels and cattle, and fed them in numbers on the territory they occupied, and thus injured the future crops. From their place of concealment, the Israelites, who had found during the seven years they had been thus visited, that the idols which they had erected had naturally left their appeals unanswered, began to turn to the only God. Their prayers went up from the caverns and clefts in the rocks. They were heard.

The robbers were hourly expected to come up

through the valley and scour the country around the Abiezrites. The people were in motion everywhere; some hurrying to the mountains, others burying valuables in the ground, others vainly imploring help of their idols. A great number of the latter were collected around the altar of the principal idol Baal in the sacred grove, offering up gifts to entreat his intercession. Joash, who had this place of worship on his grounds, was there with his household. His son Gideon, who had kept his faith pure, had not been willing to join with them, but, on the contrary, was threshing wheat so as to have the grain in smaller compass for the hiding of it from the Midianites. As he laboured, from the void air he heard the Invisible speak—"Thou mighty man of valour, the Lord is with thee. Continue with your heart thus fixed, and you shall save Israel. I have sent you." Gideon looked about him; there was no living thing near him. He dropped his flail and, knowing that the ground was hallowed at the moment by something more than natural, he knelt with bowed head.

"Oh, my Lord, for it is Thou alone who deigns to speak to me, I am but poor, and my family is of little rank in the tribe of Manasseh. Wherewith, saving Thy substance, am I to rescue our land."

"The Lord, whose angel I am, chooses His weapons where He wills. The earthen jar is often set above the golden vase. Gideon of Manasseh, you are called. Not alone, but with the Lord's your arm shall strike."

"Oh, how I thank you that I so humble, should

have found grace in Thy all-seeing sight!" said Gideon, rising. "Let me offer you, the messenger, my present ere you go."

And the answer was—"I will tarry till you come again."

With quick feet Gideon darted into the house, and speedily prepared a kid and some unleavened cakes, as he was told to do. A fire spread all over the stones, and consumed the meat and cakes. When Gideon looked up, the angel was gone. Gideon was one of the sentinels around his father's farm. He led off, in the night, ten of the serving-men who stood on guard, into the sacred grove, and, while he set them at work chopping down the trees, he himself pushed off the idol Baal from the pedestal, and destroyed it and the altar. Then he built with other stones a new altar, on which he sacrificed a young bullock which he had brought with his little band. He did this work in the night, so as to be uninterrupted by his father or the citizens.

When morning came, the people ran about in amazement to spread the news that Baal had permitted his image to be debased, his altar overthrown, and the wood cut down.

"Who has brought this evil?" was the question in everybody's mouth. To this the answer came soon—"Gideon, the son of Joash."

The people, in anger hastened to Joash's house, where, with fierce shouts, they demanded that he should give up to them his son, so that he might be

put to death in expiation of the contempt he had shown to the object of their worship. But Gideon had already informed his father of all.

"Friends, brothers of my tribes," said the latter, "do you really plead for Baal? You know how I have contributed to his fame and glory by my many sacrifices, so I have some right in him. The grove stands on my lands, too. But I have seen my folly, friends. Baal is no god. Let him fight his own battles, and let us, meanwhile, rally in the name of the real God of our fathers, who showed so many times His undeniable power." Like himself, the Israelites had their eyes opened.

When the Midianites and their allies had come to the borders of Abiezrites, they saw Joash and Gideon mustering a force against them. The sight made them hesitate and fear, and they encamped in the vale of Jezreel. The Israelites outnumbered the intruders as three to one, but the enemy were not much alarmed at them. Gideon's design was not the mere beating back of the foe, but the re-installation of the true God. He wanted to prove that success came from the righteousness of the cause, and not by its banded thousands. So at night he knelt in a retired spot to entreat a proof.

"O gracious Lord, I fear to take upon myself in youth so broad a burden, even in Thy hallowed name. If I am still to be honoured with Thy task, may I ask this test, O Lord? See, I tear from my sheepskin coat a scrap of fleece. It is dry. I bury

it in the ground. If the dew shall fall all around about, and yet if it shall only damp the wool and leave dry the earth around, I shall know I am yet favoured, and that Israel will be saved."

When he rose early and hurried to the spot, the ground was dry around, but the fleece was heavy in his hands, and he wrung drops from it a whole bowl full. A day passed, and at night he knelt once more.

"Merciful Lord, who is slow to anger, let not Thy wrath be inflamed against Thy servant. Only this once, this once only, do I venture to doubt. Let the fleece be dry, and the ground wet, if Thou wilt, my Master."

The dew fell heavily as rain that evening; the sentries could scarcely keep the fires ablaze from the sheets of moisture; their coats and the tents were glistening with the fine watery drops. But when Gideon took up the wool, it was dry as if from air even. Yet the earth surrounding the little grave which it had occupied was soft with the abundance of the fall.

Then Gideon, to reduce his force, proclaimed that those need not stay in face of the foe who were afraid, or more urgently required home. Two-and-twenty thousand of the host took advantage of the permission and left the camp. Of the ten thousand left, Gideon determined to take only the hardier ones. In going down the mountain, they had to cross a torrent, and the army stopped on the bank to drink. Some delicately looked around for vessels in which

to scoop up the water and carry it to their mouths; others took pieces of bark and hollow stones as cups, those that had vessels used them, and those who had none formed them out of their joined hands. But the soldiers whose minds were set upon action, went down on hands and knees to the water and drank in that way, or by lapping it up like a dog. These Gideon chose. He halted his host, and picked out the men he had observed, who amounted to nearly three hundred.

When the shadows had deepened, Gideon, with only one man, left his friends and stealthily glided down into the valley. The two spies had the fortune to slip within the hostile lines between two of the camp-fires. Gideon's eyes flashed as he saw what an amount of damage the robbers had already done. Two soldiers were asleep quite near where they had crawled, and though Gideon had not made a sound, one awoke. "Wake up, man of Oreb," said he to his comrade; "I have had a strange vision; would you believe it, I thought a great cake of unleavened bread rolled down the hill yonder where the Hebrews have been massing themselves this last week, down into this valley, and up into our camp, where it ran against our chief's tent, which was struck to the ground, as low as if a simoom had swept over it."

Gideon stole away with his follower and regained his command. He awoke all the thousands and bade them be in readiness, while he called together his three hundred. These he divided into three com-

panies, and made each man take a trumpet of metal or horn, an empty earthen jug, and a lamp. They lit the latter, but hid the flame in the pitchers, as they moved cautiously down. Then he gave the orders, and added: "When I blow my trumpet, which you will know from its silver tone, be that your signal to carry out my orders and raise the war-cry. In the Lord be your trust, every man!"

They scattered thereupon, and filed off right and left, till they formed an outer line to that of the enemy's outposts in a half-circle around their front. The Midianites, still seeing the Hebrews moving about in the glimmer of their own fires on the opposite eminences, were far from dreaming that part of them were already below the height.

All of a sudden, directly in their faces in the centre, there split the stilly air a blast from a silver trumpet. The watchers started from their semi-sleep on their spears, and looked and listened. On all sides before them, many blasts arose from behind rock, bush, and tree. The men of Gideon dashed the pitchers against trees and stones, and swinging the unveiled lamps over their heads with their left hands, united to cry like one man for unity, and like the thunders for force—"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon is upon you!"

A panic seized the whole host of the invaders. Starting up out of sleep, and seeing the advancing row of flashing lamps with half-opened eyes, they might well be startled. Not a man dreamt of resist-

ance or delay—no thought of plunder, horse, camel, or friend; self alone was the motto in that headlong flight. They pressed themselves into narrow defiles, they trod down one another. The weakest went to the wall and were pushed over precipices. A shower of stones and darts began to fall upon the rearmost, and these latter rushed on and prevented the rallying no one thought of attempting.

There never had been so great a defeat since the days of Joshua. The border of the Israelites was extended far into the enemies' territory by the victories that followed. The Hebrews, more grateful to the visible instrument than to the Invisible but Evident Power, desired Gideon to rule them.

"Brothers," said he, "only the Lord should be over you. I will not take the government, nor shall my son succeed me, as you wish. If you are determined to show your gratitude to me rather than to Him from whom were the victories, let every one of you give me the ear-rings from the slain foemen."

With the precious metal thus obtained, Gideon made a rich girdle for the priests. But he would not receive any reward throughout the forty years of peace and happiness, during which he lived contented, seeing the country around him looking up to the King of Heaven alone.

NIMMO'S

SUNDAY AND WEEK - DAY REWARD BOOKS.

~~~~~  
*Foolecap 8vo, cloth extra, gilt edges, Illustrated, price 1s. 6d. each.*  
~~~~~

1. **The Sculptor of Bruges.** By Mrs. W. G. Hall.
2. **Christmas at the Beacon: A Tale for the Young.** By Ellen PALMER.
3. **The Sea and the Savages: A Story of Adventure.** By HAROLD LINCOLN.
4. **The Swedish Singer; or, The Story of Vanda Rosendahl.** By Mrs. W. G. HALL.
5. **My Beautiful Home; or, Lily's Search.** By Chas. Bruce.
6. **Summer Holidays at Silversea.** By E. Rosalie Salmon.
7. **Fred Graham's Resolve.** By the Author of 'Mat and Sofie,' etc. etc.
8. **Wilton School; or, Harry Campbell's Revenge.** A Tale. By F. E. WEATHERLY.
9. **Grace Harvey and her Cousins.**
10. **Blind Meroy; and other Tales for the Young.** By Gertrude CROCKFORD.
11. **Evan Lindsay.** By Margaret Fraser Tytler, Author of 'Tales of Good and Great Kings,' 'Tales of the Great and Brave,' etc.
12. **Harvey Sinclair; or, A Lesson for Life.** By the Author of 'Mat and Sofie,' 'Fred Graham's Resolve.'
13. **The Boys of Willoughby School: A Tale.** By Robert RICHARDSON, B.A., Author of 'The Cold Shoulder,' 'Our Junior Mathematical Master,' etc.

Complete Catalogues of W. P. NIMMO & CO.'S Publications
may be had post free on application.

William P. Nimmo & Co., Edinburgh.

NIMMO'S ONE SHILLING FAVOURITE REWARD BOOKS.

Demy 18mo, Illustrated, cloth extra, price 1s. each; also in gilt side and edges, price 1s. 6d. each.

1. **The Vicar of Wakefield.** Poems and Essays. By OLIVER GOLDSMITH.
2. **Esop's Fables, with Instructive Applications.** By Dr. CROXALL.
3. **Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.**
4. **The Young Man-of-War's Man.** By CHARLES NORDHOFF, Author of 'Seeing the World.'
5. **The Treasury of Anecdote: Moral and Religious.**
6. **The Boy's Own Workshop; or, The Young Carpenters.** By JACOB ABBOTT.
7. **The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.**
8. **The History of Sandford and Merton.**
9. **Evenings at Home; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened.**
10. **Unexpected Pleasures; or, Left alone in the Holidays.** By Mrs. GEORGE CUPPLES, Author of 'Norrie Seton,' etc.
11. **The Beauties of Shakespeare.** With a General Index by the Rev. WILLIAM DODD, LL.D.
12. **Gems from 'The Spectator.'** A Selection from the most admired Writings of Addison and Steele.
13. **Burns' Poetical Works.** With a Complete Glossary.
14. **The Sketch Book.** By WASHINGTON IRVING.

* * The above Series of elegant and useful books is specially prepared for the entertainment and instruction of young persons.

NIMMO'S POPULAR RELIGIOUS GIFT BOOKS.

18mo, finely printed on toned paper, handsomely bound in cloth extra, price 1s. each.

1. **Across the River: Twelve Views of Heaven.** By NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.; R. W. HAMILTON, D.D.; ROBERT S. CANDLISH, D.D.; JAMES HAMILTON, D.D., etc. etc. etc.
2. **The Chastening of Love: Words of Consolation for the Christian Mourner.** By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D., Manchester.
3. **The Cedar Christian, and other Practical Papers.** By the Rev. THEODORE L. CUTLER.
4. **The Orphan; or, Words of Comfort for the Fatherless and Motherless.**
5. **Spirit of the Old Divines.**
6. **Choice Gleanings from Sacred Writers.**
7. **Direction in Prayer; or, The Lord's Prayer Illustrated in a Series of Expositions.** By PETER GRANT, D.D., Author of 'Emblems of Jesus,' etc.
8. **Scripture Imagery.** By PETER GRANT, D.D., Author of 'Emblems of Jesus,' etc.

Nimmo's Sixpenny Juvenile Books.

*Small Foolscap 8vo, Illustrated, handsomely bound in cloth,
price 6d. each.*

1. *Pearls for Little People.*
2. *Great Lessons for Little People.*
3. *Reason in Rhyme: A Poetry Book for the Young.*
4. *Æsop's Little Fable Book.*
5. *Grapes from the Great Vine.*
6. *The Pot of Gold.*
7. *Story Pictures from the Bible.*
8. *The Tables of Stone: Illustrations of the Commandments.*
9. *Ways of Doing Good.*
10. *Stories about our Dogs.* By HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.
11. *The Red-Winged Goose.*
12. *The Hermit of the Hills.*
13. *Effie's Christmas, and other Stories.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
14. *A Visit to Grandmother, and other Stories for the Young.*
15. *Bible Stories for Young People.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
16. *The Little Woodman and his Dog CÆSAR.* By MRS. SHEERWOOD.
17. *Among the Mountains: Tales for the Young.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
18. *Little Gems for Little Readers.*
19. *Do your Duty, come what will, and other Stories for the Young.*
20. *Noble Joe: A Tale for Children.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
21. *Lucy Vernon, and other Stories for the Young.*
22. *Anecdotes of Favourite Animals told for Children.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
23. *Little Henry and his Bearer.* By MRS. SHEERWOOD.
24. *The Holidays at Wilton, and other Stories.* By ADELAIDE AUSTEN.
25. *Chryssie Lyle: A Tale for the Young.* By CECIL SCOTT.
26. *Little Elsie among the Quarries.* By ELLEN PALMER.
27. *The Lesson of Obedience.* By the Rev. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.
28. *The Lesson of Diligence.* By the Rev. RICHARD NEWTON, D.D.
29. *Fergus: A Tale.* By JACOB ABBOTT.
30. *Gilbert and his Mother.* By JACOB ABBOTT.
31. *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.* By HANNAH MORE.
32. *Emily Barton, and other Stories.* By CHARLES and MARY LAMB.
33. *Elizabeth Villiers, and other Stories.* By CHARLES and MARY LAMB.
34. *The Grateful Negro.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH.
35. *Forgive and Forget.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH.
36. *Waste not, Want not.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH.
37. *The False Key.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH.
38. *The Bracelets.* By MARIA EDGEWORTH.

Nimmo's Fourpenny Juvenile Books.

The above Series of Books is also kept in embossed and illuminated paper cover, beautifully printed in gold from entirely new designs, price 4d. each.

NIMMO'S
SUNDAY-SCHOOL REWARD BOOKS.
IN PACKETS.

PENNY BOOKS. Twelve Books in Packet.

In demy 18mo, 16 pp., Illustrated. Coloured Wrapper with beautiful design. Price 1s. each Packet.

PACKET I., Twelve kinds. | PACKET IV., Twelve kinds.

"	II.,	"		"	V.,	"
"	III.,	"		"	VI.,	"

TWOPENNY BOOKS. Six Books in Packet.

In demy 18mo, 32 pp., Illustrated. Coloured Wrapper with beautiful design. Price 1s. each Packet.

PACKET I., . Six kinds. | PACKET IV., . Six kinds.

"	II.,	.	"		"	V.,	.	"
"	III.,	.	"		"	VI.,	.	"

The above SUNDAY-SCHOOL REWARD PACKETS also kept in Volumes, demy 18mo, cloth extra, price 1s. each, or in gilt back and edges, price 1s. 6d. each, under the following titles:

1. **George and his Penny**, by Mrs. SHERWOOD; and other Tales.
2. **The Young Apprentice**, by JANE TAYLOR; and other Tales.
3. **Faithful unto Death**, by CHARLES BRUCE; and other Tales.
4. **My Little Teachers**, and other Tales.
5. **Brave and True**, and other Tales.
6. **Emily's Temptation**, and other Tales.
7. **The Negro Servant**, by Rev. LEIGH RICHMOND; and other Tales.
8. **The Orange Girl of St. Giles**, and other Tales.
9. **The Orange Grove**, by Mrs. SHERWOOD; and other Tales.
10. **Little Nat**, and other Tales.
11. **Learning by Experience**, and other Tales.
12. **The Orphan's Friend**, by JAMES F. COBB; and other Tales.

* * *The above Series of SUNDAY-SCHOOL REWARD BOOKS comprises some of the best selected Tales, written specially for Youth, by Mrs. SHERWOOD, JANE TAYLOR, RICHARD ROWE, JAMES F. COBB, F.R.G.S., CHARLES BRUCE, and other popular and well-known Authors. The moral teaching in each, though given in the form of a Story, is sound, healthy, and unmistakeable, while they are all written in a way which cannot fail to prove interesting and attractive to the very youngest class of readers.*