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BIOGRAPHY.

THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER'S life and actions were of such a nature, that we may easily conceive the excess of *praise* and of *cen- sure*, which from different quarters must have fallen to his share. This renders it more difficult to discern his true cha- racter. However, as we are led by no partial attachments we shall endeavour to give as unbiassed an account of his life as we can gather from his own writings, and from those who have written concerning him. And, if in a life of such impor- tance, and so full of events, we exceed our usual bounds, we flatter ourselves with the hope of our readers indulgence.

Luther, was born at *Isleben*, in the county of *Mansfield*, in the circle of *Upper Saxony*, on the 10th of *November*, 1483, being the eve of *St. Martin's* day, which occasioned his pa- rents to give him the name of *Martin*. His father and mo- ther, who were of no very high degree, lived before this, at a little distant village; and being called by some affairs of con- sequence to *Isleben*, the good woman there fell in labour and brought forth her son. They continued not long at *Isleben* but removed to *Mansfield*, where *John Luther*, the father, pursued his trade of a refiner of metals; from which we are told, he had his name; *Luther* or *Luder*, in the German lan- guage having that signification.

Very honorable mention is made of the piety of Martin's parents: they were solicitous to give their son a good education, and accordingly placed him at the best schools, suitable to his age, which their situation and circumstances allowed. When he had finished his grammar studies at Magdeburg, and Eifenach, he was removed to Erfurth, an university in Thuringia, where he went through a course of Aristotelian Philosophy; was admitted Master of Arts in 1503, being then twenty years old, and afterwards was elected professor of Natural Philosophy and Ethics, though it was his parents intention and desire, that he should apply himself particularly to the study of the Civil Law. His attention and application to study were remarkable; and young as he was, he disapproved the motives of ambition and worldly glory, by which masters generally incite young men to diligence, saying, that no principle was so powerful to awaken the mind to diligence and virtue, as the sincere love of God: hence he used often to repeat, "Study began with prayer is half completed." However it pleased God, who had eminent services for him to perform, to draw him nearer and nearer to himself, by degrees. A severe sickness seized him; and the apprehension of death alarmed him. An old priest visited him, and amongst other things, we are told, said to him; "Young batchelor be of good courage, this sickness is not unto death; our God will make you a great man, for the consolation of many; for whom God loves, and prepares as an instrument of salvation to others, upon him he lays the cross, in due time; and in the school of suffering, they who are patient and submissive, learn many important lessons."—Recovered from this sickness, it happened, that as he was one day walking in the fields with a particular friend, he himself was struck to the ground, and his friend killed by lightning; the horror and consternation of which was such, that he vowed from that moment, to leave the world, and enter into a monastery; for within the sacred walls of such religious houses,

the superstition of these times had confined all sanctity: He performed his resolution; and was admitted into the monastery of Augustines at Erfurth, in the year 1507.

This was contrary to the knowledge, and contrary to the approbation of his father: but the commonly received doctrine of these times was, that those parents were not to be obeyed, who desired to prevent their children from taking the monastic vow; in proof of which they perversely applied the words of scripture, *we must obey God rather than men*. He was however, well satisfied afterwards, of the impropriety of his conduct; I solemnly declare, says he, I entered not upon a monastic life to indulge my belly or my ease, but wholly instigated by the anxieties of my conscience, which I hoped by this means to quiet. And, when I might have been of much service, by my example, and by my instruction at Erfurth; leaving my parents and relations, nay opposing them all, I preposterously took upon me the Cowl, because I was persuaded, that by this kind of miserable life, I should highly please God."

His situation in that monastery was not very desirable; his brethren made him porter and scavenger, and employed him to gather in their charitable contributions through the city. His father's remonstrances too, when he came to see him, added to his disquietude. For when he told him the tale of the fact, which induced him to enter the monastery; the good old man said, "I wish, my son, this is not a deceit and illusion of the devil," adding beside, whatever you have heard and been told, "Have you not heard that parents are to be obeyed?" Thus uneasy and distressed, he was so happy as to obtain a Latin Bible, which he read with unwearied attention, and found the only relief to his mind: he was soon after ordained priest, in the twenty-fourth year of his age; and then with all diligence, applied himself to the reading of the schoolmen, amongst whom Ocean was his favorite: we are told that he

was a perfect master of St. Austin, of Gabriel, and Cameracensis; and was well skilled in the ecclesiastical historians.

The tenderness and anxiety of his conscience yet continued: and though he was laborious in duty, and never omitted the very perfection of study, prayer, fasting, and watching; he could not obtain that ease and serenity, to which his temper naturally inclined. Staupitius greatly comforted him—“Martain, (said he,) you don't know how necessary and useful this trial may be to you; for God doth not exercise you thus without cause: you will find, that he will use your ministry for the performance of something great.”—But an old monk of the convent, with whom he used frequently to converse, gave him the greatest consolation; he told him respecting the article of *forgiveness of sins*, that it was the commandment of God, that not individuals only, as Peter, and David, &c. but that every man should believe his sins to be forgiven, through faith in Christ. This led Luther to new enquiries. He found the old monk's doctrine confirmed by St. Bernard, who says, “that man is freely justified by faith:” he then perceived the meaning of St. Paul, when he says, “we are justified by faith.” And this great doctrine he continually opposed to the Romish error of the merit of works. They held, that man by works of his own, prayer, fasting, corporal afflictions, &c. might merit and claim pardon.—Luther taught, that pardon was freely given to sinners, through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ—a faith which was never unattended, when real, with all the ample and excellent fruits of righteousness.—This doctrine, to which he was before so much a stranger, gave much consolation to his conscience.

Frederic, the III^d. elector of Saxony, established an university at Wittenberg in the year 1502. The conduct of the affair, and the choice of professors, teachers, &c. was committed to Luther's friend Staupitius, and Millerstod, a doctor of great merit and learning. Having an high opinion of Lu?

ther's religion, learning, and industry, in 1508 they sent for him, from Erfurth to Wittenberg, where he taught Philosophy and was much attended. He first expounded the Logic and Philosophy of Aristotle in the schools; disputed often and discovered the greatest acuteness and penetration; still, striking out something new and contrary, to the old and received Theology of those times, which in various particulars, he treated with some freedom. Observing these things Millerstad is reported to have said; "This same monk will perplex all our teachers, will propose a new doctrine, and reform the whole Romish church. For he is intent upon reading the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and depends upon the words of Jesus Christ. These, neither the philosophers, nor sophists, neither Scotists, Albertists, nor Thomists can subvert and confound."

Luther, during this time, maintained the highest and most devoted reverence for the church of Rome. A quarrel between some Augustine monks and their vicar general, occasioned him to take a journey thither, deputed as he was to manage the cause; which he transacted with great reputation. His spirit, like St. Paul's at Athens, was moved within him when he saw the superstition and impiety of the religious there; and he used afterwards to say, that he would not buy have seen Rome, for a million of florins.— Upon his return, he took the degree of Doctor of Divinity, to which his friend Staupitius obliged him; and he was graduated Doctor at the expence of Frederic, the elector; in the negociation of which, he found such difficulties, that he had almost resolved to leave Leipfic, (whither he went to the elector) and gave up his design. Amongst the other reasons he gives to excuse himself to Staupitius, he says, that men should be fixed upon, more proper, and of much better health, than himself, whose weak and sickly frame of body, gave him no hopes of a long continuence in life. In another place he says of himself, that he was more like a corpse, than a man—which account of

himself is confirmed by Mosallanfes, who tells us, "Martin is of a moderate stature, a meagre body exhausted both by care and study, so that when you look nearly at him, you may almost count all his bones." Averse however as he was to be created *doctor*, it afterwards gave him great satisfaction, since the oath which he took in consequence obliged him to the performance of those duties for which otherwise he could have had no plea; and on account of which he despised all the thunder of the papal *anathemas*.

From the time he was made doctor, in 1512 to the year 1517 he applied himself industriously to the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages; to the explaining the scriptures publicly, especially St. Paul's epistles to the Romans, and Galatians, and the Psalms. Learning began greatly to revive: Erasmus was an useful instrument; so useful, that it was said, "He laid the egg which Luther hatched." Men of sense and probity were on Luther's side, and while he discredited the false philosophy of Aristotle and the schools, he had many friends. He used all his endeavours to this purpose, and to shew his opinion of Aristotle, he says in one of his letters, "If Aristotle had not been flesh, I should not have been ashamed to assert, that he was the devil." It deserves also to be remarked, that his life was entirely blameless, while he was thus instrumental in paving the way for that great *reformation*, which God wrought by him.

It may be necessary just to observe, that the state of the church was never more corrupt, than at this time. The Popes Alexander the sixth and Julius the second, were generally and deservedly abhorred; and as to Leo the tenth, who now filled the chair, all the world knows how loose he sat to religion. "The conduct of the dignified Clergy (says bishop Burnet) throughout all Europe, had long given infinite scandal. The bishops were grossly ignorant: they seldom resided in their dioceses, except to riot at high festivals; and all the effect their residence could have, was to corrupt others by their ill example.

They followed the courts of princes, and aspired to the greatest offices. The abbots and monks were wholly given up to luxury and idleness; and it appeared by the unmarried state of the seculars and regulars, that the restraining them from having wives of their own, made them conclude they had a right to all other mens. The inferior clergy were no better, and not having places of retreat to conceal their vices in, as the monks had, they became more public. In sum, all ranks of churchmen were so universally despised and hated, that the world was very apt to be possessed with prejudices against their doctrines, for the sake of the men, whose interest it was to support them: and the worship of God was so much defiled with gross superstition, that, without great enquiries, all men were easily convinced, that the church stood in much need of a *reformation*."—In this crisis, Luther designing no such thing, was led from small beginnings to the perfecting, that great work which we will proceed to trace.

Pope Julius the second began the building of the magnificent church of St. Peter at Rome, he left it unfinished to his successor Leo the tenth; who desirous to complete this superb edifice, but being himself involved in debt, and finding the apostolic chamber exhausted, he had recourse to the selling of indulgences, a gainful traffic, for the procuring him a sum of money. And accordingly in 1517, he published general indulgences throughout all Europe to such as would contribute to the building of St. Peter's. The sum of *ten shillings* was sufficient to purchase the pardon of sins, and the ransom of a soul from purgatory!

A Dominican friar, John Tezel, of infamous character who had been condemned, but escaped punishment, for the crime of adultery, was employed in this dirty work, in that part of Germany under the jurisdiction of Albert, archbishop of Mentz and Magdeburgh. And as all the money collected in Saxony was granted to the Pope's sister, Magdalen, (notwithstanding the pretence of building the church) these indul-

gences were scandalously let out to farm without any regard to time or place; they were sold for trifles they were played for at hazard in taverns they absolved both the living and the dead. All good and reasonable people were greatly scandalized at these infamous proceedings: Luther (for his part) not only preached against indulgences, but published certain propositions, wherein he abundantly exposed them; and placed these propositions publicly on the church, that joins to the castle of Wittenberg. This was the alarm for war; and this the great æra of the reformation. These propositions are still extant: in one part of them he says, "it is a foul error, for a man to think he can make satisfaction for his sins, which God out of his inestimable clemency, both always and freely forgives and remits, requiring nothing more from us in return, than that we should lead the remainder of our life according to his laws." Tezel and his party preached and wrote against Luther, with great violence, and little argument. Luther replied; and at the end, "When at length, says he, Tezel was wearied with torturing scripture, all his darts are thrown at me, and I am called heresiarch, heretic, schismatic, erroneous, rash calumnious." To these things I reply; "The Lord give grace both to him and to me, Amen." How much it is to be wished, that he had always maintained so much moderation and temper! Tezel, who was by no means an equal match for Luther, (whose scandalous life made him odious, insomuch that the emperor Maximilian had resolved to have him seized, put in a bag, and thrown into the river) in a public thesis at Francfort upon Oder, opposed Luther; and having the power of the church on his side, burned Luther's propositions, and threatened him with the same fate. But he was not to be daunted by menaces of this kind: his courage rose in proportion to his difficulties: and finding himself thus engaged, he endeavoured by all the force of reason and scripture, to support that, which appeared to him, the truth.—As he had not the most distant intention

of opposing the papal powers, he wrote a very submissive letter to archbishop Albert, apologizing for his proceedings, and imploring his protection: "Papal indulgences are carried about says he, under your illustrious title, for the building, of St. Peter's church; in which I do not accuse the exclamations of the preachers, which I have not heard; but I grieve for the erroneous opinions, which the people conceive from them, which they every where vent unhappily believing, that if they purchase those letters of indulgences, they are secure of salvation: that souls will immediately escape from purgatory, when they cast their contributions into the chest. Nay so great is the grace which they suppose, arising from them that there is no sin so heinous, but they believe it may be remitted, &c. O good God; thus the souls committed to your care, most excellent father! are instructed for eternal death; and a most severe account to be rendered by you for them all, is thus made and daily encreased! For this reason I could no longer keep silence."

He afterwards wrote to Jerom, bishop of Brandenburg, his Diocesan, who advised him not to intermeddle in these troublesome affairs. But he was engaged; and in a preface, which he afterwards published before an edition of these *propositions*, &c. He thus gives an account of the state of his mind: "I permit these propositions to be published, by which from the beginning of my cause, I opposed the doctrines of indulgences, so greatly, that the success and importance of the affair, which afterwards ensued must be attributed not to me but to God only; for by these propositions my shame and extreme weakness is discovered, and it is seen, *how fearfully I embarked in this business*. I fell into it alone and unawares; and when conscience would not allow me to recede, I yet revered the *pope* most truly and seriously. For how contemptible and miserable a monk was I then; more like a corpse than a man! and how great the majesty of the pope; so that his nod was to be feared not only by the kings of the earth,

but if I may so say, even by heaven and hell! In how great straits my heart was that and the following year; and in what submission, by no means false and feigned, nay almost in what desperation; the secure mind of those can have no idea, who now address the papal majesty with much boldness and pride. But I, who then alone was in danger, was not so bold and confident. I was ignorant of many things, which now by the grace of God, I know. I disputed however, and was desirous of learning. And not finding in the books of divines and canonists, that satisfaction I wished, I was willing to consult and hear the living and the church." He goes on to declare that he was so anxious in the search of truth, that he scarcely knew, whether he slept or waked: and that when he had satisfied himself of the truth from the scripture, he had the utmost difficulty to get over his regard for the authority of the church; "and verily says he, I esteemed the papal church the true one, with a much higher degree of veneration, than those who so perversely and wonderfully now extol it against me."

From hence it is abundantly evident, that Luther had no thought of those consequences, which arose from his propositions. And the letter which he wrote to Leo, imploring his protection, strongly confirms this; he concludes that letter, "I lay myself prostrate at your feet, most blessed pope, with all that I am and have. Save me, kill me, call me, recall me, approve me, condemn me, as you please: I will acknowledge your voice, as the voice of Christ, presiding and speaking in you," &c.—while thus he submitted himself to the pope, and expected his reward; a variety of adversaries with great virulence rose up against him. For all Europe was filled with his doctrines; and sovereign princes thought him not beneath their most careful notice. Eckius, vice chancellor of the university of Ingolstadt, wrote against him; as did Prierias, vicar-general of the Dominicans. Luther answered them both; and the pope himself enjoined silence on the latter: for a bad defender of a good cause, much more of a bad one, is

worse than no defender at all. A third opponent, one Hochstratus, wrote with more fury than the former two, and advised the pope to make use of the irresistible argument of *fire and sword*. Luther made a kind of manifests, against this author, and marked him with the brand of ignorance and cruelty. While his faith and courage marvellously increased, and as there was this year (1518) a meeting of the Augustine friars at Heidelberg, he took a journey thither on foot, though his friends greatly dissuaded him; being strongly commended by the elector of Saxony to the prince of the Palatinate. He disputed there with high credit; and gained many friends and admirers, among the rest the celebrated Bucer.

But as his affair made no small stir in Germany and Italy, Maximilian the emperor wrote to Leo desiring him to put an end to it, speedily as possible, and promising him his assistance. Letters were written from Rome to the elector of Saxony, (who steadily adhered to the cause of Luther) desiring him to give him up. The elector replied, "that Luther was willing to have his cause tried before equitable and proper judges;" but would not consent to his appearing personally at Rome, whither he had been cited, too justly apprehending the danger of his life. Cardinal Cajetan, by the permission of the pope, was at length appointed to hear his cause at Augsburg. Thither Luther came; and behaved with his usual fortitude, prudence and sagacity baffling the arguments of the cardinal, and refusing to revoke his opinions with which alone it was plain the cardinal would be satisfied. Luther's propositions we should have observed, had been condemned at Rome, imprudently by the pope; and the doctrine of indulgences defended; so that there was no probability of compromise; and in a thundering bull the pope had threatened excommunication, and dire interdictions not only against Luther, but against all who should support, encourage, or receive him, in case he submitted not to the holy apostolical church. Finding that nothing could be done at Augsburg,

(though he promised to be silent, in case his adversaries would be the same) and apprehending danger, after having registered his protest, he retreated from thence hastily and early in the morning, without breeches, boots, or spurs, on a borrowed horse; and after a fatiguing journey returned safe to his friends at Wittenberg. While he was at Augsburg he wrote the following letter to his friend Philip Melancthan; "Nothing new or deserving notice is done here, save that the whole city is filled with the rumour of my name, and all are desirous to see a man, the enkindler of such a flame. Do you continue to act, as you do, and instruct with all your power the young men. I go willingly to be offered up, both for you and for them, if it so pleases the Lord. I had rather perish and be deprived of that which is one of my greatest joys, your pleasing conversation, for ever; than revoke what I have said well, and be an occasion of ruining those most excellent studies and pursuits, for their sakes who are the most ignorant and most virulent enemies of letters and study. Italy is clouded with the palpable darkness of Egypt, so ignorant are they of Christ, and of the things which belong to Christ: yet these we hold as the lords and masters of our faith and morals! So the anger of God is fulfilled towards us: *I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.* Farewell, my dear Philip, and labour to avert the anger of God by thy pure and fervent prayers." He gave the elector, after his return from Augsburg, a particular account of the transactions there; as did Cajetan on the other side; and while Luther justly conceiving himself in the utmost peril, resigned himself up to the will of God, (saying "that if he had six hundred lives he would rather give them all up, than recant one article which pertained to the faith of Christ;") his adversaries blackened him with every scandal, as an enemy to all good works, and laboured by all means to work his destruction.

What was the issue, we shall see in our next number; as our compass will not allow us to proceed at present, or to en-

er into the transactions of the following year. We will only observe that during these times of trouble, Luther published several useful and excellent performances, as an explanation of the Lord's Prayer, the Penitential Psalms, the cxth. Psalm, a Dissertation on the word *penitence*, and many other pieces equally adapted to the state of those times. Laying it as an unshaken maxim, that "the sacred scriptures are the sole foundation of all doctrine, and that all human opinions are to be brought to them, as the touchstone." And still averring, in opposition to his adversaries, that whatever draws men from a sincere desire of repenting, is false, dangerous, and to be rejected.

The protection of the elector of Saxony, and the friendship of the university of Wittenberg, were Luther's security. We cannot conclude, without mentioning Ernest duke of Luneberg. "He was sent by his uncle the elector to the university of Wittenberg; where he made a great progress in learning, and had an opportunity to converse with Luther, when he began to discover his sentiments about the hierarchy, and the doctrines of the see of Rome. Ernest boldly embraced the doctrines of Luther; and his example was followed by his brothers Otho and Francis, as also by Philip of the line of Grubenhagen. These princes made the necessary preparations to introduce the reformation in the circle of the Lower Saxony as the elector, their uncle, was doing in that of the Upper Saxony. Ernest was determined to pursue the glorious scheme he had formed, gradually to abolish the errors and abuses, that had crept into the Church. His concern was so great for extending the knowledge of the pure faith, that he generously sent men to the county of Hoya, East Friesland, and other parts of Germany, to preach the gospel in its native simplicity. Such was his zeal in the cause of the reformation, and so many were the difficulties and oppositions he met with on that account, that he justly merited the surname which was given him of Confessor." He was always

a steady friend to Luther: but neither his nor his uncle's friendship, in human appearance, seemed sufficient to defend him from the storm gathering over his head, from the united force of the Emperor, the pope and all the corrupt, numerous and powerful advocates for the *papacy*, bent upon the destruction of a poor and seemingly contemptible *monk*! But where human power is most weak, the divine is most strong and conspicuous. This will appear in the sequel.

Lon. Christ. Mag.

(To be continued.)

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL ESSAYS.

FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE

A series of letters on the tendency of religion to promote the happiness of mankind in the present world.

PHILANDER TO POLITUS, LETTER V.

SIR,

GENUINE piety is not, as some seem to imagine, merely an occasional transport of religious affection. It not only accompanies the Christian in the church and the closet; but as an active, steady principle, directs the whole of his conduct, and mingles itself with all the sentiments and feelings of his soul. It is, therefore, natural to suppose that it must have an influence upon his happiness in every possible situation of human life. Accordingly,

I argue in the fourth place, that the pious man enjoys to far greater advantage than the irreligious, a state of worldly prosperity. This assertion may at first appear to you peculiarly objectionable. But I hope to make its truth evident beyond all contradiction.

I shall not here insist on the natural tendency of a life of sobriety, industry, and integrity, to advancement in wealth and publick favour. I am convinced, however, that though virtue is by no means fully rewarded, nor vice fully punished, in the present state, and therefore that we have abundant reason on this ground to expect a future retribution; yet it is in general a sound maxim that virtue leads to success and prosperity in the world, and vice to disappointment and misery. The present conduct of the great Governor of the world evinces that he is on the side of righteousness; tho' it also necessarily implies a period to come when men *shall receive, more uniformly and completely, according to the deeds done in the body.* But at this time I shall only request you to suppose a man of piety and a man of the world placed in similar circumstances of prosperity; suppose them both to possess health and riches, and honours, and friends: and compare them with each other in respect to their enjoyment of these possessions.

The Christian enjoys the bounties of Heaven with temperance and moderation. The gospel allows him to gratify his appetites and desires; but not to cloy them by excessive indulgence. It permits to him the pleasures of the understanding and the fancy; but prevents them, by wholesome restraints, from leading him into delusion and misery. While it excites him to fix on God and heaven as his supreme portion, it makes him wise also to estimate and choose aright amongst temporal objects; to prefer those which suit his nobler capacities, the intellect and the heart, to those of mere animal nature; and to direct his pursuits accordingly. And while it restores the proper tone and balance to his nature and innocent propensities it delivers him from those malevolent tempers and unreasonable passions of depraved nature, which unhinge the whole system, and mar all its enjoyments. On the other hand, excessive indulgence defeats its own purpose, by rapidly wearing out the very capacities of pleasure. The sinner, destitute of the direction of divine wisdom, seldom makes a prudent estimate

even of worldly objects; but sacrifices the pleasures of reason for those infatuating amusements which are of the most frivolous and often of the most pernicious kind. Indeed such is the stupifying and degrading tendency of sin, that it almost universally enslaves mankind to the very lowest part of their nature; and makes the mind, with all its noble powers, no more than a minister to the appetites and senses of the body. This is what the scriptures emphatically call *the carnal mind*. Consider how very large a portion of those who might, by their circumstances, enjoy all the pleasures of knowledge and of taste, do nevertheless make eating and drinking and sleeping the main business of their lives: and then decide on the comparison I have made.

Again. The pleasures of life are heightened to the Christian by the tranquility of an approving conscience. In my last letter I considered a peaceful conscience as a source of simple and immediate pleasure. But its influence is still more extensive. It is to the soul what health is to the body; not only pleasant in itself, but the ground-work of every other enjoyment. The sinner cannot at all times hide from himself that he is a rebel against God, that he is living in the perversion and abuse of his bounties, that the eye and the anger of God are upon him in all his guilty pursuits, and that he must ere long render his account for all these blessings to the great Judge of the world. His conscience irresistably anticipates the fearful doom of *the slothful and wicked servant*. Remorse and apprehension, painful in themselves, mar and embitter all his luxurious gratifications. And were it not so, still he is destitute of the positive zest and improvement which conscientious rectitude imparts to every possession and enjoyment of the Christian. The pious man feels himself highly honoured by his heavenly Father with the important trust of his bounties. He enjoys the luxury of doing good; partakes of what God has given him with the poor and the needy; knows that he is managing his stewardship well; and an-

icipates his welcome *to the joy of his Lord*. In short, if it be true that a guiltless conscience and the smiles of God have always been found a strong consolation to the poor and the friendless who enjoyed them; must they not of course greatly enhance the pleasures bestowed by an indulgent Providence?

Once more. The pious man's enjoyments are heightened by his sentiments of gratitude towards the great Giver of all good. I take it to be an universal maxim that our natural pleasures are exalted and enriched in proportion as we connect with them the exercise of moral feeling and sentiment. Gratitude to a benefactor is in itself a delightful emotion. It is true, that various circumstances often render a sense of obligation to a fellow creature painful. But no such circumstances attend the favours we receive from God. We contemplate his pure and unchangeable benevolence; and have no apprehension that he will ever upbraid us with his kindness. To this sweet and endearing view of the divine character the Christian is habitually prompted by unceasing benefits. And they lead him naturally to adore that amazing mercy of God, from whence every blessing flows, displayed most illustriously and impressively in the gift of his dear Son to suffer and die for the redemption of sinners. By this easy and just association of ideas, the smallest favour of Providence becomes a memento of redeeming love; and is by this means inexpressibly improved to the humble receiver. Contrast with this the un sanctified pleasures of the man whose heart is hardened by proeperity, and who *has not God in all his thoughts*: and let sober reason decide on which side the advantage lies.

On the whole; though the wicked often possess wealth and prosperity as well as the righteous; yet *it is gift of God, (and he gives it only to his people) to be able to eat thereof, and to take their portion, and to rejoice in their labour, to the greatest advantage*. It must be evident to every one who thinks soberly, that rational piety is so far from a tendency to gloomi-

ness of temper, that it is the only solid foundation of cheerfulness and joy. It teaches us not to contemn the bounties of our Father in heaven; but wisely *so to use as not to abuse them*. And if it requirs us to deny ourselves some of the gaieties of a frivolous world, it is that we may pursue, even in affairs of the world itself, pleasures more reasonable, more sublime, and more lasting.

My fifth argument in proof of the happy tendency of piety, is that it supports the soul in times of affliction. It is not pretended that religion annihilates any part of our nature, or renders us unsusceptible of pain and sorrow: but that it softens and even overbalances our distresses by its consolations. And surely it is of universal importance to inquire whether this be true or not. For though *the afflictions of the righteous are many*, they are by no means the only sufferers in this imperfect and mournful world. All are appointed to taste more or less of the cup of sorrow; and every wise man will earnestly seek for the best means of alleviation and support under the inevitable burdens of humanity.

It would be easy to prove that many vicious courses lead directly to the greatest calamities; such as loss of health, of character, of friends, and of fortune. But I shall not at present insist on this matter. It may be supposed that religion exposes the Christian in this world to some peculiar distresses; and I am willing, for argument's sake, to admit that these cases balance each other. Let us imagine a pious man and a man of the world placed in similar afflictive situations; and inquire which of them is likely to support his soul with most fortitude and comfort. Contemplate each of them in a state of want, and destitute of friends; or standing at the grave of a beloved friend or relative lately lost; or laid on a bed of sickness, and in the near prospect of dissolution; or in any other of the innumerable distressing positions in which man may be placed.

And here it is obvious to remark, in the first place, that the Christian's supreme treasure is absolutely beyond the reach of

temporal calamity. Though he lose every worldly possession, the smiles of his God and the testimony of a good conscience are not lost; and these he is accustomed to value more than all that earth can bestow. I certainly do not speak of those lukewarm, nominal Christians who make religion merely a thing by the bye, the occasional opiate of a wounded conscience; such religion will not stand the fiery trial. I speak of the man who truly *sets his affections on things above*, whose *conversation is in heaven*, who feels himself *a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth*. Such an one *has chosen that good part which shall never be taken from him*. Amidst the waves of distress he stands firm; for *the Lord is on his right hand that he cannot be moved*. And though his *flesh and his heart fail* God is the strength of his heart, and his portion forever. Indeed it is the general experience of the people of God that they enjoy in adversity an increased portion of his presence, and of that precious communion with him, which they esteem more than life and all its joys. But how different from all this are the afflictions of the sinner! Under light bereavements he makes a shift to find satisfaction in something else. But when heavy distresses overwhelm him; when ill health takes away his capacities of pleasure, or when severe strokes of providence deprive him of the means of gratification; when the objects of his highest affections are lost in the grave; what resource has he left? Instead of leaning on the friendship of God, he trembles beneath his frown, or frets at his dispensations. Instead of the soothing voice of an approving conscience, he is his own accuser, and feels the stings of conscious guilt. In a word, his disconsolate language is that of a poor idolator of ancient times, *my gods which I have made are taken away,—and what have I more?* It is dreadful indeed to find no alleviation of misery either in earth or heaven.

Again. The Christian receives and bears the strokes of afflictive providence as the wise and merciful chastisements of his heavenly Father. Knowing the waywardness of his

own heart, and the dangerous influence of worldly pleasure and prosperity; he feels that correction is frequently needful to keep him near to God. And resting with a firm faith on the infallible promises of the gospel, he knows that *all these things shall work together for his good.* It is good for me said an ancient saint, *that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.* Afflictions are useful to break down our excessive attachments to sensible objects and by the grace of God to prepare us for eternal glory. And *though no chastening seemeth to be joyous but grievous in itself,* yet the Christian endures it patiently and even thankfully, knowing that *afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.* Yea, to use the triumphant language of the Apostle, whose life was a series of constant and great distresses, *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Now what has the afflicted sinner, to balance these animating considerations? The pains which he suffers are not the fatherly chastisements of a reconciled God; but the terrible tokens of his just displeasure, and a foretaste of future and endless misery.

And this leads me to observe, finally, that the afflictions of God's people are greatly alleviated by the hope of a blessed immortality. Their Lord and Master, having set them a glorious example of patient suffering, is ascended to heaven to prepare a place for all who love him and wait for his appearance. The Christian finds sweet consolation in the idea that he is under the eye and guidance of a *merciful High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of his infirmities and sorrows:* and that after having *suffered with Christ, he shall also rest and reign with him forever.* He knows that the time of his trial, though it may be painful, is but short; that though *weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning;* and reckons assuredly, that the sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. The hope of the gospel supports him under the heaviest storms of trouble, *as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, entering into the things within the veil.* Even death itself is to the prepared Christian a friendly messenger, to translate him from every sorrow to perfect rest; and the last gasp of mortality shall waft his soul to unspeakable bliss in the bosom of his God. So that he may confidently sing that triumphant song, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!* O how different is the situation of the afflicted sinner, destitute of any hope beyond the grave; yea, rather, assured that all his troubles here are but the beginning of eternal sorrows! Instead of *entering into rest* when his course on earth is finished, his bible and his conscience assure him of the wrath of God, *the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched.*

There is no subject more abundantly insisted on by the inspired writers than the effectual support of religion to the afflicted. But I will not farther enlarge on the argument. I will only in addition to what has been said, refer you to experience and observation. They abundantly prove that these are not mere matters of theory, but of universal fact. Would to God that men were wise to prepare for *the day of evil*; and especially to *consider*, and prepare themselves for *their latter end!*

In my next letter I will close the whole discussion, by removing, as I hope, every difficulty and objection which may seem to lie against the doctrine I have laboured to establish. In the mean while believe me to remain, respectfully, &c.

PHILANDER.

The death-bed a religious monitor.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ has said, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; and we are commanded by his Apostle to follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. This is not an arbitrary constitution, but is deeply founded in the nature of things. It is the moral perfection, in one word the holiness of God, which constitutes his glory: and unless we possess a portion of the same perfection, or to use the strong and beautiful language of inspiration, unless we become partakers of the divine nature, we can never discern the glory of such a character. It is utterly impossible that we should without holiness of heart, attain to that vision of God which implies communion with him and the enjoyment of him. Our great business, therefore, in this world is to acquire holiness; not as the price with which we are to purchase our eternal blessedness in the vision of God, but as an indispensable qualification for it. And any means which may assist us in this most important pursuit deserve one serious attention.

While we are assured that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, let us remember that we are at the same time commanded to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Yea the animating assurance is given as the very reason of the command. Rejoicing in the promise of the Holy Spirit and ascribing all our progress in holiness to his gracious agency, let us not forget that our own activity, our watchfulness, and diligence, are not hereby rendered at all the less necessary. These truths which God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

It is not enough that we form general resolutions to renounce sin and devote ourselves to the service of God; nor even that we occasionally renew such resolutions. The demands of duty suffer no intermission. Temptation to sin does

not attack us in the way of a general irreligious influence merely, or after long intervals. As it assumes a thousand various forms, so we are continually liable to be assaulted by it from some quarter or other. It is needful, therefore, that besides such general purposes, occasionally renewed, we should have sentiments of piety and rules of decision on our actions impressed habitually on our minds, that they may present themselves for our support on every particular emergency. If divine truth be the instrument of sanctification, as it certainly is, every one who earnestly seeks to be sanctified must feel the importance of having such sentiments and rules made habitually familiar to his mind, and influential on the determinations of his heart. For our assistance in this matter many excellent directions have been offered. Consult, says one, thy highest, thy eternal interests; and act as a solemn regard to those interests shall dictate. Habituate thyself to apply this rule in forming thy plans of conduct, and let it direct every action of thy life. Let it aid thee in repelling the allurements of sin, and quicken thee always in the performance of duty. Not because religion is a mercenary service, for such it is not; but because God has inseparably joined thy happiness with thy obedience, and because motives of hope and fear are well adapted to thy present imperfect state. Learn, says another, on all occasions to place thyself in imagination beyond the action proposed. Suppose it already done; reflect coolly upon it, and consider what must then be the judgment of conscience. Bear it constantly in mind, says a third, that the eye of God is ever upon thee. Accustom thyself to the lively impression that the God of spotless purity not only observes every step of thy outward conduct, but searches the inmost recesses and knows perfectly the most secret movements of thy heart. When duty calls, or when temptation to sin entices, let the awful thought, thou, God seest me, instantly and, as it were, spontaneously arise, to turn thy feet from the way of the destroyer into the narrow path of righteousness and peace.

Acknowledging the propriety and weight of these admonitions, let us propose another, and consider it somewhat more at large. It is this : habituate thy mind to the idea of lying on a death-bed. Place thyself in thought frequently, readily, in that most interesting situation ; and thence look back on the course and actions of thy life.

That all must die ; that we may die soon ; that the longest life is but short, infinitely short, when compared with eternity ; are truths of which no man needs to be informed. Yet obvious and certain as they are, the best of men need to be often reminded of them. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart, such the influence of sensible objects and worldly circumstances, that thousands who would think their understandings insulted, should we pretend to inform them that they are mortal, yet manifestly live as though they were to continue in the present world forever. Even the people of God, being but imperfectly renewed, are from the same causes too prone to lose sight of their latter end, and to forget that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, who profess to desire above all things a better, that is an heavenly country. Now surely it is not impossible to overcome this dangerous forgetfulness, and to cultivate an acquaintance with an event no less important than certain ; to each of us certain and important in the highest degree. Nor would it be difficult to prove that the familiar lively impression of a dying hour must naturally bring with it such trains of thought as are eminently suited, under the divine blessing, to alarm the ungodly, and to excite the children of light to press forward that they may apprehend that for which also they are apprehended of Christ Jesus, even the cleansing of themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

A dying hour dispels the mists of prejudice and passion. It removes the delusive appearances which health and flowing spirits commonly spread over earthly things, and exhibits them in their true colours. Placed in the narrow confine be-

twixt time and eternity, the soul is in a situation peculiarly fitted to make a just estimate of the nature and value of temporal concerns. Conscience, no longer silenced by the eagerness of desire, the elation of hope, or the pressure of multiplied cares, has now an ample opportunity to exert with freedom her awful power. Enkindled with fire from the near tribunal of a holy and omniscient Judge, she throws floods of light on times and scenes which are past. Memory, armed with unusual energy, acts as her handmaid; and faithfully reports innumerable thoughts, wishes, purposes and actions which were long buried in oblivion. These she compares with the perfect rule of duty, and rigorously anticipates the approaching decision of God. At this trying period, how transitory, how insignificant do all the affairs of time, how unspeakably necessary and momentous do those of religion appear! Where is now that resounding fame which basely acknowledged the success of wild ambition; or that which pursued and crowned the generous labours of patriotism? Where are the astonishing discoveries made by genius soaring on the wings of science, and scanning the wide creation? Where are the glittering productions of art, the pomp of wealth, the parade of luxurious magnificence? Where are the many pleasures of sense, and of the imagination, which have so often arrogated to themselves the injured name of happiness? At the approach of death they all burst, like a bubble lighter than air, and vanish from the sight. Nothing now but piety and virtue, nothing but the sure evidences, and lively exercise of that faith which worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world, with the strong hope of immortal glory, which a faith thus evidenced inspires, can afford solid satisfaction to the soul, and enable it to look with steady confidence upon that state of existence where there is no change, and from which there is no return.

Reader, whatever be thy moral character and state, endeavour to bring thy last hour near: and indeed thou knowest not how near it may really be. Suppose it already come:

Imagine thyself breathing it painfully away. Place thyself on a dying pillow, in the full exercise of thy understanding and reflection. For though thou mayest depart suddenly, or under a suspension of thy mental powers, thou canst not seriously reckon either of these an event to be desired, for any substantial advantage attending it. And now let a friend to thy soul approach thy bed, and converse a few moments with thee.

Hast thou made this world the object of thy sole pursuit? Hast thou walked, to the utmost of thy power, in the sight of thine eyes, and in the ways of thine evil heart? Hast thou lived in the open neglect of religion, and even joined with infidels in avowed contempt of the doctrines of the cross? Behold, thy days are numbered and finished. Thy Judge standeth before the door. Thou art called to bid farewell to the world and all its objects; to appear in the immediate presence of that God whom thou hast obstinately offended, and who is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity. Thou hast been careful and troubled about many things: but the one thing needful, the salvation of thy immortal soul, hast thou most foolishly neglected. Perhaps thou hast lived in pleasures, hast abounded in wealth, and obtained much fuel for thy pride. But the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Canst thou now ask thy guilty pleasures, or those pretended friends who participated them with thee, to give thee comfort? They are fled forever; and nothing remains to thee but the sting of remorse. Canst thou find satisfaction now in remembering the vain and impious imaginations with which thou wert wont to persuade thyself that sin is only the terrour of fools, heaven and hell the dreams of superstition, and the gospel of Christ a fable? Thou art convinced, to thy confusion, that they are realities. Or if thou hast not gone to this length in defiance of thy Maker, what thinkest thou of thy repeated delays, when thou wert warned to fly from sin and its fatal consequences? How many precious seasons, how many gracious invitations,

how much light and instruction, hast thou wantonly wasted and despised! Terrified by contemplating the past, thou turnest thy view to the future, which is just at hand. But tenfold terrors meet thee there; a frowning Judge, the irreversible sentence of his wrath, the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched. Thus, racked with horror, the guilty soul is tossed alternately from the blasting catalogue of its transgressions, to the flaming bar of the almighty Avenger; and whether it look backward or forward, every look increases its inexpressible agony. By an unfeigned repentance thou mightest indeed still be reconciled to God: but instances of this kind are exceedingly rare. And what reason has thou to expect that the renovating grace of God, which thou hast despised until the last extremity, shall now be extended to thee? Art thou not conscious that thy heart is as hard, as full of enmity against God and against Christ as ever? Thy distress springs not from a genuine abhorrence of sin: it is nothing but the dread of punishment, the anguish of despair. Thy impenitent heart, as well as thy unpardoned guilt, must shut the gate of God's holy kingdom against thee. Such an heart is visibly a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction.

— Dost thou begin to tremble, irreligious reader, at this tremendous prospect? Be assured, the description is infinitely short of the reality. Forget not that dreadful position, from which thou art now released: but hasten to avoid it. Blessed be God, there is yet hope concerning thee that thou mayest be saved. He still bears with thee, rebellious as thou art, and lengthens out the thread of thy forfeited life. Let the amazing goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God lead thee to repentance. Listen to the warnings and the invitations of his word, which still pursue thee. Break off thy sins by repentance; and embrace the pardoning mercy of God by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Renouncing the works of darkness, choose the service of God, even the pursuit of universal holiness, for the employment of thy life. So shalt thou

have hope and peace in thy latter end. O let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

But we must return again to the death-bed. Perhaps, languishing mortal, thou hast been long a professor of religion, and hast reposed thy hopes of safety on fair external performances, while thy heart was unrenewed by divine grace, a stranger to the love of God, the sorrow and humility of genuine repentance, and the pure faith of the gospel. If so, does thy hope of heaven stand the test of this fiery trial? Do not thy character and state now assume a new and alarming aspect? Alas, thou hast been inexcusably ignorant of thy exceeding sinfulness, the holiness of God, and the essential nature of that salvation which thou hast professed to seek and to expect. Or in despite of thy better knowledge of these things, thou hast indulged thy pride, and cleaved to thine own delusions. Satisfied with a mere name of life, thou hast forgotten that thou wert dead in trespasses and sins. Calling God thy Father, and his son Jesus thy Lord and Master, thou hast permitted thy heart to remain the slave of selfishness and lust, a neglected cage of every unclean bird. Thus deceiving thine own soul, thou hast presumed to imagine the Omniscient altogether such an one as thyself, who might be imposed on by hypocritical pretences of obedience, while thy heart was full of rebellion against him. Thou hast gone about to establish thine own righteousness, in contempt of the righteousness which is of God by faith. Perhaps thou hast dared to rend asunder the glorious harmony of the gospel in another way. Slothfully reclining on the righteousness and atonement of the Redeemer, under the pretence of giving him all the honour of thy salvation, thou hast utterly rejected him in his kingly office; refusing to submit to his commandments, or to ask the exertion of his power for thy deliverance from the bondage of corruption. On the ground of such cri-

minal and deadly errors the tower of thy impious confidence was erected. But the king of terrors touches it with his hand, and it disappears in a moment. Fearfulness surprises thee on the review of thy hidden iniquities, the near prospect of the bar of the Searcher of hearts, where the hope of the hypocrite shall utterly perish, and of that lake of fire, in which whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and especially whosoever lieth unto God, shall receive his everlasting portion.

— Canst thou attempt to quiet these tormenting apprehensions by returning to the thought that thou art not yet placed in this most deplorable situation? Awake, miserable hypocrite, before it be too late. Awake, thou that slumberest on the couch of a deceitful security, dreaming that all shall be well with thee. Renounce immediately that destructive peace, which has not been ratified in the court of heaven. Long and greatly as thou hast dishonoured God, behold, he is still ready to hear and accept the prayer of sincere penitence. The blessed Jesus, whose name and gospel thou hast treated with such grievous indignity, is still able and willing, on thy cordial return to him, to blot out thy manifold transgressions, and to own thee as a disciple. Approach his throne of grace with reverence, and implore the inestimable gift of his sanctifying Spirit. Acknowledge thyself to be wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Buy of him gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see. So shall thy righteousness go forth as brightness, and thy salvation as a lamp that burneth. Thy hope shall be gladness: and thou shalt receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Let us visit the bed of death once more. Let us with pleasure mark the departing hour of a child of God. Happy art thou, soldier of Christ: thy warfare is ended, and thou art just entering into the joy of thy Lord. Thy race is run, and the prize is at hand. Thou art enabled to take leave of the world without grief or dismay; for thou hast received the promise

of an incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance. Tho' thy earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, thou hast a building of God an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Yet suffer a word of inquiry, proposed with tenderness. Thou art calm and resigned to the will of thy heavenly Father, supported by the faith and the hopes of the gospel. Why then do frequent tears of sorrow water thy cheek? Why doth sadness mingle with thy consolations? Ah! thou rememberest precious time not well improved; opportunities of doing good neglected, a deficiency of watchfulness over thy heart and conduct; and not a few consequent defects in the performance of duty. Thou seest that thou hast indulged, more than became a Christian, to the cares and the pleasures of the world. By these things thou hast in some measure failed in glorifying thy God and Saviour, and diminished the brightness of thy future crown. Besides, it is desirable that thou shouldest be able to commit thy departing spirit to God, not only with safety, but with triumph; and to bear at this season an eminent testimony to the excellence and sweetness of the religion of thy Redeemer. But thou art apprehensive that he may chasten thee with a refusal of this honourable privilege, and cause thy sun to set beneath a cloud.

— Surely these regrets are worthy to be dreaded & avoided. Surely it is necessary that the people of God should carry on their minds deep and habitual impressions of their latter end. Remember, ye children of the Holy One, that this world is not your rest, nor your abiding place. Remember that ye are sojourners in a foreign land; and take heed lest ye set your hearts immoderately upon those things which are provided for you merely as accommodations by the way. Ye are called to run, earnestly and patiently to run the race of holiness set before you; looking unto Jesus; having your conversation in heaven; denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he

might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Behold the way of holiness, clearly marked out to you by his word and his example; the way which he hath enjoined and encouraged you to pursue, under the guidance of his Holy Spirit. Be assured, the more speedily ye advance in this sacred way, the more pleasant ye shall find your journey to be. And in due season it shall terminate in that fulness of joy, which is in the presence of God, in those unspeakable pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

Our subject has constrained us to make some melancholy representations; a task to which nothing could invite a benevolent mind, but the belief that they are necessary, and the hope that they may be useful. Art thou convinced, reader, of the importance of the admonition which we have been illustrating? Dost thou seriously inquire how thou mayest attain to an habitual remembrance and impression of thy mortality? An earnest concern in the matter, is more than half the work. But for thy farther assistance, let it be recommended to avoid most carefully such company and avocations as will probably dissipate the mind, and destroy sober reflection; and to allot some portion of time every day for serious meditation on death, judgment and eternity. Especially, when thou arisest in the morning, remind thy soul that the setting sun may behold thy body reduced to lifeless clay: and when thou retirest to rest in the evening, close not thine eyes without the solemn recollection that thy next awaking may be in the invisible world, in heaven or in hell. Thus will the interesting idea gain ground: it will both recur more readily, and be more deeply impressed. But above all, pray frequently for this great blessing. Apply to that sanctifying Spirit who alone can give thee heavenly wisdom, and make this or any other truth effectual to thy salvation. Implore of him to enable thee to live circumspectly, and to walk humbly with thy God. Seek to advance daily in the mortification of sin, and to grow

in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus shall the hour of thy dissolution lose its terrors; and thou shalt learn to look forward with delight to that period when being completely prepared for the holy kingdom of God above, the inheritance of his saints in glory, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and this mortal shall put on immortality; faith shall be turned into sight, and hope into full and everlasting fruition. Which God grant for Jesus' sake, Amen.

PHILANDER.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE

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True Riches, No. 1.

SCARCELY any passion is so strong or so general amongst mankind as the passion for riches. Who is there that will not be rich if he can, at least if he can honestly? The methods commonly pursued for this purpose are various indeed; but all attended with serious inconveniencies. They are full of labour and anxiety; often very tedious; productive of many dangerous temptations to sin; and finally, so uncertain in the event that it is but the smaller number of adventurers who prove tolerably successful. Now I think there is another method for the attainment of this desirable object, not only as practicable, but at once more speedy, more safe and more certain. Who wishes not to see it delineated? The reader's candid attention is requested to the following rules and reflections.

1. Avoid being in debt. This is not only a maxim of sound prudence, but an express precept of Christianity. Owe no man anything—but love. There may indeed be cases of necessity in which debt may be unavoidable; and of these every man must judge for himself. Yet no necessity can justify it where there is not a reasonable prospect of our being able punctually to fulfil our engagements. But how common is it to incur debts unnecessarily, for the mere conveniencies or even

superfluities of life, and without any prospect of punctual discharge. Many indeed are in the habit of placing themselves in this situation thoughtlessly, without any calculation whether they shall be able to make good their promises or not. Now there are many and great evils attending, such a practice. The debtor is dependent on his creditor. His tranquility of mind is diminished by the consciousness of this dependence. His property, and what is of more importance, his character is at hazard: and both often suffer severely through his inability to comply with the engagements he has made. What insincere, unjust and base actions have men been prompted to commit by the pressure of debts unnecessarily and rashly contracted! And how often do they lament their folly in the tedious and gloomy confinement of a prison! But I shall not insist farther on this point, because the imprudence of going wantonly into debt is pretty generally acknowledged, and even by those who are deepest in the practice of it. That you may the more easily avoid this folly,

2. Moderate your desires: Love not the world nor the things of the world with any immoderate attachment. While you pursue with diligence the path of honest industry, and look for the blessing of God to improve your worldly fortune, consider well what your circumstances and your income actually are, and limit your wishes and schemes of enjoyment accordingly. Acquire habits of temperance, and a taste for such pleasures as are easily within your reach. I do not pretend that the gripe of absolute penury is not very painful. To be destitute of the necessaries and some of the comforts of life is, I own, a state scarcely compatible with peace and tranquility of mind. But it is not commonly considered how extensively and how foolishly mankind are the authors of their own unhappiness. A variety of pleasures of the understanding, the imagination and the heart are of easy acquisition. They are at the same time pleasures of the purest and most durable kind. Yet we overlook these, we scarcely cultivate any taste at all for them. And we make ourselves miserable by

forming artificial wants, by cherishing fantastical and extravagant wishes, and by an incessant struggle to imitate in our modes of living those who possess more of the means of gratification than ourselves. The reader perceives that I do not estimate riches merely by the extent of a man's possessions. This standard is so extremely vague that it is good for nothing. Our real wealth can only be measured justly by the relation which subsists between our desires and the means we possess for gratifying them. Is not this admitted? Is it not then the same thing in effect to moderate our desires as to enlarge our possessions? And how much easier would the former be in ten thousand instances than the latter; especially if parents would early and diligently teach their children to form correct notions of worldly pleasure, and train them to habits of sobriety and moderation. How much anxiety, how many grievous disappointments, what various snares of temptation and pangs of remorse might be avoided by this method, which are incurred by running too eagerly in the contrary path! It is very possible to be more happy, more truly rich, with a small fortune, by the prudent government of our appetites and desires, than we can be in the most affluent circumstances without it. It is possible to derive greater pleasure from a book, from the beauties of nature, or the conversation of a friend, than the highest luxury and magnificence can afford to those who have never learned the proper regulation of their own passions. Surely the cultivation of a taste for simple, innocent and attainable pleasures is one of the first lessons of practical wisdom.

3. Lay up your treasure, your best and dearest treasure in heaven. Seek above all things that enduring substance, that inestimable and everlasting inheritance, which God has reserved for them who love him. This is absolutely necessary to a compliance with the last rule. Such is our nature that our conduct is not directed merely by our intellectual convictions, but principally by the affections and dispositions of our

hearts. If then we would effectually withdraw our affections from earthly things, we must set them vigorously on things above. Sensible objects will assuredly engross our attention, and lead our desires away into wild and criminal excesses, unless there be some superior principle to preserve order and subordination in the soul. And this can only be supreme love and devotion to God, with a strong and habitual regard to that glory and immortality which are the portion of his people. Attempts have frequently been made to teach mankind temperance, resignation, and all virtue, without any assistance from devotional sentiments. But it may be safely affirmed that the love of God alone gives complete steadiness to human nature, and preserves it from falling a prey to irregular passions. Without this sweet and tranquillizing sentiment of the heart, all the world is insufficient to afford us solid and lasting peace. The man who knows that God is his Father, Christ his Saviour, and heaven his eternal home, will make a prudent estimate of the acquisitions and enjoyments of the present state. He will pursue them without danger, and use them without excess. And in times of deep affliction, while wealth and grandeur endeavour in vain to soothe their wretched possessor, the pious man has resources for consolation which depend not on this ever-changing and uncertain world.

I intend, in a future number or two, to illustrate these rules and reflections, by exhibiting to the reader the character of a pair of my neighbours.

ASPASIO.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE:

Gentlemen,

Looking over my papers I found the following address, composed for, and delivered by a young gentleman of South Carolina, several years ago, at his leaving the College of Hampden Sidney. Its great object is to inculcate good morals, and a diligent pursuit of useful knowledge. And it occurred to me that it might perhaps be acceptable and useful to those of your young readers whom Providence has favoured with opportunities for study. Should you think it deserving, please to give it a place in the Magazine.

PHILANDER.

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### A VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

THE days of my academical studies are completed. The period is arrived when I must bid a final adieu to friends whom I love, and to scenes, the remembrance of which will never be erased from my mind. The task is painful, but it must be attempted; and I request the indulgence of my audience while I address myself more particularly to those with whom I have been so lately and so intimately connected.

MY DEAR FELLOW STUDENTS,

The bonds which have united us are now about to be dissolved; the curtain is now to be dropped which will separate us, perhaps forever. Permit me on this interesting occasion to leave with you a few reflections, the truth and importance of which are deeply impressed on my own mind. Accept this last proof of attachment, the greatest of which I am capable.

By the bounty of Providence, and the affectionate care of your parents and friends, you have been placed here for the purpose of acquiring useful knowledge; and it becomes you seriously to consider how much you will have to answer to yourselves, to your parents, to your country, and your God, for the manner in which you improve so great a privilege.

Diligence and perseverance are requisite to the attainment of any important end in any department of human life; but they are peculiarly necessary to youth in the pursuit of literary improvement. To obtain an extensive and accurate education is a laborious task. It must not be considered as a secondary object of attention, while trifling amusements or the gratification of vicious passions is made the first and chief. These not only destroy time: they impair the powers of the mind, and unfit it for its proper exercises in the hours allotted to study. The lowest mechanick trade is not attained without long and diligent application. And can it be supposed that a good acquaintance with the learned languages and the sciences shall be the acquisition of a few hours, days, or weeks, stolen from the infatuating couch of idleness, or the mad career of vicious pleasure? Let not youth deceive itself with such unwarrantable, such arrogant expectations. It is not the being called a student, it is not a seven years' residence at college and passing through its forms, that will make you good scholars. In order to deserve that character you must love study; you must engage in it with unremitting ardour and unwearied perseverance. With these even a moderate genius will do much. Without them the greatest will never arrive at eminence, at least that degree of eminence to which he ought to have aspired and which he might have attained.

The motives to excite you to activity in your studies are numerous, they are forcible. Many are the anxious cares of your parents for your advancement and respectability. On this object their fondest wishes are fixed as the greatest of earthly blessings; and they claim it of you indispensably that you should make the best use of the opportunities they have put into your hands. Your teachers justly expect that your conduct and proficiency should be such as to do honour to them; and with the sober and sensible this consideration will not be without its influence. Your own reputation also is

greatly at stake. The man who neglects to acquire a competent livelihood when he has the proper means in his power, is generally despised. What contempt then is due to the youth who, instead of exerting himself in the acquisition of knowledge which is far more valuable than wealth, spends the prime of his days in sloth or dissipation! And though he may impose on the multitude with the name of a student, or the ostentation of a shallow pedant, the judicious will see through the thin disguise, and despise him as he deserves. Your fellow citizens behold you as the hope of the rising age. You owe it to them to qualify yourselves for filling with propriety those offices of public trust which await you. In our happy country men of learning are never under the necessity of wasting their years in dull inactivity. Stations in abundance offer themselves suited to the exertion of mental talents. And do you not feel an ardent desire to fill those stations with credit to yourselves, and advantage to your fellow citizens? This may be called ambition; but it is a laudable, a noble ambition, the genuine thirst of genius and magnanimity.

There is yet another motive which cannot fail to have a powerful influence when duly appreciated. The pleasures of the mind are far superior to those of the body. This is a common observation; and I am happy in this opportunity of adding my testimony, however weak, in confirmation of its truth. The pleasures of study are enjoyed without those temptations to excess, or those pangs of remorse, which too often attend mere sensual gratifications. They promote serenity and contentment of mind, and are an excellent resource under the pressures of adversity. They are progressive and durable in their nature. They will last when the objects which now attract our senses and excite the most lively emotions in our hearts shall have lost their efficacy; when the pleasures which are pursued by youth with such rash and, alas, with such pernicious ardour, can no longer be enjoyed.

With these considerations in view, it would be injurious to suppose you can be remiss in your studies. Allow your friends

therefore, to indulge the pleasing hope that by a course of industrious and persevering application you will render yourselves the delight of your parents and acquaintances as well as an honour to the place of your education.

But let it ever be remembered, my dear fellow students, that there is another thing of still greater importance which claims your attention: I mean the acquisition of virtuous principles and habits. No attainments in knowledge will atone for the want of these. Not to urge the higher motives of religion, it may be averred that a heart uninfluenced by upright moral principles, unhabituated to benevolent affections, will assuredly defeat every truly valuable end of your education. You are ardently engaged in the pursuit of your own individual happiness. You are convinced that wealth and external grandeur must be in vain resorted to for this purpose, without a stock of intellectual improvement. But it is equally certain that this, though an important step towards happiness, will never bring you to it, without the addition of virtuous dispositions. Amidst the contending passions that invade the breast, amidst the various disappointments and calamities incident to our condition, it is only in the approbation of conscience, and the smiles of Heaven, that the heart of man, not callous to every feeling of humanity, can ultimately rest with calm composure and satisfaction. As to that respectability which every generous breast so warmly desires, be assured the most splendid talents and accomplishments will not be sufficient to attain it without an honest heart. Contempt and pity are all that a vicious character has to expect from the wise and good, whose esteem ought principally to be cultivated. And these emotions are ever heightened in proportion to the greatness of the intellectual qualifications which they see so shamefully abused. But we may go farther and say that, bad as the world is, even the most unthinking and abandoned of mankind feel a peculiar reverence and pay a peculiar respect to a virtuous character. Nor can any man consistently expect

to be greatly useful in promoting the welfare of his fellow men without such principles of conduct as are here insisted on. Narrow views and selfish passions will of course predominate in the soul that is destitute of virtue. These will prompt him to seek his own private interests at the expence of those of the community: they will prevent, or at least clip the wings of every benevolent enterprize. Unfit to be trusted, his abilities will want exercise. Or if, as is to often the case, he meets the confidence of his fellow citizens, weak indeed is the security they have that he will not employ it to mischievous purposes. As the vital air, when infected, becomes the vehicle of disease and death, so the greatest talents and knowledge, when corrupted by selfish and wicked passions, only qualify the possessor to be the disgrace and the scourge of mankind.

Would you then possess a virtuous heart? Would you establish a virtuous character? Remember its foundation must be laid in early life. Youth is the proper season of moral as well as intellectual improvement: While the heart is susceptible of strong impressions, apt to be considerably shocked at the appearance of selfishness and meanness of spirit, this is the time to sow the seeds of virtue. According to the common progress of things, it will be too late when we shall have become hardened in a contrary course, and subjected to the dominion of inveterate habits. Amidst the bustle and cares of life, men generally lose the finer sensibilities of early years. The charms of virtue, seen through false mediums, cease to warm their bosoms and invite their pursuit. The remonstrances of conscience are scarcely heard amidst the calls of interest, perhaps are quite suppressed by multiplicity of business. Thus the youth who promised fair falls a prey to temptation and ungoverned passions; and very remote is the probability that he will ever be recovered.

Time does not allow me to enlarge on this interesting subject. Suffer me however, just to mention, as objects of your



utmost caution, the immoderate love of pleasure, and the keeping of bad company. These are follies most common to youth; nor are they more common than disgraceful and ruinous. They are the rocks on which thousands have been wrecked. How much genius, how many fine dispositions, how many growing hopes of parents and friends, have been destroyed by these! Surely it becomes us to take warning by the calamities of others; and make their destruction a beacon to guide us into the path of safety.

May these sentiments have a proper effect on your minds. May you by a diligent perseverance in your studies, attain that treasure of useful knowledge which is the object of your residence here. And may this, joined with humane affections and unshaken principles of rectitude, render you happy in yourselves, and a blessing to the world. Permit me now to leave you for a few moments to pay my respects where they are due.

*To the President.*

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

When I am about to leave this place, no longer to enjoy the benefit of your instructions, it is a pleasing duty to express in this publick manner my grateful sense of the many obligations you have conferred upon me. Your mildness and condescension in the execution of the duties of your office, as President of this institution, your unwearied attention to the improvement of the students here in knowledge and good morals, merit the highest affection and respect from them and from the publick, The wise and the virtuous will not withhold the tribute so justly due. But I will spare your sensibility the pain of a particular detail on this subject. The approbation of your own heart is infinitely more pleasing to you than the highest praise of others, though most deservedly bestowed. With the warmest wishes that you may continue to enjoy the blessings of health and repose, and that you may be eminently useful in the work, so delightful to yourself and so important to mankind, of training up youth in the way in

which they should go, I bid you, honored and dear sir adieu!

*To the Trustees.*

Permit me, gentlemen, on this occasion to congratulate you, as trustees of Hampden Sidney, on the flourishing state of this seminary under your care. Your diligent attention to the duties attached to your office does not fail to attract the notice, and gain you the approbation of your fellow citizens. Convinced that the diffusion of knowledge is essentially connected with the welfare of your country, these are the objects of your benevolent efforts. The intelligent and the good appreciate their merit. Their gratitude and best wishes attend you. Go on, gentlemen, in your patriotick labours; and may they continue to be crowned by an indulgent Providence with abundant success.

*To the Tutors.*

At my removal from this seminary the tutors have a just claim to my acknowledgments; and I should be inexcusable were I to pass them by in silence. You do not, gentlemen, expect from me the strains of panegyrick. Give me leave simply to observe, that your faithful performance of the duties of your station does you honour; and that by your manner of doing it you justly possess the attachment as well as the respect of the students. I know you have the promotion of useful learning much at heart; and it cannot but afford you much satisfaction to see the work of your hands prosper. With all the respect of the pupil and the affection of the friend, I bid you farewell.

*Conclusion.*

But lest I should put the patience of my audience to too great a trial, I hasten to a conclusion. Farewell then to this beloved retreat, the seat of science and of peace; where, amidst the pleasures of literary exercises, and the intercourse of friendship, I have spent so many days. Farewell to this respectable collection of ladies and gentlemen, who have so repeatedly honoured us with their presence, and animated us

by the smiles of their approbation. And lastly, with the sincerest interest for your success in your studies, and your general prosperity through life, I bid you, my dear fellow students, most cordially farewell.

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FOR THE VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS MAGAZINE

—
ON INCONTINENCE.

THE vices of incontinence and seduction have been frequently examined and exploded by the moralists of Europe. Many of these writers have succeeded in shewing that the vices mentioned, are not only destructive of human happiness, but that they sometimes produce a state of more pungent, lasting, and hopeless misery, than perhaps any other species of crime. To impress their ideas on this subject the more effectually, they sometimes present us with the picture of an innocent, unsuspecting girl, falling a prey to some artful betrayer. Forsaken by the wretch who accomplished her ruin, under the guise of friendship and love; abandoned and spurned by the respectable part of her own sex; cut off from all virtuous society and all virtuous employments, she has no way left to support a miserable existence but the vicious trade of prostitution. They tell us, that some of these pitiable objects are sensible of their guilt, and would wish to reform, but on them the door of repentance seems to be shut. From the practice of vice they derive their subsistence, if they forsake that practice they have no alternative but to perish. They are effectually precluded from every avenue of returning to the world, or to a state of innocence.

I am persuaded, that Writers who have spent their time in portraying the consequences of these vices, have not labored without effect. The vices themselves they have not been able to banish from society, but they have certainly set bounds to an evil which they could not exterminate, and checked the

progress of what they could not stop. They have taught the humane and reflecting part of mankind, to view those vices in their proper colors; and although they may never have been able to reclaim a hardened rake, we hope they have kept many young men from becoming such. For my part I have often risen from their lectures with a full conviction that the seducer was the worst character in the world. He gives the most fatal blow to the happiness of such as come within his reach, and if the criminality of actions are in any measure proportioned to the misery they produce, he will have more to answer for in the day of general eclaircissement, than either the horse-thief or the murderer.

Incontinence prevails to an alarming extent in our country, though under a form something different from what it assumes in Europe. The females of color, and of a people held in bondage, are with us the objects of seduction. These new circumstances, with which the vice is attended, has given a new direction to its consequences, and is perhaps one reason why it has prevailed so far, or why so few of our libertines have been reformed by European moralists. The pictures they draw do not suit our country. The vice with us does not lead to misery by the same steps, and therefore many are ready to conclude, that it does not lead to misery at all. In Europe the greater part of the misery falls on the prostitute herself; this, with us, is not so palpably the case, and hence, the young rake supposes that he has nothing to do but to overcome that delicacy and refinement of taste, that sense of decency which would be shocked by low connections, and then he may indulge his propensity without injury to any one. I hope however it will not be difficult to refute this opinion, and to shew that incontinence is a crime of the greatest magnitude, and of the worst consequences with us, as well as in Europe. I shall attempt this by pointing out in the first place, the manner by which it leads to the misery of our servants, and in the second place, to the corruption of their masters.

1. Incontinence leads to the misery of our servants: I do not here come forward as many of our writers have done on other occasions, prepared to pour a torrent of crocodile tears over the condition of those whom we hold in bondage; I do not at present plead for their emancipation, because I do not see any opportunity either of promoting their happiness or the happiness of society by such a measure. But I can say with sincerity, that I consider them as an unfortunate people; and I believe the man who would wantonly add to their misery, must possess a bad heart. But how does the incontinence of the whites augment the misery of our servants? I answer, that it must be a source of misery, because it is a source of uneasy guilt, even to the prostitute herself; she would have been more happy in a virtuous marriage with a husband of her own rank; she would have raised her children with more satisfaction, and died with more peace. For I cannot believe that the invariable law of heaven is repealed in favour of this case, and that vice, which is always the road to misery, should here be the highway to happiness.

It is a source of misery to the offspring of such vicious connections. Such children will be taught who their parents are, and the knowledge of this, will alone be sufficient to excite notions very inconsistent with their station. Besides there is no greater punishment to a child, than entire exclusion from its parents: here the child is a slave, condemned to labour through the day, and to lie down at night, after a coarse, and perhaps, a scanty meal. But the father is a gentleman, he rides in state, and revels in luxury, but if his child should meet him on the road, the one is afraid, and the other ashamed, even to disown the connection. Such an unnatural separation of the nearest relatives, cannot be consistent with happiness.

But the heaviest part of the misery, arising from this vice, falls on the male part of our servants. All calculations on this subject, would teach us to expect that the number of males

is at least equal to that of the females, and of course for every female corrupted some male must be doomed to a state of celibacy. It is generally admitted, that virtuous marriage, or the prospect of it constitutes a great proportion of human happiness. But when a young man of color thinks of that relation, and turns his attention to the females of his own rank, who might have appeared to him the most amiable, or accomplished, he finds some already seduced, and others in the highway to seduction. If he avows his attachment, his young master may be his rival, and with such a competitor he has no means of contending; or should he form the marriage connection, his peace may be still more effectually wounded. This is not a mere topic of declamation, but the situation of the slaves is so different from our own, that it is hard to bring the picture home to our feelings. Let us suppose, that this country was subjugated by some European power, and covered with swarms of titled gentry, whose superiority of rank and power might give them an opportunity of seducing our wives and daughters to an equal extent, and would we not think such libertines worse than gangs of robbers, or hords of assassins? We abhor the slave trade—our orators declaim with sufficient spirit against the agents who first brought the traffic of human flesh to our shores; but, perhaps, there is a class among ourselves who do more than even they did to wound the poor African's peace.

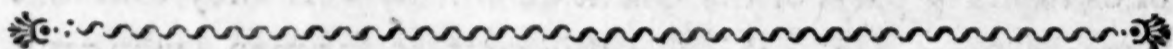
But this vice leads to the corruption of the whites. I have frequently observed, when young men first fall into it, however amiable and promising they might have been before, they immediately contract an unteachable temper, shun religious company and religious worship, and become familiar with places of dissipation. The reason is they are sensible of guilt and when in the way of serious subjects, conscience is more apt to assert her rights; and when a person is induced to flee from every thing serious, and resort to dissipation to drown the clamours of his own breast he is in the utmost danger both of losing his moral character and of making shipwreck of the

faith forever. But perhaps the most fatal influence of this vice in producing a corruption of morals, is by destroying parental affection. Moral writers tell us that parental affection is a principle which does not suppose any great degree of virtue, but that the want of it supposes the lowest state of depravity. But when the father lives in affluence and sees his children in servitude; when his remaining modesty makes him ashamed to own those children, is he not under the strongest temptation to stifle every parental feeling? He is under a temptation to every thing—even to wish the death of that unfortunate child whose existence might be the means of divulging his secret practices. To the friends of virtue and religion there is something truly affecting in this picture. What would they think of us in many parts of the Christian world, were they told that it was no uncommon thing in this country for men, who rank high in society, to see and even to hold their children in *slavery*!—to bequeath *them* as they do their horses! and sometimes to *sell them* for mere convenience, or for the support of their luxury!!

I think there is one light in which this subject merits the serious attention of our government. The southern States are pretty generally penetrated with an apprehension, that they may one day be doomed to experience the fate of St. Domingo. If such an event is approaching, will it not be hastened by the circumstance, that many of those who stand highest in rank, office, and influence in our country, have their brothers and sisters and nearest relatives among our slaves? But whether government will be disposed to take any measures for checking the evil, or whether the temper of our country would relish such measures, is perhaps doubtful. It often happens, that the vicious man foresees his danger, but will not forsake the bait which brings it upon him: like the peasant on Etna,—the mountain totters under his feet but he cannot tear himself from his habitation till it is too late to flee, and he buries himself in the ruins of the volcano.

Some vices are of such a nature, that it is difficult to reprove them without offending the delicacy of certain readers. I have been sensible of the danger on this subject, and labored to avoid it, but perhaps I have failed. If so, I will attempt to derive one benefit from my miscarriage. I think I may claim it as a matter of right, that those readers, whose delicacy cannot bear the most cautious mention of the crime, should not hereafter bestow their smiles and caresses on the criminal.

I cannot conclude this subject without conjuring parents to use all possible means of guarding their children against this vice : and the only effectual way of doing it, is to keep them from loose, infidel maxims, and bad company, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. C.



SELECTIONS.

(From the London Evangelical Magazine.)

REMARKABLE CONVERSION OF A FAMILY.

ABOUT the year 1712, a worthy and industrious family, of the name of * * * *, was settled at C. a village nearly in the centre of * * * shire. In the parents, a moral character, without reproach, was blended with a strict, and perhaps superstitious, regard to the forms of devotion ; but they were totally strangers to the religion of the heart. Their confessions were destitute of penitential sorrow, for they knew not the evil of sin ; their petitions were mingled with no ardent desires, for they knew not the need nor the value of divine mercy ; their praises were not enlivened by grateful love, for they had never learned to "account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." To be honest and sober, and to keep to their church was all the religion they knew ; and they were resolutely determined that they and their house would know no other, but God who is rich in mercy, had determined otherwise.

In a few years the family became numerous; and, though several died in infancy, the parents, by the fruits of their industry, trained up six sons and four daughters. It became necessary to provide situations for the sons; and the second of them about the year 1730, received a proposal to reside at C——, a market-town in the same county with a person of considerable respectability, a member and a deacon of a Dissenting church. The religion of the proposed master formed the only objection to his service: this was over-ruled by other advantages, and the offer was accepted. At the youth's departure to his new situation, his father said to him, "Son you must now faithfully promise me never to enter the meeting at——: on this condition, you go to your place." The son, without hesitation, accepted the condition, and made the required engagement. Fixed in his new residence, he soon reaped, in the confidence of his master, the just reward of his own diligence. The attachment was mutual; and the youth was surprised to find in a man whose religion he had been taught to reprobate, virtues which commanded his esteem. In the family too, domestic peace and good order were sustained, and crowned by daily devotion: at which the youth was expected to be present. He was not, however, once asked to attend at meeting; but regularly took his place in the parish church. At this time he was wholly destitute of any concern respecting his eternal safety: he had no idea at all of his native depravity: such was his spiritual blindness, that he could repeat the ten commandments every Sabbath, without once suspecting that he had broken any of them, even in the thoughts or wishes of his heart; and, by a necessary consequence, atonement by the blood of the great Sin-offering, and regeneration of heart by the divine Spirit, appeared to him as doctrines of no value: he had, however, good natural sense, and could perceive that the righteous is, in many instances, "more excellent than his neighbor."

The name of *Methodist* was then hardly known; and *Presbyterian* was the general term with which an ignorant multi-

tude thought fit to reproach almost all persons of serious godliness. Amongst these, the master of the youth was well known; and he shared largely the scourge of the persecutor's tongue. His servant, who had often, in other instances, united in similar revilings, was now convinced that his master, at least, merited better treatment: he saw him upright, gentle, temperate, benevolent, and devout; and the youth said to himself, "Surely, a bad religion could not make so good a man." This conviction wrought so powerfully on the mind of the servant, that he exceedingly wished to know more perfectly what his master's religion was; but he had said to his father, and he held his promise sacred, "I will never enter the meeting-house at——." This engagement held him to his church; but his desire to attend, for once, where his master worshipped, still increased; but he believed he could, without a breach of promise, stand in the porch of the meeting-house. He did so. It was a summer's day, the doors were opened, the minister pleaded with earnestness, the youth's attention was caught, and the arrow of conviction reached the destined mark. He said, and it was the first time he had made the confession, "I am a lost sinner;" but he soon added "To me is the word of his salvation sent." The change in his character was sudden, but decisive. He had heard the voice of the good Shepherd, and could no longer be happy, whilst excluded from his fold. As became a son, both dutiful and pious, he wrote to his father, saying, "I faithfully regard my promise, not to enter the meeting-house at——, as the condition of my present residence; but I cannot any longer remain here, unless you remove that condition, and allow me to attend where, I believe, my duty to God and my eternal interest direct me." On the receipt of this letter, the father, highly alarmed and enraged, commanded his son instantly to return home; yet he was obliged, out of regard to his master's interest, to send, for the present, a younger son in his

room; from whom he exacted the same promise which he had received from his brother.

The converted youth, with mingled joy and sorrow, now sought the paternal roof, and met an angry parent with submission, and ardent prayer to God for direction in his new and trying situation. The next Lord's day morning his father, seeing the son preparing to walk, inquired what was his design: the son replied, "Father, I revere your authority; you know I have ever obeyed you; and, in one instance, I fear I carried that obedience too far, by placing your authority above that of my Heavenly Judge: my promise extended only to one place, and I am going this morning to the meeting-house at B——: it is the nearest place in which I can unite with serious Christians, and hear the doctrine which I think necessary to my eternal salvation. In this instance, I hope you will allow me to act for myself; in all others I am still ready to obey your commands." To this address the enraged father replied, "If you go to *any meeting*, my house shall be no longer your home." "I hope it will," the son replied, and respectfully withdrew. He avoided that day to see his father again; and the next day he silently resumed his usual occupation. But religion was now the pleasure and business of every day to this pious youth. Often he would protract the evening walk with a brother or a sister on his arm, to whom he told with heart-felt joy, the hope which glowed in his breast for another and a better world, where He dwells who bore the curse for guilty men. At home, the winter's evening was employed in religious converse; and Dr, Watts' psalms, and hymns, which he had brought with him, agreeably allured a family fond of music, and banished from their dwelling the vain and trifling village-song. This change, of course, became the wonder and the reproach of the whole village. Had the family become abandoned to every vice, the circumstance would probably have excited little surprise or regret; but to hear of religion on any day but Sunday, was a

new thing to these poor villagers, and as disagreeable as it was strange ; even the children at school learned to revile as they passed the place where the heavenly stranger had taken up his constant abode.

The work was of God, and none could hinder it. In a few months the pious youth had the happiness to discover a decided change of character in a brother, and in two sisters ; and they, determining to share the reproach of the cross, accompanied their brother to his usual place of worship. Frequently, on their return, they were all four of them shut out of doors by an offended father ; and thus would have remained without shelter, had not their mother (a tender parent, and now beginning to be a pious one) often crept silently down the stairs, at dead of night, to re-admit her banished children. The father, poor unhappy man, would have felt far less sorrow in following his children to the grave, than in seeing them thus take their whole delight in prayer and praise, and holy converse ; though it was evident to all impartial observers, that every mortal virtue, and every tender attachment to himself, were by their religion, abundantly heightened and enlarged. How dreadful are the effects of a deep rooted prejudice against evangelical truth !

New events increased the unhappy father's grief, and the joy of his pious children. The son, who had replaced his elder brother, now informed his father that he must, if he stayed at C****, have liberty also to hear what he believed to be the gospel of salvation. The father replied with anger, "you must use your own pleasure, for I have no other son whom I can trust to replace you." Steady perseverance gained on the father's opposition ; he saw that his children, though they were dutiful to him, had learned, that "to love father or mother more than Christ, is to be unworthy of him." The neighbors too became less violent in their reproaches, when they perceived that they were patiently endured. Truth prevailed, and opposition gave way. The elder children carefully instructed

the younger; all had liberty to attend serious and godly preachers. Devotion and a godly life silenced the objections of one parent, whilst the other, together with all her ten children, evidently partook of that grace which bringeth salvation.

The writer of these lines saw the aged mother about the year 1774, six weeks before her death; she was then eighty-one; venerable in form and countenance; her dignity was that of a saint just about to commence the song, "Uto him that hath loved me," &c. This old disciple retraced, in the preceding history, the dealings of God to her and hers, in a manner which fixed an indelible impression on the writer's mind, though he was then but eleven years old. A few days after this interview, she was admitted into the joy of her Lord.

The father, who died some years before, had regularly attended the means of grace with his family. One of the sons died in youth. The other five were esteemed and highly useful Christians in several of the midland counties. One of the daughters is still living in the county of Gloucester, and possesses, in advanced life, all the ardent piety of her long deceased parent. An immediate descendant of one of the younger brothers is pastor of a Christian Society within a few miles of the village of C****, and sometimes preaches, he hopes with success, hard by the house of his ancestors, which he never views without saying, "Lord, I adore thy ways to bring me near to God." "Thy ways are in the great deep, and thy footsteps are not known." "Thy counsel shall stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure."

The preceding narrative may lead us to reflect, 1. On the injustice of the charge so often urged against godly ministers and serious Christians, as disturbers of the peace of society. When the lamb is to be worried, the wolf wants not a pretext. Ever since our divine Master dwelt on the earth, his doctrine has excited violent opposition from the ignorant, the prejudiced and the vicious; but shall we, on this account, censure Christianity? As well may we blame the innocent traveller for exciting the avarice and the cruelty of the robber. In the

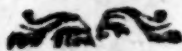
religion of Christ all is meek, peaceful, and benevolent: its opposers render it the *occasion* of reproach and bitter contention; but the *cause* of these evils is in themselves; and with them will finally rest both the blame and the punishment:

2. The pastor, who, in his own residence, or during his own life, gathers but little fruit from his labors, has often by them enriched distant churches and succeeding generations. Let ministers recollect this in the hour of discouragement, nor ever decline from their Masters work, since a single discourse, addressed to an unexpected hearer, has often proved as a fountain opened to circulate the highest of all blessings through channels too numerous, complex, and extensive, to be traced with accuracy, till knowledge shall be rendered complete in a better world.

3. In the commencement of a religious course, how necessary is it to unite the meekness of wisdom with unbending fortitude! Had the pious son been deficient in meekness, he might have fled his father's house, or have violently resented the harsh treatment which he received. On the other hand, without fortitude to sustain persecution, he would have resigned, to present interest and ease all the unspeakable advantages and consolations of religion; but combining these virtues, though the trial was hard, the result was happy.

4. Let it not be forgotten that the holy life and gentle manners of a pious master first silenced in his servant objections to religion, and then induced him to attend a gospel ministry. Too often, we fear, is this case reversed; and thus the way of truth is evil spoken of. God will establish the work of our hands upon us; and religion will abundantly prosper, when those who avow its interests shall also display its excellencies in their habitual conduct, and thus become "living epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men."

NEPOS.



ANECDOTES.

THE PRAYING SOLDIER.

DURING the late unhappy commotion in Ireland, a private soldier in the army of Lord Cornwallis, was daily observed to be absent from his quarters, and from the company of his fellow-soldiers. He began to be suspected of withdrawing himself for the purpose of holding intercourse with the rebels; and on this suspicion, probably increased by the malice of his wicked comrades, he was tried by a court-martial, and condemned to die. The Marquis hearing of this, wished to examine the minutes of the trial; and, not being satisfied, sent for the man to converse with him. Upon being interrogated, the prisoner solemnly disavowed every treasonable practice or intention, declared his sincere attachment to his sovereign, and his readiness to live and die in his service:—he affirmed that the real cause of his frequent absence was, that he might obtain a place of retirement for the purpose of private prayer; for which his lordship knew he had no opportunity among his profane comrades, who had become his enemies, merely on account of his profession of religion. He said, he had made this defence on his trial; but the officers thought it so improbable, that they paid no attention to it. The Marquis, in order to satisfy himself as to the truth of his defence, observed, that if so, he must have acquired some considerable aptness in this exercise. The poor man replied, that as to ability, he had nothing to boast of. The Marquis insisted on his kneeling down and praying aloud before him: which he did,—and poured forth his soul before God with such copiousness, fluency, and ardour, that the Marquis took him by the hand, and said, he was satisfied that no man could pray in that manner who did not live in the habit of intercourse with his God. He not only revoked the sentence, but received him into his peculiar favour, placing him among his personal attendants; where, it is said, he still continues in the way to promotion.

On reading the above, every serious mind will be led to reflect on the remarkable interposition of Providence in behalf of this man of prayer ; for this is the most prominent feature in the Christian character. He could not live without prayer though he thereby exposed himself to the suspicion and hatred of his associates, and even endangered his life ; but the God whom, like Daniel, he served, knew how to deliver him in the perilous hour ; and not only heard his prayers, but made the exercise of this duty itself the mean of his deliverance. O how does this reproach those who live without prayer, though they have every opportunity for retirement, unseen and unsuspected!



WHEN La Raveillere L'Epaux arrived at the dignity of a director of the French Republic, he addressed some instructions to all the departments, in the name of the Executive Directory, on the subject of religion. Speaking of Christians, whom he calls fanatics, he says, ' Weary out their patience, surround them with your inspection ; let it embarrass them by day, let it disturb them by night ; give them not a moment of repose ; let them, without seeing you, feel your superintendance in every place.' These instructions are dated in the month of Frimaire, in the 4th. year of the invisible republic, and fully prove, how much philosophers, who have been inveiging so long against intolerance and persecution, can improve upon the practice when they possess the power.



ONE day the renowned Cardinal de Rentz seeing a carbine levelled at him, by some one he did not know, had the presence of mind to cry out, " If your father, Sir were now seeing what you are about!" This speech immediately disarmed the fury of the assassin.

Remember, O believer, a Father's eye is upon thee. May the testimony ever be thine, that thou pleasest him!

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE:

FROM the report of the Committee of Missions to the General Assembly, it appears, that the missionaries have faithfully, and, there is reason to hope, not unsuccessfully, performed the duties of their appointments; and although some of them have met with discouragements, yet, in general, they were received with cordiality, and heard with decent attention. In a variety of instances, impressions have been made, which it may be presumed, will not be easily effaced; the careless and secure have been alarmed, and the children of Zion have been made joyful in their King.

Extract from the Missionary journal of the Rev. John Close.

“ June 18th, 1805. At South Granville* I attended a very large and respectable meeting of ministers and people (mostly presbyterians and congregationalists) appointed on account of a special attention to religion in that place.

I believe upwards of twenty regular ministers attended: no other took any active part in the public exercises. The people met on two days for social worship: they assembled in a grove, in the day time: there were no encampments. On the second day the Lord's supper was administered. Thousands collected from the neighbouring towns. It was judged by many that there were 700 or 800 communicants; and some supposed more. Between 40 and 50 new communicants, of that congregation, were that day admitted to the Lord's supper; nineteen adults were baptized; and I was informed, that 70 children of those adults were baptized on the next Lord's day. I never saw, within the walls of a church, more general attention, solemnity, and order, than were observable throughout the whole of the public performances.”

“ In the west and southerly parts of Vermont, and in some parts of Washington county, state of New-York, there appears an unusual attention to religion.”

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\* In Washington county, state of New York.

*Report on the accounts of the general state of religion given to the Assembly by the members individually.*

The Assembly have heard with pleasure, accounts from the east and west, the north and south, proclaiming the triumphs of the Redeemer, in the extension and prosperity of his kingdom in our country.

The Assembly have received an impression of the most pleasing kind from the intelligence that there is, in almost *every quarter*, a *general*, and in some parts of our church an *increased* attention to the public worship of God: that there exists a spirit of inquiry in regard to religious truth, and a more general conviction that the power of godliness is necessary to stamp value on its form.

Associations for prayer and reading the holy scriptures, have it appears, been the means frequently blessed by God, to preserve the very existence of religion, in places destitute of the preaching of the gospel, and the full administration of its ordinances. Such associations have happily prepared the people for the labours of the pious missionary, who thus came upon ground, as it were, already broken up, and profitably scattered the good seed of the word.

The Assembly have also heard with great satisfaction, that the catechising of children and others, has, in certain parts of our church, been practised with more than ordinary care, and with that desirable success, which may ever be expected to follow a suitable regard to this most important duty.

With heartfelt pleasure the Assembly bear testimony to the charitable exertions made by some of their churches, for the relief of the poor, and for the maintenance of the holy ministry. They rejoice to find that the ordinances of the gospel are, *in general*, attended with punctuality and earnestness. They regret, however, that in *some particulars*, they are compelled to use the language of reprehension. It is with pain they observe it to be the practice of too many, in some of their churches, to attend divine service only on *one* part of the day,

to the neglect or contempt of the remaining part. Against *this practice*, so injurious to the spiritual interests of their people; so entirely inconsistent with the christian character and privileges, they think it no more than their duty *solemnly to protest*. And they do most affectionately beseech all who are conscious of delinquency in this respect, no longer to withhold from God any portion of that time, which he hath specially consecrated to his own service.

We live at a time when it becomes a duty peculiarly incumbent, to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." It will, however, be remembered, that the sacred cause of truth, can never be promoted by angry controversy, or railing accusation. It is, therefore, recommended to the churches, to vindicate the truth, not only by sound and temperate discussion, but also and especially, by the manifestation of its sanctifying and transforming power over the life and conversation; and by evincing, that, "the like mind is in us which was in Christ Jesus our Lord."

It should ever be recollected that error in doctrine, hath a native tendency to produce immorality in practice; and therefore, that we should not be carried about by every wind of doctrine. Let us prove all things and hold fast that which is good. This caution, it is hoped, will be received with attention and solemnity, in as much as the church has been of late invaded by errors which strike at the very foundation of our faith and hope, such as the denial of the Godhead, and atonement of the blessed Redeemer, the subjection of holy scripture to the most extravagant impulses of the heart of man. These and other errors of a dangerous nature, have been industriously, and, alas! that the Assembly should be constrained to add, in some portions of our country, too successfully disseminated.

It is believed that in the revivals of late years, many have been added to the church of such as shall be saved. Many, who steadfast in the christian life, seek to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. For this, let the Giver of

every good, and every perfect gift, be praised. These happy subjects of divine grace are exhorted to "hold fast that which they have received, that no man take their crown." to "be faithful unto death, that they may obtain a crown of life."

But as it hath often occurred, in former periods of the church, so there is reason to believe, it has happened with respect to these effusions of the Spirit's gracious influences. Transformed into an angel of light, the enemy of souls hath endeavoured to mar the glorious display of divine operations; by inciting to the most absurd and extravagant outrages upon christian sobriety and decorum.

The Assembly beseech all their people to bear in mind, that if they allow themselves to abandon the unerring guidance of God's written word, they will inevitably become the prey of ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism. "Bodily exercise profiteth little." The mind sown with the seed of the word; the soul renewed by the holy Spirit; these profit; these entitle a man to the character of being truly religious: and whatsoever has not a tendency to cherish and promote true religion, is inconstant as the wind, and light as the chaff it scatters.

The Assembly are happy to add, that their observations on the prosperity of the church, and the favorable position of religious affairs generally, were not meant to be confined to the presbyteries under their care: they comprehend also the state of things within the bounds of the General Association of Connecticut, and among the congregational churches of Vermont, where the interests of Christ's kingdom appear to prosper.

On the whole, they commend their beloved people to the grace of God, praying the great Head of the church, to vouchsafe to them yet farther days of refreshing from his presence. Exalted Redeemer, "pour water on the thirsty; floods of water upon the dry ground; thy Spirit on our seed, and thy blessings on our offspring; that they may grow up as grass, and as willows by the water courses." Amen.

## REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN LITTLE COMPTON:

*We tender our thanks to the friend, who sent to one of the Editors the following interesting letter—Panoplist.*

CAMBRIDGE, MAY 16, 1806.

SIR,

KNOWING that you feel deeply interested in the cause of our Redeemer, and that any information respecting the prosperity of Zion, I cannot but transmit to you a short account of a revival in Rhode-Island, which I received a few days ago in a letter from Newport, dated April 22, 1806.

“ In Little Compton, Tiverton, Westport, and Fall River towns, in the south-eastern part of this state, the Lord is in a most remarkable manner displaying his power and grace; especially in Little Compton where Mr. Shepard is minister. There the attention has been much greater than in the other places. There the Lord appears to display his power and goodness in a most wonderful manner. Aged sinners, on the verge of the grave, and who have appeared, as to religion, like trees twice dead, and plucked up by the roots, now flourish in the courts of our God. Children of 14, 10, and even 8 years of age, cry hosanna to the Son of David. Opposers to the doctrines of distinguishing, electing, and uncontrollable grace, now rejoice in these doctrines, as their only hope. The enemies of all religion are silent, as to opposition; and some are constrained to say, Verily this is the finger of God! Almost every family contains a new-born soul, and some two, three, and four. Not less than one hundred appear to have tasted and seen, that the Lord is gracious, since the reformation commenced; and almost all the rest are inquiring, What must we do to be saved? Their meetings, which are almost daily, are thronged, and every countenance is solemn as the grave. The first Sabbath in April more than forty were admitted into the church. The work appears to increase. It is regular, still, and evidently genuine.”

I am, Sir, with the tenderest regard for your welfare,  
yours, &c.

## O R I G I N A L

## ON FRIENDSHIP.

WAND'RING along this dreary vale of tears  
 Where toil and sorrow ev'ry step attend,  
 With heavy ills oppress'd, and heavier fears,  
 Oh what were life without a faithful friend!

In childhood's thoughtless unsuspecting day,  
 Unvext with care and ignorant of guile  
 (Blest ignorance!) the mind is ever gay,  
 Nor dreams of malice lurking in a smile.

Advancing in the flowery paths of youth  
 The heart with social, gen'rous warmth expands;  
 Each face seems cloth'd with honesty and truth,  
 And each smooth tongue our confidence commands.

But ah! the fond illusion must depart,  
 Experience soon the painful lesson gives  
 That speech is oft no index to the heart,  
 That oft the smiling countenance deceives.

Lo! sordid av'rice seizes on the soul,  
 At once the blighted bud of friendship dies:  
 Lo! wild ambition, spurning all controul,  
 Dissolves at once ev'n nature's dearest ties:

Alas! if hateful envy gnaw the breast,  
 Or if it swell with ever-restless pride,  
 Within the soul by such base cares possess'd,  
 No manly sentiment can long abide.

Alike the little vulgar and the great  
 Hard and unfeeling of another's wo,  
 To int'rest only true, of friendship prate,  
 And feign a flame their bosoms never know:

At such a scene the disappointed heart  
 Desponding seeks the solitary cell,  
 Nor deigns to act a fashionable part  
 Where real, unbought friendship cannot dwell.

Yet are there not an uncorrupted few  
 Who from this charge exemption justly claim ?  
 Who prove the melancholy thought untrue  
 That friendship's nothing but an empty name ?

Of Heav'n more highly favour'd than the rest  
 A few in all the walks of life appear,  
 Of softer mould, with feeling bosoms blest,  
 And warm benevolence and truth sincere.

Strangers to envy, avarice, and pride,  
 To spread felicity is all their joy,  
 To seek the cell where want and pain abide,  
 And wipe the tear from sorrow's clouded eye.

In temper one and Heav'n-inspired design,  
 Friends to mankind, in virtue's cause unmov'd,  
 These kindred spirits no rude jars disjoin,  
 With sacred warmth they love and are belov'd.

O with what rapture two such bosoms meet  
 In mutual confidence and mutual love,  
 A while the cares and toils of life forget,  
 And all the blifs of souls united prove !

If through the clouds that o'er my head impend  
 And seem to darken all my earthly way,  
 Almighty Goodness sometimes deign to send  
 A beam that kindles darkness into day ;

A partner in my pleasures may I find,  
 (For pleasure is but half enjoy'd alone,)  
 Whose gen'rous soul, by virtue well refin'd,  
 Will ever make my happiness his own.

But ah! the joys that earth affords are few,  
 While num'rous ills my progress still await,  
 Desires unquench'd, bereavements ever new,  
 The world's false smile or undisguis'd hate.

Oft sinks my soul beneath a load of care,  
 And fees or fancies evils yet to come;  
 A cold ungentle aspect all things near,  
 And through a trackless wild I seem to roam.

O for a faithful friend in such an hour  
 The swelling sigh of sorrow to repress,  
 And with soft sympathy's mysterious pow'r  
 My troubled spirit soothe and lull to peace.

When sickness shall this mortal frame arrest,  
 And death approach with all his awful train:  
 And weary days, and nights estrang'd from rest,  
 Linger along in unremitting pain:

O for a constant friend beside my bed  
 To cheer the tedious moments as they fly;  
 To raise with tender care my fainting head,  
 And point to endless rest beyond the sky.

PHILANDER.

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DIED, July 20, 1806, at Lynchburgh, the Rev. *James Tompkins*, minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Concord.

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PAGE LINE

E R R A T A.

- 208 17, top & bottom line for *Ascopagite* read *Areopagite*.  
 — 4, bottom for *antipuity* read *antiquity*.  
 210 9, top for *Lata* read *Læta*.  
 — 9, bottom for *Donalists* read *Donatists*.  
 211 14, bottom for *Enchifidion* read *Enchiridion*.

