

WRITINGS OF HARVEY NEWCOMB

by Harvey Newcomb

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Harvey Newcomb, compiled for study and devotional reading.

53 Chapters

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Newcomb, Harvey - The Young Mans Guide to the Harmonious Development of Christian Character

01.00. The Young Lady's Guide to the Harmonious Development of Christian Character

The Young Lady's Guide to the Harmonious Development of Christian Character by Harvey Newcomb, 1843 In this 29 chapter book by Newcomb (Congregationalist) presents us with many topics of great importance to our youth. Some of his chapters: doctrinal Knowledge, nature and effects of true religion, love, prayer, temptation, self-denial, public worship, meditation, improvement of Time, dress, social and relative Duties, marriage, etc.

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01.01. Preface

PREFACE

This book is addressed to those who are supposed to have commenced the Christian life. Its object is, to aid them in the harmonious development of all their powers, upon Christian principles; so as to produce the highest degree of cultivation—intellectual, social, moral, and religious—of which they are capable, in the circumstances where Providence has placed them. It is equally adapted to the various walks of life, having respect to a course of self-culture within the reach of all. It is addressed to a particular class of people—young ladies—whom it is especially designed to benefit. It is not intended, however, to be read exclusively by them. The greater portion of the book is equally suited to any other Christian.

It was originally written as a directory for a beloved sister of the author. It has since passed through two very thorough revisions; and in the present one, a considerable portion of it has been entirely rewritten, some parts of it condensed, and much new matter added. Those who have read the former editions will find this almost a new book, while the material substance of the original has been retained. Since it was first written, it has twice undergone a critical examination by learned and judicious friends; and, in the present revision, which is the last that is contemplated, the author has thrown out every sentence and every expression which has appeared to him of doubtful utility; so that those who read it, may rely upon its being a safe guide. Under a deep and solemn sense of responsibility for the influence which such a book is destined to exert, and with the humble hope of benefiting immortal minds, it is respectfully committed to the Christian public.

01.02. True Religion Essentially Progressive

TRUE RELIGION ESSENTIALLY PROGRESSIVE The great moral and spiritual change, which the Scriptures declare to be necessary to salvation, is compared by Christ and the apostles to a new birth, because it is the beginning of spiritual life. The term regeneration, however, only applies to this change in its commencement, which is instantaneous. The young convert, therefore, is very properly called by the apostle Peter a "new-born babe." It is a great mistake, then, to suppose that a true Christian, who is in a right state of mind, is to look back to the period of his conversion for his most lively and vigorous exercises of grace, or for his principal evidences of being in a gracious state. It may, indeed, be at that time more perceptible, because the change from a state of nature to a state of grace is very great. Yet this change is imperfect, and the greater part of the work of "putting off the old man,"—of "bringing under the body and keeping it in subjection," remains yet to be done; while the "new man" must grow up from the feebleness of childhood to the "stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus."

True religion must, therefore, be essentially progressive. This is the clear implication of all the figures used in the word of God to describe the work of grace in the heart. It is compared to a mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds. But, when it springs up, it rises and spreads its branches until it becomes the greatest of all herbs. The beauty and appropriateness of this figure will not be appreciated unless we take into consideration the luxuriant growth of plants in Eastern countries. But we should never expect such a plant to spring up at once into full maturity. It is the mushroom which opens full grown to behold for the first time the morning sun; but it as speedily withers away. Yet neither should we expect such a plant to become stationary in its growth, before it arrives at maturity. If it ceases to grow, there must be a worm at the root, or some fatal disease, which will cause it to shrivel and die. The operation of grace is also compared to leaven; which is so little at first that its presence in the meal can scarcely be perceived. But when it begins to work, it increases and extends until the whole is leavened. Yet its progress may be impeded by cold; and the process can rarely be restored, so as not to injure the production. So the Christian will rarely recover from the injurious effects of backsliding and growing cold in his pious affections.

Again, grace is compared to a living spring—a fountain, whose waters bubble up and send forth a constant stream. Christ says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." When these words were uttered, our Lord was sitting on a deep well, in conversation with the woman of Samaria. As his custom was, he drew instruction from the objects around him. He directed her attention away from the water which could only quench natural thirst, to the living water, which refreshes the soul. But she, not understanding him, wished to know how he could obtain living water from a deep well, without anything to draw with. In order to show the superiority of the water of life, he told her that those who drank of it should have it in them, constantly springing up of itself, as from an overflowing fountain.

One of the most deeply-cherished recollections of the author's early life, is the living spring that flowed from a rock near the home of his childhood. The severest drought never affected it, and in

the coldest season of a northern winter it was never frozen. Oft, as he rose in the morning, when the chilling blasts whistled around the dwelling, and everything seemed sealed up with perpetual frost, the ice and snow would be smoking around the spring. Thus, like a steady stream, should our graces flow, unaffected by the drought or barrenness of others, melting the icy hearts around us.

"The righteous," says David, "shall flourish like a palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The palm-tree continues to grow and increase, and retains its vigor and fruitfulness perhaps longer than any other tree. It is also renowned for its ability to multiply its own kind, its root producing a great number of suckers; and when it is planted by a living spring in the desert, soon there will be found a little forest of palm-trees growing up around it. This is one of the most useful of trees, every part of it being put to some profitable use. To "flourish like the palm-tree," therefore, is full of meaning. This can be realized by the Christian only when he is making progress in his own spiritual growth, contributing, by his influence, to the increase of the "trees of righteousness" in the garden of the Lord, and abounding in works of usefulness. The cedar is an evergreen. It does not, like many trees, shed its verdure, and remain apparently lifeless one half the year, and then shoot forth luxuriantly again for a little season; but its growth is steady and sure. It is perpetually green. To grow like a cedar, therefore, indicates a steady progress in the divine life. The motives which urge us to seek and maintain an elevated standard of piety, are the highest that can be presented to our minds. The glory of God requires it. This is the greatest possible good. It is the manifestation of the divine perfections to his intelligent creatures. This manifestation is made by discovering to them his works of creation, providence, and grace, and by impressing his moral image upon their hearts. In this their happiness consists. In promoting his own glory, therefore, God exercises the highest degree of unselfish benevolence. Nothing can add to his happiness: nothing can diminish it. If the whole creation were blotted out, and God were the only being in the universe, he would still be perfectly glorious and happy in himself. There can be, therefore, no selfishness in his maintaining his own glory. The glory of the Creator is essential to the good of the creature. A desire to glorify God must, then, be the ruling principle of our conduct, the moving spring of our actions. But how is the glory of God promoted by our growth in grace?

1. It is manifested to us by impressing his image upon our hearts, and by giving us a spiritual discovery of the excellence, purity, and loveliness, of his moral nature.
2. It is manifested to others, so far as we maintain a holy life; for thereby the moral image of Christ is exhibited, as the glory of the sun appears by the reflected light of the moon.
3. The glory of God is promoted by making others acquainted with the riches of free grace, and bringing them to Christ; for, by that means, they receive spiritual light to behold the beauty and glory of the divine perfections, and his image is stamped upon their souls.

We have, likewise, great encouragement to aim at progress in divine things. The word of God is full of promises to such as seek after high attainments in divine knowledge and holiness. The prophet Hosea says, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth." His going forth, to those who follow on to know him, shall be as certain, and as regular, and steady, as the daily return of the morning; and as progressive as the sun, when his beams break from the east, and increase in brightness and intensity, until they pour down the burning

heat, and steady, clear light, of perfect day. "If we follow on to know the Lord," our consolations shall be as constant, and our experience of the goodness of the Lord as certain, as the regular succession of night and day; and our communion with God, and increase of light, shall be as steady as the progress of the sun from early dawn to mid-day. There may be occasional clouds; but they will quickly disperse, and the Sun of Righteousness will break forth with sweeter beams and more cheering luster.

He shall also "come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth." In Palestine, the rain does not fall, as in this country, at all seasons of the year; but heavy rains descend, to water the ground at seed-time, to cause the seed to spring up and grow; and these rains are so plentiful as to carry on vegetation with steady progress, until near the harvest, when the "latter rain" falls, to perfect the crop—to give body to the kernel, so that, when it shall ripen, it may be plump and full. If this latter rain fails, the kernel shrinks, and shrivels up, so that the grain is deteriorated in quality, and diminished in quantity. The "former rain," in the text quoted, then, would seem to denote that "refreshing from on high," which the soul experiences when the "good seed" of the word first springs up; and, if this be abundant, and the young convert will "follow on to know the Lord," the impulse which he then receives will carry him on in a steady course of spiritual growth, until the "latter rain" comes to perfect his fruits. In the experience of Christians who have made much progress in the divine life, there is something very much resembling this "latter rain." They go on in a steady course, after their conversion, always advancing, though, perhaps, less perceptibly at some seasons than others, as there are seasons in vegetation when things seem to make no progress. But, at length, after having faithfully followed on to know the Lord, they receive a fresh unction from on high. The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon them anew, like the "latter rain," to perfect the growth of the Christian graces. It may happen, in the growth of vegetation in the East, that, for a while before the "latter rain," the drought may be such as to cause the grain to droop, and, perhaps, to appear as though it were going to dry up and wither away.

So, often, previous to this new experience of which I am speaking, the Christian is brought through great trials, often exceeding, in the strength of temptation and the power of conviction, that which preceded his first experience of pardoning mercy. But, when light again breaks in upon his mind, he is brought out into "a large place," and beholds the "beauty of the Lord," and the glories of his grace, with clearer vision than ever before. The riches of full assurance break in upon the soul, and his peace flows as a river that is never dry. He has new and clearer discoveries of the glory of God, and of that divine and unspeakably glorious mystery, "God manifest in the flesh." His soul is lifted up in God's ways, though exceedingly abased in himself, and humbled before God. He has exchanged the "spirit of bondage" for the "spirit of adoption." His mind is in "perfect peace, stayed on God." And this "latter rain" brings his fruits to maturity. His love and joy, as well as all his pious affections, are more pure and spiritual, with less mixture of human passion; his faith is stronger, clearer, and more steady; his patience is strengthened; he is more forbearing, more gentle, more meek, more humble, more consistent in his temper and conduct at all times. He literally and truly "brings forth fruit with patience;" and his fruit remains, and is seen, to the glory of God's grace. And, with many, this refreshing is often repeated, through a long Christian life, causing them always to "bring forth fruit in their season."

There is something like this "latter rain" in the experience of Bible saints, as in that of Job, in his trial, and of David and Peter, after their falls. So, also, we find it in the memoirs of eminent

Christians, as of Bunyan, Mrs. Edwards, (wife of Jonathan Edwards,) Edward Payson, James Brainerd, Taylor, Griffin, and many others. Mrs. Edwards, for a long time, enjoyed, as she said, "the riches of full assurance." She felt "an uninterrupted and entire resignation to God, with respect to health or sickness, ease or pain, life or death; and an entire resignation of the lives of her nearest earthly friends." She also felt a "sweet peace and serenity of soul, without a cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of nature and Providence; a wonderful access to God by prayer, sensibly conversing with him, as much as if God were here on earth; frequent, plain, sensible, and immediate answers to prayer; all tears wiped away; all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, except sorrow for sin; doing everything for God's glory, with a continual and uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace, and joy." At the same time she engaged in the common duties of life with great diligence, considering them as a part of the service of God; and, when done from this motive, she said they were as delightful as prayer itself. She also showed an "extreme anxiety to avoid every sin, and to discharge every moral obligation. She was most exemplary in the performance of every social and relative duty; exhibited great inoffensiveness of life and conversation; great meekness, benevolence, and gentleness of spirit; and avoided, with remarkable conscientiousness, all those things which she regarded as failings in her own character." But how did these people arrive at this eminence in the Christian life? Although by free, sovereign grace—yet it was by no miracle. If we will use the same means, we may attain the same end; and that without any disparagement to our dependence upon God, or his sovereignty in the dispensation of his grace; for he has appointed the means, as well as the end. In speaking of the attainments of Mrs. Edwards, her husband says, "Mrs. Edwards had been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace; and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, weanedness to the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long-continued struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labor in piety, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means. This growth had been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a most visible alteration of outward behavior; particularly in living above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty and self-denial; maintaining the Christian conflict under temptations, and conquering, from time to time, under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time, such as seasons of extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death."

We find accounts of similar trials and struggles in the lives of others. This is what we may expect. It agrees with the Christian life, as described in God's word. It is "through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven." This is the way in which we must go, if we would ever enter there. We must make piety the great business of life, to which everything else must give place. We must engage in the work with our whole souls, looking to Christ for strength against our spiritual enemies; following the example of Paul, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" and then we shall come off conquerors at last, "through him that has loved us, and given himself for us."

01.03. Doctrinal Knowledge

DOCTRINAL KNOWLEDGE

It is common for people to speak of doctrine with aversion, as though it were something abstract and dry, having no connection with practical life. This notion, however, is founded on a misapprehension, not only of the meaning of the term, but of the connection of actions with established principles of the mind. The general signification of the word doctrine is, the principles upon which any system is founded. As applied to Christianity, it means divine truth; for this is the foundation upon which the Christian religion rests. Although the truths of God's word are not reduced to a regular system in the Bible, yet, when brought together, they make the most beautiful and perfect of all systems. It is proper, therefore, that we should contemplate them in a body, as they appear with the most perfect symmetry in the plan of God's moral government.

There is a disposition, with many, to undervalue doctrinal knowledge. They think it of little consequence what they believe, if they are only sincere, and manifest much feeling on the subject of religion. This is a ruinous mistake. There is an intimate connection between faith and practice. The principles which are believed, and received into the heart, govern and control the conduct. The doctrines which God has revealed in his word are the principles of his moral government. If we mistake these principles, we may be found in open rebellion, while we think we are doing God service. For example, God commands us to keep holy the Sabbath day. But, if we do not believe that he has given this commandment, we shall feel under no obligation to obey it. And every truth which God has revealed is as intimately connected with practice as this, although the duty enjoined may be, in itself considered, of less consequence.

Christianity is called a spiritual building. "You are built up a spiritual house." "Whose house are we." "You are God's building." The foundation and frame-work of this building are the doctrines or truths of the Bible. Some of these doctrines are called FUNDAMENTAL, or ESSENTIAL, because they lie at the foundation of the whole building, and are so essential to it, that, if taken away, the edifice would fall to the ground. These are:

1. the existence of God in the mysterious union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
2. the fall, and consequent depravity and condemnation, of man;
3. the atonement of Christ;
4. justification by faith in him alone;
5. the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit;
6. the eternal punishment of those who finally reject the gospel.

If any one of these were taken away, it would overturn the whole building. These may, therefore, well be called the foundation. But there are many other important parts of a frame besides the foundation. So there are many very important truths of Christianity besides its essential doctrines.

But some of these are of more consequence than others. If a post or a beam is taken away, the building is greatly marred, and in danger of falling; yet, if well covered, it may still be a comfortable dwelling. Again, although a brace or a pin is of service to strengthen the building, yet either may be taken away without very serious injury. But a frame may be complete in all its parts, and yet be no building. Without a covering, it will not answer a single design of a house; and in proportion as it is well covered, will it be a comfortable residence. Just so with Christianity. The covering of the house is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, producing gracious affections, which manifest themselves in a holy life. But the covering of a house cannot exist without some kind of frame-work. So experimental and practical piety cannot exist without a belief of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The Holy Spirit operates upon the heart through the truth. He gives it a personal application, brings it home to the heart and conscience, and exerts an efficacious influence in connection with it, changing the heart and life. "By His own choice, He gave us a new birth by the message of truth." "Seeing you have purified your souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Thus the agency of the Spirit is generally acknowledged in connection with the truth. "Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth."

Any religious feeling or experience, therefore, which is not produced by the truth, made effectual by the Holy Spirit, is not genuine. There is a kind of indefinite religious feeling, which many mistake for Christian experience. They feel, and, perhaps, deeply; but they know not why they feel. Such religious feeling is to be suspected as spurious. It may be a delusion of Satan. By persuading people to rest upon this spurious religious feeling, he accomplishes his purpose as well as if he had kept them in a careless state. The clearer our views of truth, the more spiritual and holy will be our pious affections. Thus godly sorrow arises from a sight of our own depravity, with a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as committed against a holy God, and against great light and mercy. Faith is produced by a view of the atonement of Christ, and of his infinite fullness as a complete and perfect Savior. Love is excited by a discovery of the excellence of God's moral perfections. Godly fear and reverence arise from a sight of the majesty and glory of his natural attributes, and a sense of his presence. Joy may come from a sense of the infinite rectitude of his moral government, from the sight of the glory of God in his works of providence and grace, or from a general view of the beauty and excellence of divine truth. Comfort may be derived from evidence of the divine favor; and confidence, from an appropriation of God's promises to ourselves. But all religious feeling produced by impulse, without any rational view of the truth, is to be suspected. Every religious affection has its counterfeit. Thus sorrow may be produced by the fear of hell, without any sense of the evil of sin. A presumption of our own good estate may be mistaken for faith; and this will produce joy. We may exercise a carnal or selfish love to God, because we think he loves us, and has made us the objects of his special favor; and this may excite the natural passions to a high degree of fervor, without any spiritual affection. The promises of God, also, so far as they concern the personal good of the believer, may administer as much comfort to the self-deceived, as to the real saint. But as the frame-work of a building, though complete in all its parts, would be no house without a covering, so we may have a speculative knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian religion, and not be Christians. It is the experimental and practical application of these doctrines to the heart and life that makes the building complete. By regarding ourselves as subjects of God's moral government, and the doctrines of the Bible as the laws of his kingdom, we feel such a personal interest in them, that we cannot rest in abstract speculation. Let us, therefore, study these doctrines, that we may know how to live to the glory of God.

Directions for acquiring Doctrinal Knowledge.

I. Become a little child. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word." "Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." A little child believes the words of his father. "My father says so," is reason enough for him. He does not say, "I will not believe it, because I cannot understand it." In like manner should we submit to the teachings of God's holy word. We cannot expect to comprehend the ways of an infinite Being. We can see but a very small part of the system of his moral government. Let us not, then, try to carry out difficult points beyond what is taught in the Scriptures. God has revealed in the Scripture, all that is necessary for us to know in this life. He knows best where to leave these subjects. If there were no difficulties in the truths revealed, there would be no trial of our faith. It is necessary that we should take some things on trust. There are some truths clearly revealed, which we find difficulty in reconciling one with the other. Be content to believe both on the authority of God's word. He will reconcile them hereafter. "What I do, you know not now," said our Lord to Peter, "but you shall know hereafter." Let this consideration always satisfy us: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight."

I am the more particular here, because this is the point where error begins. The setting up of 'feeble reason' in opposition to the word of God, is the origin of most mistakes in religion. And, if we determine to be satisfied of the reasonableness of the truth before we believe it, and carry out the principle, we shall land in downright atheism. I do not mean to say that any truth is unreasonable. On the contrary, divine truth is the perfection of reason. But there are some truths which may appear unreasonable because we cannot see the whole of them. Thus a fly on the corner of a house cannot see the beauty and symmetry of the whole building. So far as his eye extends, it may appear to be sadly lacking in its proportions. Yet this is but a faint representation of our narrow views of God's moral government. But a great many of the difficulties which are felt in regard to religious truth arise from mistaking the true province of reason. There are a multitude of facts in natural science which are capable of being demonstrated; and yet all philosophy is set at defiance to determine the mode or manner of their existence, or the reasons why they exist. Thus we can easily understand the fact of the attraction of the needle to the pole; but the cause of this attraction, or the manner in which it operates, is entirely beyond our apprehension. So we can understand the fact that the heat of the sun, with moisture upon the earth, will cause seed to vegetate; but we can explain neither the reason why, nor the mode of operation; nor can we tell the reason why every seed will produce its kind, or why every animal will propagate its own species; neither can we discover the mode, or manner, in either of these cases; and yet the fact is undeniable. To determine the facts, in all these cases, by an examination of the evidence by which they are substantiated, is the true province of reason; but it would be unphilosophical and absurd to deny the fact, because we cannot understand the how or the why.

Apply this simple principle to divine truth, and half the difficulties with which it is surrounded will vanish. Thus we can understand the fact of the connection of Adam's fall with the depravity of all men; but the reasons which influenced the Divine Mind, in constituting the arrangement under which this takes place, are entirely out of our reach; nor can we explain the mode by which this depravity is inherited. So we can apprehend the fact of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the union of the divine and human natures in Christ; but the mode, or manner, is above our comprehension. Reason is competent to judge of the evidence by which these truths are

established; and no better evidence can be had or desired than the word of God, in ascertaining the meaning of which reason is to be employed. But, when that meaning is ascertained, reason is to bow with implicit faith. It is to be observed, however, that the word of God does not teach anything which is obviously absurd, and repugnant to right reason, as the Papal notion of transubstantiation; and the fact that the meaning we attach to any passage of Scripture is absurd, and repugnant to reason, is presumptive evidence that we have mistaken its meaning.

II. Avoid a controversial spirit. Do not study for the sake of finding arguments to support your own opinions. Take the place of a sincere inquirer after truth, with a determination to embrace whatever you find supported by the word of God, however contrary it may be to your favorite notions. But, when objections arise in your mind against any doctrine, do not suppose you have made some new discovery, and therefore reject it without further inquiry. The same objections have, perhaps, occurred to the mind of every inquirer on the same subject; and, very probably, they have often been satisfactorily answered by able writers. This is a common error of young inquirers. They are apt to think others take things upon trust, and that they are the only people who have thought of the difficulties which start up in their minds. But, when their reading becomes more extensive, they learn, with shame, that what appeared to them original thought, was only reviving old, cast-off opinions.

III. Use such helps as you can obtain. Read carefully selected and judicious authors, on doctrinal subjects. Although the Scriptures are our only guide, yet we may profit by the experience of others. We may see how the difficulties which arise in our own minds appeared to them, and how they solved them. We may learn, also, that our difficulties with commonly received opinions are not new, but that they have before occurred to the minds of others, who, nevertheless, after examination, have retained these opinions. This may prevent us from hastily rejecting any doctrine without thorough examination. We may also obtain much light upon many difficult passages of Scripture, by an acquaintance with the times and circumstances in which they were written; and men who undertake to write on such subjects generally search deeply into these matters.

Furthermore, it has pleased God, in every age, to raise up men "mighty in the Scriptures." With their extraordinary powers of mind, and knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written, it would be strange if they should not have clearer perceptions of their meaning, and more comprehensive views of divine truth, than those who have only read the English Bible; and to despise what they have written would be the height of self-conceited folly.

We may also employ the sermons which we hear for an increase of doctrinal knowledge, as well as an excitement to the performance of duty. But all which we read or hear must be brought to the test of God's word. We are commanded to "test the spirits, whether they be of God." Do not take the opinions of men upon trust. Compare them diligently with the word of God, and do not receive them until you are convinced that they agree with this unerring standard. Make this your text-book; and only use others to assist you in coming to a right understanding of this. Yet be not too confident in your own understanding; and be ever ready to suspect your judgment, where you find it opposed by the opinions of the mass of learned and pious men whom God has raised up for the instruction of his people.

IV. In all your researches after doctrinal knowledge, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God would enable you to understand his word, that you may be "rooted and grounded in the faith."

The influences of the Holy Spirit are twofold. He enlightens the understanding, to lead it into a correct knowledge of the truth; and he applies the truth, to the sanctification of the heart. Pray diligently that you may have both. If you persevere in the proper observance of this direction, you cannot fail to profit by the others; but, if you neglect this, your pursuit of doctrinal knowledge will serve only as food for your pride, self-confidence, and conceit—and exert a blighting influence upon your soul.

01.04. Nature and Effects of True Religion

NATURE AND EFFECTS OF TRUE RELIGION The nature and effects of true religion are described in the Holy Scriptures, under the similitude of a tree planted by the side of a river. The Psalmist says the righteous "is like a tree planted beside rivers of water that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither." The prophet Jeremiah, also, speaking of the man who trusts and hopes in the Lord, says, "He will be like a tree that is planted by water. It will send its roots down to a stream. It will not be afraid in the heat of summer. Its leaves will turn green. It will not be anxious during droughts. It will not stop producing fruit." The river, which is ever flowing, represents the abundant provision of God's grace. But a tree may stand so near a river as to be watered when it overflows its banks; and yet, if its roots only spread over the surface of the ground, and do not reach the bed of the river, it will wither in a time of drought. This aptly represents those who appear engaged and in earnest only during remarkable outpourings of the Spirit. They are all alive and full of zeal when the river overflows; but, when it returns to its ordinary channel, their leaf withers; and, if a long season of spiritual drought follows, they become dry and barren, so that no appearance of spiritual life remains. But mark how different the description of the true child of God: "He is like a tree planted by rivers of water." This figure appears to have been taken from the practice of cultivating trees. They are removed from the wild state in which they spring up, and their roots firmly fixed in a spot of ground cultivated and prepared to facilitate their growth. So the Christian is taken from a state of nature, which is a wild, uncultivated state, and placed in a state of grace, by the side of the river, which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. But this tree also "spreads out her roots by the river." When the roots of the tree are spread out along the bed of the river, it will always be supplied with water, even when the river is low. This steadiness of Christian character is elsewhere spoken of under a similar figure: "The root of the righteous shall not be moved;" "He shall cause those who come of Jacob to take root;" "Being rooted and grounded in love." Hence the prophet adds that the heat and the drought shall not affect it; but its leaf shall be green, always growing; and it shall not cease to bring forth fruit. And throughout the Scriptures the righteous are represented as bringing forth fruit: "And the remnant that has escaped out of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." Here is first a taking deep root downward, or the sanctification of the faculties of the soul, by which new principles of action are adopted; and a bearing fruit upward, or the exercise of those principles, in holy affections and corresponding outward conduct.

Again, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." The bud and blossom are the first exercises of Christian experience. But every tree bears a multitude of false blossoms, which, by the superficial observer, may not be distinguished from the true. They may for a time appear even more promising and beautiful. As it appears in full bloom, it would be impossible for the keenest eye to discover the unfruitful blossoms. But as soon as the season arrives for the fruit to begin to grow, these fair blossoms are withered and gone, and nothing remains but a dry and wilted stem. So, in the first stages of Christian experience, there are many counterfeits. But the real children of God shall not only bud and blossom, but they shall "fill the face of the world with

fruit." In the Song of Solomon, the church is compared to "an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits." The pomegranate is a kind of apple. The tree is low, but spreads its branches, so that its breadth is greater than its height. So the true Christian is humble and lowly, while his good works spread all around him. The blossoms of this tree are large and beautiful, forming a cup like a bell. But when the flowers are double, no fruit follows. So the double-minded hypocrite brings forth no fruit. The pomegranate apple is exceedingly beautiful and delicious, and so the real fruits of Christianity are full of beauty and loveliness.

Again, the church is said to lay up for Christ all manner of pleasant fruit, new and old. But backsliding Israel is called an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself. Here we may distinguish between the apparent good fruits of the false professor and of the real Christian. The latter does everything for Christ. He desires the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's kingdom; and this is his ruling motive. But the former, though he may do many things good in themselves, yet does them all with selfish motives. His ruling desire is to gratify himself, and to promote his own honor and interest, either in this world or in that which is to come. The fruit which his people bring forth is that on which Christ chiefly insists, as a test of Christian character. "Every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit." He compares himself to a vine, and his followers to branches; and informs them that every branch which bears no fruit shall be taken away. In the passage quoted from the first Psalm, the righteous is said to bring forth fruit in his season. And in the 92nd Psalms 14:1-7th verse, it is said, "They shall still bring forth fruit in their old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;" thus exhibiting a constancy of fruit-bearing, and an uninterrupted growth, even down to old age. But what is meant by bringing forth fruit in his season? Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." Hence we conclude that bringing forth fruit in season must be carrying out the principles of the gospel into every part of our conduct. In another place, the same apostle informs us more particularly what are the fruits of the Spirit are: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control." Let us, then, carry out these principles, and see what influence they will have upon the Christian character.

LOVE is something that can be felt. It is an outgoing of heart towards the object loved, and a feeling of union with it. When we have a strong affection for a friend, it is because we see in him something that is lovely. We love his society, and delight to think of him when he is absent. Our minds are continually upon the lovely traits of his character. So ought we to love God. The ground of this love should be the infinite purity, excellence, and beauty of his moral perfections. He is infinite loveliness in himself. There is such a thing as feeling this love in exercise. In the Song of Solomon, love is said to be "strong as death." Surely this is no faint imagery. Is it possible for a person to exercise a feeling "as strong as death," and yet not be sensible of it? Love takes hold of every faculty of soul and body. It must, then, be no very dull feeling.

Again, the warmth and the settled and abiding nature of love are represented by such strong language as this: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Surely this can be no fitful feeling, which comes and goes at extraordinary seasons. It must be a settled and abiding principle of the soul, though it may not always be accompanied with strong emotion. We may sometimes be destitute of emotion towards the friends we love most. But the settled principle of esteem and preference is abiding; and our attention needs only to be called to the lovely traits in our friend's character to call forth emotion.

David, under the influence of this feeling, breaks forth in such expressions as these: "My soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for you!" "As the deer pants for the water-brooks, so my soul pants after you, O God; my soul thirsts for God, for the living God!" "My soul longs, yes, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God!" "My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times." Surely there is no dullness, no coldness, in such feelings as these. They accord with the spirit of the command, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." And this was not, with the Psalmist, an occasional lively frame. This soul-breaking longing was the habitual feeling of his heart; for he exercised it "at all times." And what was it that called forth these ardent longings? Was it the personal benefits which he had received, or expected to receive, from God? By no means. After expressing an earnest desire to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, he tells us why he wished to be there: "To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." The object of his love was "the beauty of the Lord;" doubtless meaning his moral perfections.

Intimately connected with this was his desire to know the will of the Lord. For this he wished to "inquire in his temple." And whenever the love of God is genuine, it will call forth similar desire. The apostle John, whose very breath is love, says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." The child who loves his parents will delight in doing whatever pleases them. But the child who cares for his parents only as he expects to be benefitted by them, will always do as little as possible for them, and that little unwillingly. So in our relations with God. The self-deceived may have a kind of love to God, because he thinks himself a peculiar object of divine favor, and because he still expects greater blessings. But this does not lead him to delight in the commands of God. He rather esteems them a task. His heart is not in the doing of them; and he is willing to make them as light as possible. But the true Christian delights in the law of God; and the chief source of his grief is, that he falls so far short of keeping it.

Again, if we love God, we shall love his image. "And everyone who loves Him who begets also loves the one who has been born of Him." Our love to Christians, if genuine, must arise from the resemblance which they bear to Christ; and not from the comfort which we enjoy in their society, nor because they appear friendly to us. This false professors also feel. If we truly exercise that love, we shall be willing to make personal sacrifices for their benefit. We are directed to love one another as Christ loved us. And how did Christ love us? He laid down his life for us. And the beloved apostle says, we ought, in imitation of him, "to lay down our lives for the brethren;" that is, if occasion requires it. Such is the strength of that love, which we are required to exercise for our Christian brethren. But how can this exist in the heart, when we feel unwilling to make the least sacrifice of our own feelings or interests for their sakes? But there is another kind of love required of us—the love of compassion, which may be exercised even towards wicked men. And what must be the extent of this love? There can be but one standard. We have the example of our Lord before us. So intense was his love, that it led him to sacrifice personal ease, comfort, and worldly good, for the benefit of the bodies and souls of men; and even to lay down his life for their salvation. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Thus must we lay ourselves out for doing all we can to relieve the sufferings and save the souls of our fellow-men.

Another fruit of the Spirit is JOY. We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord at all times. If we have a proper sense of the holiness of God's moral character, of the majesty and glory of his power, of the infinite wisdom which shines through all his works, the infinite rectitude of his moral

government, and especially of that amazing display of his love in the work of redemption—it will fill our hearts with "joy unspeakable and full of glory!" Nor is rejoicing in God at all inconsistent with mourning for sin. On the contrary, the more we see of the divine character, the more deeply shall we be abased and humbled before him. Says Job, "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees you. Therefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It was a sight of God which brought this holy man so low before him.

Another fruit of the Spirit is PEACE—peace with God, and peace with man. The impenitent are at war with God; there is therefore no peace for them. God is angry with them, and they are contending with him. But the Christian becomes reconciled to God through Christ. He finds peace in believing in him. The Lord is no longer a God of terror to him, but a "God of peace." Hence the gospel is called the "way of peace," and Christ the "Prince of peace." Jesus, in his parting interview with his beloved disciples, says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." Righteousness, or justice, and peace, are said to have met together, and kissed each other. "We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are brought into a state of reconciliation with God, attended with a settled feeling of delight towards his government. This begets a serene and peaceful disposition of heart. But this gracious work of the Holy Spirit does not stop with these exercises of the mind. It must be carried out in our fellowship with others, and our feelings towards them. Whatever is in our hearts will manifest itself in our conduct. If we exercise a morose, sour, and jealous disposition; if we indulge a censorious spirit, not easily overlooking others' faults; if we are easily provoked, and irritated with the slightest offence; if we indulge in petty strife and backbiting—surely the peace of God does not rule in our hearts.

MEEKNESS is a twin-sister of peace. It is a temper of mind not easily provoked to resentment; or, as the word signifies, easiness of mind. It is the bringing of our wild and turbulent passions under control. It is an eminent work of the Spirit; and we may judge of our spiritual attainments by the degree of it which we possess. The Scriptures abound with exhortations to the cultivation of it. It is preeminently lovely in the female character. Hence Peter exhorts women to put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.

LONG-SUFFERING and gentleness are twin-daughters of meekness. Long-suffering is godlike; it is an imitation of the forbearance of God towards his rebellious creatures. He is long-suffering and slow to anger. He does not let his anger burn hot against sinners until all means of bringing them to repentance have failed. O, how should this shame us, who cannot bear the least appearance of insult or injury from our fellow-sinners without resentment! But, if we would be the children of our Father in heaven, we must learn to bear ill-treatment with a forbearing and forgiving temper.

GENTLENESS is one of the most lovely of all the graces of the Spirit. It is a "softness or mildness of disposition and behavior, and stands opposed to harshness and severity, pride and arrogance." "It corrects whatever is offensive in our manner, and, by a constant train of humane attentions, studies to alleviate the burden of common misery." The constant exercise of this spirit is of the greatest importance to the Christian who would glorify God in his life, and do good to his fellow-creatures.

GOODNESS is another fruit of the Spirit. I suppose the apostle here means the same that he expresses in another place by "mercy and kindness." It is doing good both to the bodies and souls of others, as we have opportunity. "Be kindly affectioned one to another." "Be kind one to another,

tenderhearted." This is a distinguished trait in the Christian character. It shone forth in all its loveliness in our divine Redeemer. He went about doing good. So ought we to imitate his example. It should be our chief aim and study to make ourselves useful to others; for we thereby glorify God. If we have the Spirit of Christ, this will be our "food and drink."

Another fruit of the Spirit is FAITH. "Faith is credit given to a declaration or promise, on the authority of the person who makes it;" including the idea of confidence in such person, and reliance upon his word. It is a common principle of action in the ordinary affairs of life, in the transaction of which people act according to their faith. If a person believes that his house is on fire, he will make haste to escape. If a man believes a bank note is good, he will receive it for its professed value. If the merchant believes that his customer is able to pay, he will give him goods upon credit. That faith which is the fruit of the Spirit is a hearty belief of all the truths of God's word, including not only the idea of confidence in him—but a love of the truth, and a hearty acquiescence in the will of God declared in it. Faith in Christ includes also the idea of trust, or reliance upon him for salvation. In proportion as we believe the truths of God's word, in the sense here specified, we shall act accordingly.

One reason why the sinner does not repent and turn to God is, that he does not really believe the word of God as it applies to himself. He may believe some of the abstract truths of the Scriptures; but he does not really believe himself to be in the dreadful danger which they represent him; or, if his understanding is convinced, his heart is so opposed to the truth that he will not yield to it. The reason why Christians live so far from the standard of God's word is, that their belief in the truths contained in it is so weak and faint. We all profess to believe that God is everywhere present; yet we often complain that we have no lively sense of his presence. The reason is, we do not fully and heartily believe this truth. So strong and vivid is the impression, when this solemn truth takes full possession of the soul, that the apostle compares it to "seeing him that is invisible." Now, but for our unbelief, we should always have such a view of the divine presence. O, with what holy awe and reverence would this inspire us! On examination, we shall find that all the graces of the Spirit arise from faith, and all our sins and short comings from unbelief. It is a belief of the moral excellence of God's character which inspires love. It is a belief of our own depravity, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which creates godly sorrow. It is a strong and lively faith in all the truths of the Bible which overcomes the world. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." It is an unshaken belief in these truths, presenting the glories of heaven just in view, which supports the Christian in the dark and trying hour of death. It is the same belief which makes him "as bold as a lion" in the performance of his duty. This is what supported the martyrs, and enabled them cheerfully to lay down their lives for Christ's sake. It is this which must support us in the Christian warfare; and our progress will be in proportion to our faith.

TEMPERANCE is another fruit of the Spirit. This consists in the proper control of all our desires, appetites, and passions. The exercise of this grace is of vital importance, not only as it concerns the glory of God, but our own health and happiness.

Thus we see the beautiful symmetry of the Christian character, as it extends from the heart to all our actions, in every relation of life.

01.05. LOVE

LOVE

Although I have dwelt at considerable length upon the fruits of the Spirit, yet so deeply do I feel impressed with the excellency and amiable sweetness of the grace of love, that I am constrained to commend it to my readers in a distinct chapter. Love is the queen of the graces, excelling even faith and hope, and enduring when all those gifts which add brilliancy to the character shall cease their attractions; and, though you may not possess great personal charms, superior accomplishments, or great powers of mind, yet, if you do but "put on love," you will, like the blessed Savior, "grow in favor both with God and man." The apostle calls love the "bond of perfectness;" "alluding to the belt of the Orientals, which was not only ornamental and expensive, but was put on last, serving to adjust the other parts of the dress, and keep the whole together." It is a bond which holds all the Christian graces in harmonious union, and, by keeping them together, secures a permanent completeness and consistency of character. Without the belt, the flowing robes of Oriental dress would present a sad appearance, hardly serving the purposes of decency. So the apostle concludes that the most brilliant gifts and heroic actions are all nothing without love.

Love means a benevolent disposition of heart—love to God, and good-will to man—diffused through the whole character and conduct. But my principal object, in this chapter, will be to consider it in its manifestations, in our fellowship with our fellow-men; taking Paul's description of this grace in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and applying it so as to discover negatively what conduct is inconsistent with love, and positively the effect of love on the human character. The apostle says, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

I. Love is patient. It will endure ill treatment, and prefer suffering to strife. It will not resent the first encroachments, but patiently bear with injuries as long as they can be borne. If love reigns in your heart, you will consider how many and aggravated are your own offences against God, and yet that his patience bears with your perverseness, and he is daily loading you with benefits; and shall you be impatient of the slightest offences from a fellow-worm? Consider, also, how liable you are to encroach upon the rights of others, and to try their patience by your infirmities. Do not, therefore, be hasty in the indulgence of hard thoughts of others, nor impatient of their faults and infirmities. How much contention and strife might be avoided by a little forbearance! And who is there so perfect as not sometimes to need it to be extended toward himself? The ills of social life are greatly mitigated by the exercise of mutual forbearance; and they find no place under the sweet reign of love.

II. Love is kind. "It is gracious, bountiful, courteous, and obliging." But why did the apostle couple these two dispositions together? "Love is patient, and is KIND." Evidently, because patience, without kindness, would be unavailing. If you bear with the injuries or supposed offences of

another, and yet allow your mind to be soured, and your kind offices remitted, the wound will corrode and inflame until it breaks out with tenfold violence. But kindness of temper, and the constant practice of friendly offices and benevolent actions, will disarm ill-nature, and bring the offender to see the folly of his conduct. "A soft answer turns away wrath, and the kind treatment of an enemy will pour coals of fire on his head." What can be more lovely than a kind and obliging disposition, which delights in occasions and opportunities of contributing to the comfort and happiness of others? This disposition adorns with peculiar grace the female character. Solomon, describing a virtuous woman, says, "In her tongue is the law of kindness." If you cultivate this disposition at all times, and in all places, your presence will add a charm to every circle; you will honor your Master, and your ability to advance his cause will be greatly enhanced. In your efforts to do good, with the law of kindness in your lips, you can penetrate where, without it, you could gain no admittance; and, in your expostulations with the impenitent, you can reach the heart by the exhibition of a kind and tender spirit, where otherwise you would be repulsed. Especially is this disposition requisite in a Sabbath school teacher. Without it he can accomplish very little. Children cannot be won without kindness. If, then, you would be successful in this enterprise of love, cultivate a tender regard for the "little lambs," and be kind to them whenever you meet them. Never see a child in trouble without relieving him; or, if you can do no more, show your sympathy for his sufferings by such kind offices as are within your power.

III. Love does not envy. It is not grieved, but gratified, to see others more prosperous and wealthy, more intelligent and refined, or more holy. The extension of holiness and happiness is an object of rejoicing to the benevolent mind, without regard to self.

There are some people who are always complaining of the rich, and fretting about the aristocratic spirit of those whose rank and station, education, or mental endowments, place them in any respect above themselves. This is a sure indication of an envious spirit. There may be, in these respects, some ground of complaint. But place these people in the situation of those of whom they complain, and, where the latter are proud, the former would probably be aristocratic; and, where these are aristocratic, those would be tyrannical. An envious disposition argues,

1. A lack of self-respect. If we respect ourselves, we shall not desire the hollow importance arising from wealth, so much as to grieve that others have more of it than ourselves; nor shall we be willing to concede so much merit to the possession of wealth, as to suspect those who have it of esteeming us the less because we have it not.

2. It argues a lack of benevolence. The truly benevolent mind desires the increase of rational enjoyment, and will therefore rejoice in the happiness of others, without respect to his own.

3. It argues a lack of magnanimity. The truly great will rejoice in the intellectual and moral elevation of others, as adding so much to the sum of human excellence. But the envious person cannot bear to see any other one elevated above himself. This is the spirit that brought Haman to the gallows; and Satan from the seat of an archangel to the throne of devils.

4. It argues a narrow, selfish spirit—a little and wicked mind. The law of God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and reason sanctions the requisition. But the envious person will hate his neighbor, because he is not permitted to love him less than himself.

If you regard your own happiness, I implore you to suppress the first motions of this vile and hateful temper; for, while indulged, it will give you no peace; its envenomed darts will rankle and corrode in your bosom, and poison all your enjoyments. It is a disposition which can never be satisfied, so long as there is a superior being in the universe. It is aimed ultimately at the throne of God; and the envious person can never be happy while God reigns. The effects of this disposition upon human character and happiness are strikingly illustrated in the story of Haman, which I commend to your serious attention. Cultivate, then, the habit of being pleased and gratified with the happiness and prosperity of others; and constantly seek the grace of God, to enable you to exercise benevolent feelings toward all, but especially those who are elevated in any respect above you.

IV. Love is not boastful. "It does not act precipitately, inconsiderately, rashly, thoughtlessly." Some people mistake a rash and heedless spirit for genuine zeal; and this puffs them up with pride and vainglory, and sets them to railing at their betters in age, experience, or wisdom, because they will not fall into their views and measures. There is scarcely any trait of character more unlovely, especially in a young person, than self-conceit. If the youth who is puffed up with a sense of his own importance could but see the mingled emotions of pity and disgust which his conduct excites in the bosom of age and wisdom, he would be filled with confusion and shame. You will hear such people prating much of independence of mind. They profess to think for themselves, and form their own opinions, without respect to what others have thought, and said, and written. They would scorn to consult a commentary, to assist them in determining a difficult passage of Scripture, or the writings of a learned divine, to help them out of a theological difficulty. That would be subjecting their minds to the influence of prejudice, or betraying a lack of confidence in their own infallible powers!—which is the last idea they would think of entertaining. The long-cherished opinions of great, and wise, and good men, are disposed of with a sneer. You will hear them delivering their opinions dogmatically, and with strong assurance, on points of great difficulty, which good men, of the greatest learning and ability, have approached with diffidence; and boldly advancing ideas which they suppose to have originated in the depths of their own recondite minds, which they are afterwards mortified to learn are but some old, cast-off, crude theories or speculations, which had been a hundred times advanced, and as many times refuted, before they were born. But the matters appear so plain to them, that they cannot imagine how any honest mind can come to any other conclusions than those to which they have arrived. Hence they are ready to doubt the piety of all who differ with them, if not to assume the office of judge, and charge them with insincerity or hypocrisy. But their strong confidence in their opinions arises from superficial and partial examination, and overlooking objections and difficulties which readily occur to the well-balanced and discriminating mind, which has thoroughly investigated the subject in hand.

Yet I would not be understood to recommend implicit submission to the judgment and opinions even of the greatest and best of men. This is Popery. The mind must be convinced before it yields assent to any position. But it would be the height of self-conceited arrogance for any person, but especially for a youth, to presume himself too wise to gain instruction from the writings of men who have devoted their lives to the investigation of truth; or summarily to set aside, as unworthy of his attention, opinions which have been embraced by the greatest and best of men for successive generations. Nor does it argue any uncommon independence of mind; for you will generally find

such people arranged under the banner of some one of the various schools of theology, morals, philosophy, or politics—and following on with ardor the devious course of their leader, receiving whatever falls from his lips as the voice of an oracle, and running with enthusiasm into all his extravagances. Like the vane upon the spire, that lifts up itself with proud eminence to the clouds, they are ready to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. Whereas true independence of mind consists in weighing evidence and argument impartially, and forming a decision independent of prejudice, party feeling, pride of opinion, or self-will; and, when coupled with humility, it will always rejoice to receive instruction from any source. The person who knows himself will be deeply humbled under a sense of his own weakness and ignorance, and will advance his opinions with modesty, while he treats the opinions of others with becoming respect.

V. Love does not behave unseemly. It does not disregard the courtesies of life, nor break over the bounds of decency and decorum, but pays a strict regard to propriety of conduct, in all circumstances. There are many unseemly things which render the conduct of any person repulsive and disgusting.

Forwardness, or a disposition to be conspicuous, is unseemly, especially in a young person. It is, indeed, the duty of everyone to be always ready to engage in every good work; and it is wrong to be backward, and refuse to cooperate with others in carrying on any useful enterprise. But the heart is deceitful; and, while we satisfy our consciences with the idea that we are going forward in the discharge of duty, we may be but feeding our own vanity, by bringing ourselves into notice. A humble Christian has a low estimate of his ability to do good, and is generally disposed to prefer others, as better qualified than himself, to occupy any conspicuous post. "In honor preferring one another." He will therefore be modest and retiring; though, when the course of duty is plain, he will by no means shrink from it. "The righteous are bold as a lion."

There are several characteristics, however, which distinguish the forward, unseemly spirit. He is jealous and testy. You will hear him complaining of the aristocratic spirit of others; and, if he is not noticed as much as he thinks he deserves, he will take offence. He will rarely be found cordially cooperating with others in any good work, unless he is foremost in it himself. If you wish to secure his aid, or forestall his opposition, you must be careful to consult him before you undertake any enterprise. Should you neglect to do so, however good your object, or well chosen your measures, you may expect him to find fault and throw obstacles in the way at every step of your progress. Such people often exhibit a fiery zeal and a restless activity; but they are never roused except for the promotion of an object with which self is in some manner identified. To assume, in a dictatorial manner, to catechize others, as to their views on any subject, especially if they are older than yourself, is unseemly. You will meet with some people who seem to take it for granted that they have a right to call you to account for your opinions, and to determine authoritatively your claim to the character which you profess. I do not question the propriety of kind and modest inquiries as to the opinions and views of others; nor of endeavoring, by fair and candid arguments, to convince them of what we suppose to be their errors. But, then, we must never forget that they are our equals, possessing the same right to judge of the truth with ourselves, and accountable for their errors to the same tribunal. This will leave no ground for the exercise of a dogmatic or a dictatorial spirit.

It is unseemly for young people to be foremost in speaking, in company, or to give advice with confidence, in regard to anything which is to influence the conduct of their superiors in age, wisdom, or experience. Elihu, although a man of superior knowledge and abilities, did not presume to speak to Job until his aged friends had ceased; for he said, "multitude of years should teach wisdom." Young people sometimes render themselves ridiculous by such unseemly conduct. The prophet Isaiah gives this as one of the marks of a degenerate age, that "the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable."

Fierce contention about personal rights is unseemly. It begets a selfish, jealous spirit. You never hear this where love reigns; for love is a yielding spirit. The spirit that can never brook the least encroachment upon his rights is an unseemly spirit, which will always be embroiled in some difficulty or other.

All coarseness, grossness, or crudeness of character is unseemly; and the declaration that love does not behave unseemly, conveys the idea of an exquisite propriety of deportment, free from everything indelicate, obtrusive, repulsive, or unamiable.

VI. Love seeks not her own. It is not selfish. The temper here described is inculcated in a beautiful manner in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. He exhorts them, in lowliness of mind, each to esteem other better than themselves; and not to look exclusively on their own concerns, but also on the concerns of others; and then commends to them the example of our Lord, who, though King of kings, humbled himself to the condition of a servant, enduring hardship, revilement, and an ignominious death—for our sakes. This does not mean that we are not to love ourselves at all, nor be entirely regardless of our own interests; for the rule which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, recognizes the right of self-love; and the command, "You shall not steal," establishes the right of private property. But it forbids us to make our own interest and happiness our chief concern, to the disregard of the rights of others and the general good; and requires us to make sacrifices of feeling and interest for the benefit of others, and even sometimes to prefer their happiness and interest to our own. This is the spirit of genuine benevolence; and the exercise of it will impart far more elevated enjoyment than can be derived from private advantage. Were this disposition in exercise, it would cut off all ground of envy and jealousy; it would remove the cause of most of the contentions that arise in society, and mitigate, in a wonderful degree, the ills of life. It lies at the foundation of all social enjoyment. The reciprocity of mutual affection depends upon the exercise of a self-sacrificing disposition; and the society where this does not exist is intolerable. Nor is it feeling or interest alone that must be given up. There is yet a more difficult sacrifice to be made, before we can be, in any considerable degree, comfortable companions. It is the sacrifice of the will. This is the last thing the selfish heart of man is disposed to yield. He has taken his stand, and the pride of his heart is committed to maintain it. He deceives himself, and compels conscience to come to his aid; while, in reality, it is a matter with which conscience has nothing to do; for the point might have been yielded without doing violence to that ever-wakeful monitor, whose office is thus perverted, and made to subserve the purposes of stiff-necked obstinacy. A disposition to yield to the judgment and will of others, so far as can be done conscientiously, is a prominent characteristic of that love which seeks not her own; while an obstinate adherence to our own plans and purposes, where no higher principle than expediency is concerned, is one of the most repulsive and uncomfortable forms of selfishness. A selfish person never willingly makes the smallest sacrifice of feeling or interest to promote the welfare or happiness of others. He wraps

himself up in his own interests and pursuits, a cheerless and forbidding object. He would gladly know no law but his own will. He has a little world of his own, in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. He makes everyone with whom he comes in contact contribute something to his own selfish purposes. His overweening desire to promote his own interests disposes him constantly to encroach upon the rights of others; or, if not to encroach upon their rights, to take advantage of their good nature, to drag them into his service. You might as well walk for pleasure in a grove of thorn-bushes, or seek repose on a bed of nettles—as to look for comfort in the society of selfish people.

VII. Love is not easily provoked. "It corrects a sharpness of temper, and sweetens and softens the mind." It does not take fire at the least opposition or unkindness, nor "make a man an offender for a word." One of the servants of Nabal described his character in this significant manner: "He is such a son of Belial that a man cannot speak to him." There are many such sons and daughters of Belial. They are so sulky and sour, so fretful and peevish, that you can hardly speak to them but they will snap and snarl like a growling watch-dog; and if they were equally dangerous, it might be necessary to chain them! All this is the opposite of love. The quality here negatively described may be summarily comprehended in the term good nature; but in a more elevated sense than this term is usually employed, it being the fruit, not of natural amiableness, but of gracious affection. This temper is essential to any considerable degree of usefulness. If you are destitute of it, your Christian character will be so marred as in a great measure to counteract the influence of your positive efforts. A bad temper, even in connection with many excellent qualities, may render a person an uncomfortable and intolerable companion; thus bringing great reproach upon the cause of Christ. Nor need anyone excuse himself on the ground of natural disposition; for the Lord has said, "My grace is sufficient for you." The gospel of Jesus Christ is a remedy for all our natural corruptions; and we are required to lay aside every weight, even the sin that most easily besets us.

VIII. Love thinks no evil, is not suspicious, does not lay up slight expressions, or equivocal conduct, and reason out evil from them. Love does not allow these things to corrode and sour the mind against an individual, but puts the best construction upon the words and conduct of others that they will bear, not yielding to an ill opinion of another but upon the most indisputable evidence. There is, perhaps, no more fruitful source of disquiet and unhappiness, both to ourselves and others, than a suspicious disposition. "Jealousy," says Solomon, "is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are the coals of fire which has a most vehement flame." A jealous person always sees a "snake in the grass;" he is afraid to trust his most intimate friend. He puts the worst construction upon the language and conduct of others that they will bear. Hence he conceives himself grossly insulted, when no ill was designed; and a gentle rebuke, or a good-humored retort, constitutes an unpardonable offence. He always looks on the dark side of human character; so that a single foible, or one glaring fault, will eclipse a thousand real excellences. He is incessantly complaining of the degeneracy of the times, and especially of the corruption of the church; for he can see nobody around him who is perfect, and therefore he comes to the conclusion that there is very little piety in the world, forgetting that, were he to find a church of immaculate purity, his own connection with it would introduce corruption. Should such a person conceive it to be his duty to tell you all your faults—woe you! For, desirable as self-knowledge is, it is no kindness to have our faults aggravated a hundred-fold, and concentrated before our minds, like the converging rays of the sun, in one focal blaze, nor poured upon our heads like the sweeping torrent, nor eked out like

the incessant patterings of a drizzling rain. Paul did not do this. When he felt it his duty to reprove, he was careful to commend what was praiseworthy, and to throw in some expressions of kindness along with his censures. And here, though it be a digression, let me implore you never to undertake the unthankful office of censor. You will find some inexperienced people who will desire you, as an office of friendship, to tell them all their faults. Be sure, if you undertake this with a friend, your friendship will be short. It will lead you to look continually at the dark side of your friend's character; and, before you are aware, you will find yourself losing your esteem for him. Very soon, you will beget the suspicion that you have conceived some dislike. If the cause is continued, this suspicion will corrode and increase; and the result will be a mutual alienation of affection. However sincerely such an experiment may be entered upon, it can hardly fail, in the nature of things, to produce this result.

It may, however, be said that we are bound, by our covenant obligations, to watch over our brethren. But there can scarcely be a greater misapprehension than to understand this duty in the sense of an incessant lookout for the little faults and foibles, or even the more marked and glaring defects of character in our brethren. The injunction is, "If your brother trespass against you, go and tell him his fault," etc. But we are not required to procure a magnifying-glass, and go about, making a business of detecting and exposing the faults of our brethren. On the contrary, there are many cautions against a meddling disposition, and against being busybodies in other men's matters. We are admonished, with great frequency and solemnity, to watch ourselves; but where is the injunction, "Watch your brethren"? Even the Savior himself did not thus attempt to correct the faults of his disciples. He rebuked them, indeed, and sometimes sharply; but he was not continually reminding them of their faults. He was not incessantly browbeating Peter for his rashness, nor Thomas for his incredulity, nor the sons of Zebedee for their ambition; but he "taught them as they were able to bear it;" and that rather by holding up before their minds the truth, than by direct personal lectures. Our covenant obligations unquestionably make it our duty to watch, and see that our brethren do not pursue a course of life inconsistent with their Christian profession, or which tends to backsliding and apostasy; and, if they are true disciples, they will be thankful for a word of caution when they are in danger of falling into sin. And, when they do thus fall, we are required to rebuke them, and not to allow them to continue in sin. But this is a very different affair from that of setting up a system of espionage over their conduct, and dwelling continually upon their faults and deficiencies—a course which cannot long be pursued without an unhappy influence upon our own temper. The human mind is so constituted as to be affected by the objects it contemplates, and often assimilated to them. Show me a person who is always contemplating the faults of others, and I will show you a dark and gloomy, sour and morose spirit, whose eyes are closed to everything that is desirable and excellent, or amiable and lovely, in the character of man; a grumbling, growling misanthrope, who is never pleased with anybody, nor satisfied with anything; an Ishmaelite, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him. If there is nothing in the human character, regenerated by the grace of God, on which we can look with delight and delight, then it is impossible for us to obey the sacred injunction, "Love the brethren."

IX. Love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. One mark by which the people of God are known is, that they "sigh and cry over the abominations that are done in the land," and weep rivers of water, because men keep not the law of God; while the wicked "rejoice to do evil, and delight in

the frowardness of the wicked." But we may deceive ourselves, and be indulging a morbid appetite for fault finding and slander, while we suppose ourselves to be grieving over the sins of others. Grief is a tender emotion; it melts the heart, and sheds around it a hallowed influence. Hence, if we find ourselves indulging a sharp, censorious spirit—eagerly catching up the faults of others, and dwelling on them, and magnifying them, and judging harshly of them—we may be sure we have another mark, which belongs not to the fold of the good Shepherd. One of the prominent characteristics of an impenitent heart is a disposition to feed upon the faults of professors of religion. Those who indulge this disposition will not admit that they take delight in the failings of Christians. They will condemn them with great severity, and lament over the dishonor they bring upon religion. Yet they catch at the deficiencies of Christians as eagerly as ever a hungry spaniel caught after his meat. This is the whole of their spiritual food and drink. It is the foundation of their hopes. They rest their claim for admittance into the celestial paradise on being as consistent in their conduct as some of those who profess to be God's people; hence, every deficiency they discover gives them a new plea to urge at the portals of heaven. Thus they secretly, though perhaps unwittingly, "rejoice in iniquity." But it is to be feared, if we may judge from the exhibition of the same spirit, that many who make high pretensions to superior sanctity rest their hopes, to a great extent, on a similar foundation. With the Pharisaical Jews, they think if they judge those who do evil, even though they do the same, they shall escape the judgment of God. They are as eager to catch up and proclaim upon the house-top the deficiencies of their brethren, as the self-righteous moralist, who prides himself on making no profession, and yet being as consistent as those that do. If such people do not rejoice in iniquity, it is, nevertheless, "sweet in their mouth," and they "drink it in like water." Their plea is, that they do not speak of it with pleasure, but with grief bear their testimony against it. But grief is solitary and silent. "He sits alone, and keeps silence." Who ever heard of a man's proclaiming his grief to every passing stranger? The harsh and bitter spirit, which palms itself on the conscience as a testimony against sin, is but an exhibition of impenitent pride. It bears not the most distant semblance of Christian humility and fidelity. "Brethren," says the apostle, "if a man is overtaken in a fault, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."

But, from the faultfinding and censorious spirit of some people, one would suppose it never came into their minds to consider whether it might not be possible for them to fall into the same condemnation; although an examination of the lamentable falls that have taken place might show a fearful list of delinquents from this class of people. David, while in his fallen state, pronounced sentence of death upon the man in Nathan's parable, whose crime was but a faint shadow of his own. The Scribes and Pharisees were indignant at the wretched woman who had been taken in sin; yet they afterwards, by their own conduct, confessed themselves guilty of the same crime. Judas was one of your censorious fault finders. He was the disciple that found fault with the tender-hearted Mary, for her affectionate tribute of respect to the Lord of life, before his passion. He thought it a great waste to pour such costly ointment on the feet of Jesus, and that it would have been much better to have it sold, and the money given to the poor. He was very compassionate to the poor, and a great enemy of extravagance; but, a little while afterwards, he sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. So, in every age, if you examine into the character of apostates, you will find that they have been noted for their severity against the sins of others, and particularly in making conscience of things indifferent, and pronouncing harsh judgment against those who refuse to conform to their views. Especially will such people be grieved with their

brethren on account of their dress, or style of living, or their manner of wearing the hair, or some such matter—which does not reach the heart. The humble Christian, who looks back to the "hole of the pit whence he was dug," and remembers that he now stands by virtue of the same grace that took his feet out of the "horrible pit and miry clay," will be the last person to vaunt over the fallen condition of his fellow-creatures. He will look upon them with an eye of tender compassion, and his rebukes will be administered in a meek, subdued, and humble spirit, remembering the injunction of Paul: "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." But the spirit of which I have been speaking is not only carnal, but devilish. The devil is the accuser of the brethren. Love not only rejoices not in iniquity, but positively rejoices in the truth—is glad of the success of the gospel, and rejoices in the manifestation of the grace of God, by the exhibition of the fruits of his Spirit in the character and conduct of his people. Hence it will lead us to look at the bright side of men's characters, and, if they give any evidence of piety, to rejoice in it, and glorify God for the manifestation of his grace in them, while we overlook, or behold with tenderness and compassion, their imperfections. And this accords with the feelings of the humble Christian. He thinks so little of himself, and feels such a sense of his own imperfections, that he quickly discerns the least evidence of Christian character in others; and he sees so much to be overlooked in himself, that he is rather inclined to the extreme of credulity, in judging the character of others. He is ready, with Paul, to esteem himself "less than the least of all saints;" and, where he sees any evidence of piety in others, he can overlook many deficiencies.

I am persuaded that we are greatly deficient in the exercise of joy and gratitude for the grace of God manifested in his children. The Epistles of Paul generally commence with an expression of joy and thanksgiving for the piety of those to whom he was writing. Even in regard to the Corinthians, among whom so many evils existed, he says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." But how seldom are we heard thanking God for the piety of our brethren!

Thus far, with the exception of the first two heads, and a part of the last, we have had the negative character of love. We now come to its POSITIVE manifestations.

X Love bears all things; or, as it may be rendered, covers all things. The latter seems to be more agreeable to the context; for otherwise it would mean the same as endures all things, in the latter clause of the verse, and thus make a tautology; while it leaves a deficiency in the description, indicated by the passage in Peter, "Love shall cover the multitude of sins." "Love will draw a veil over the faults of others, so far as is consistent with duty," in accordance with the spirit of the golden rule, which requires us to do unto others as we would they should do to us; for who would like to have his faults made the subject of common conversation among his acquaintances? And, if it is contrary to love thus to speak of the faults of individuals, it is not the less so to speak of the faults of masses of men, as of the clergy, or of the church. The injustice is the more aggravated, because it is condemning by wholesale. A member of the church of Christ, who speaks much of its corruptions, is guilty of the anomalous conduct of speaking evil of himself; for the members of Christ's body are all one in him. It may sometimes be our duty to speak of the faults of others; but, where love reigns in the heart, this will be done only in cases of unavoidable necessity, and then with great pain and sacrifice of feeling. The benevolent heart feels for the woes of others, and even compassionates their weakness and wickedness. It will desire, therefore, as much as possible, to hide them from the public gaze, unless the good of others should require their

exposure; and even then, will not do it with wanton feelings. But these remarks apply with much greater force to the practice of Christians speaking of one another's faults. Where is the heart that would not revolt at the idea of brothers and sisters proclaiming each other's faults in the ears of strangers? Yet the relation of God's children is far more endearing than the ties of kinship. Suppose a family of children, all of them in some manner deformed, yet each possessing many excellences of person. What would be thought of them, if they were always worrying themselves and complaining about each other's deformities? And what would be the effect on their individual dispositions and feelings, and on the peace and happiness of the family?

XI. Love believes all things, hopes all things. This is the opposite of jealousy and suspicion. It is a readiness to believe everything in favor of others; and even when appearances are very strong against them, still to hope for the best. This disposition will lead us to look at the characters of others in their most favorable light; to give full weight to every good quality, and full credit for every praiseworthy action; while every palliating circumstance is viewed in connection with deficiencies and misconduct. Love will never attribute an action to improper motives or a bad design, when it can account for it in any other way; and, especially, it will not be quick to charge hypocrisy and insincerity upon those who seem to be acting correctly. It will give credit to the professions of others, unless obviously contradicted by their conduct. It does not, indeed, forbid prudence and caution—"The simple believes every word; but the prudent man looks well to his going"—but it is accustomed to repose confidence in others, and it will not be continually watching for evil. A charitable spirit is opposed to the disposition to discuss private character. It will not willingly listen to criticisms upon the characters of others, nor the detail of their errors and imperfections; and it will turn away with disgust and horror, from petty scandal and evil-speaking, as offensive to benevolent feeling. It is a kind of moral sense, which recoils from detraction and backbiting.

XIII. Love endures all things. This is nearly synonymous with long-suffering; and yet it is a more comprehensive expression. Love will endure with patience, and suffer, without anger or bitterness of feeling, everything in social life which is calculated to try our tempers, and exhaust our patience. It is not testy, and impatient at the least opposition or the slightest provocation; but endures the infirmities, the unreasonableness, the ill-humor, and the hard language of others—with a meek and quiet spirit.

XIV. Finally, love is the practical application of the golden rule of our Savior, and the second table of the law, to all our fellowship with our fellow-men, diffusing around us a spirit of kindness and benevolent feeling. It comprehends all that is candid and generous, friendly and gentle, amiable and kind, in the human character, regenerated by the grace of God. It is opposed to all that is uncandid and insincere, coarse and harsh, unkind, severe, and bitter—in the disposition of fallen humanity. It is the bond which holds society together, the charm which sweetens social fellowship, the UNIVERSAL PANACEA, which, if it cannot cure—will at least mitigate, all the diseases of the social state!

01.06. Harmony of Christian Character

HARMONY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)

Nothing delights the senses like harmony. The eye rests with pleasure on the edifice which is complete in all its parts, according to the laws of architecture; and the sensation of delight is still more exquisite, on viewing the harmonious combination of colors, as exhibited in the rainbow, or the flowers of the field. The ear, also, is ravished with the harmony of musical sounds, and the palate is delighted with savory dishes. But remove a column from the house, or abstract one of the colors of the rainbow, and the eye is offended; remove from the scale one of the musical notes, and give undue prominence to another, and harmony will become discord; and what could be more insipid than a savory dish without salt? So it is with the Christian character. Its beauty and loveliness depend on the harmonious culture of all the Christian graces in due proportion. If one is deficient, and another too prominent, the idea of deformity strikes the mind with painful sensations, like harsh, discordant musical sounds, or like the disproportionate combination of colors. The apostle Peter, after exhorting to growth in grace, says, "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." He would have the new man grow up with symmetrical proportions, so as to form the "stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus," not having all the energies concentrated in one member, but having the body complete in all its parts, giving a due proportion of loveliness, activity, and strength, to each. Thus he says, Add to your faith virtue. By faith I suppose we are to understand the elementary principle of the Christian character, as exhibited in regeneration; or the act which takes hold of Christ. But we are not to rest in this.

We are to add virtue, or strength and courage, to carry out our new principle of action. But this is not all. We may be full of courage and zeal; yet, if we are ignorant of truth and duty, we shall make sad work of it, running headlong, first into this extravagance, and then into that, disturbing the plans of others, and defeating our own, by a rash and heedless course of conduct.

Young Christians are in danger of making religion consist too exclusively in emotion—which leads them to undervalue knowledge. But, while emotion is inseparable from spiritual religion, knowledge is no less essential to intelligent emotion. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion; and though a person may be sincerely and truly pious, with only the knowledge of a few simple principles, yet, without a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of religious truth, the Christian character will be weak and unstable, easily led astray, and "carried about by every wind of doctrine." Knowledge is also essential to a high degree of usefulness. It expands and invigorates the mind, and enables us, with divine aid, to devise and execute plans of usefulness with prudence and energy. But knowledge alone is not sufficient; nor even knowledge added to faith. Temperance must be added, as a regulator, both of soul and body. All the appetites and passions,

desires and emotions, must be brought within the bounds of moderation. And to temperance must be added patience, that we may be enabled to endure the trials of this life, and not to faint under the chastening hand of our heavenly Father. As it is through much tribulation that we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we have need of patience, both for our own comfort and for the honor of religion. Indeed, no grace is more needful in the ordinary affairs of life. It is the little, every-day annoyances that try the Christian character; and it is in regard to these that patience works experience. Many of these things are more difficult to be borne than the greater trials of life, because it is more difficult to see the hand of God in them. But patience enables us to endure those things which cross the temper, with a calm, unruffled spirit; to encounter contradictions, little vexations, and disappointments, without fretting or repining; and saves us from sinking under severe and protracted afflictions. To patience must be added godliness, "which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." To be godly, is to be, in a measure, like God. It is to be "renewed in knowledge, after the image of him who created us," and to have the same mind in us which was in Christ Jesus. This is the fruit of that patience which works experience, and results in hope, which makes not ashamed. To godliness must be added brotherly kindness; which is but acting out the state of heart expressed by godliness, which indicates a partaking of divine benevolence.

Then comes the crowning grace of LOVE, "which is the bond of perfectness," comprehending the whole circle of social virtues. Where all these qualities exist in due proportion, they will form a lovely character, harmonious and beautiful as the seven colors of the rainbow; yes, with the addition of an eighth, of crowning luster. But, if anyone allows his feelings to concentrate on one point, as though the whole of religion consisted in zeal, or devotional feeling, or sympathy, or the promotion of some favorite scheme of benevolence, you will find an exhibition of character as unlovely and repulsive as though the seven colors of the rainbow should concentrate in one of pale hue; or as disagreeable as though the sweet melody of a harmonious choir were changed into a dull, monotonous bass; or as unsavory as a dish of meats seasoned only with bitter herbs. This disproportionate development of Christian character is more frequently seen in young converts, especially such as have not received a thorough Christian education, and are, consequently, deficient in pious knowledge. They find themselves in a new world, and become so much absorbed in the contemplation of the new objects that present themselves to their admiring gaze, that they seem almost to forget that they have any other duties to perform than those which consist in devotional exercises. If these are interrupted, they will fret and worry their minds, and wish for some employment entirely of a pious nature. They wonder how it is possible for Christians to be so cold, as to pursue their worldly employments as diligently as they do, who take this world for their portion. And often you will hear them breaking out in expressions of great severity against older Christians, because they do not sympathize with them in these feelings. Their daily employments become irksome; and they are tempted even to neglect the interests of their employers, with the plea that the service of God has the first claim upon them. But they forget that the service of God consists in the faithful performance of every social and relative duty, "as unto the Lord, and not to men," as well as the more direct devotional exercises; and that the one is as essential to the Christian character as the other. The Bible requires us to be "diligent in business," as well as "fervent in spirit;" and the religion of the Bible makes us better in all the relations of this life, as well as in our relations with God.

Young Christians are also prone to undervalue little things. The greater things of religion take such strong possession of their souls, that they overlook many minor things of essential importance. In seasons of special religious awakening, this mistake is very common; in consequence of which many important interests suffer, and the derangement which follows makes an unfavorable impression as to the influence of revivals. The spirit of the Christian religion requires that every duty should be discharged in its proper time. The beauty of the Christian character greatly depends on its symmetrical proportions. A person may be very zealous in some things, and yet quite defective in his Christian character; and the probability is, that he has no more religion than shows itself in its consistent proportions. The new energy imparted by the regenerating grace of God may unite itself with the strong points of his character, and produce a very prominent development; while, in regard to those traits of character which are naturally weak, in his constitutional temperament, grace may be scarcely perceptible. For instance, a person who is naturally bold and resolute will be remarkable, when converted, for his moral courage; while, perhaps, he may be very deficient in meekness. And the one who is naturally weak and irresolute will, perhaps, be remarkable for the mild virtues, but very deficient in strength and energy of character. The error lies in cultivating, almost exclusively, those Christian graces which fall in with our prominent traits of character. We should rather bend our energies, by the grace of God, chiefly to the development of those points of character which are naturally weak, while we discipline, repress, and bring under control, those which are too prominent. This will prevent deformity, and promote a uniform consistency of character.

There is, perhaps, a peculiar tendency to this lopsided religion in this age of excitement and activity; and the young convert, whose Christian character is not matured, is peculiarly liable to fall into this error. The mind becomes absorbed with one object. The more exclusively this object is contemplated, the more it is magnified. It becomes, to his mind, the main thing. It is identified with his ideas of religion. He makes it a test of piety. Then he is prepared to regard and treat all who do not come up to his views on this point as destitute of true religion, however consistent they may be in other respects. This leads to denunciation, alienation of feeling, bitterness, and strife. But one of God's commands is as dear to him as another; and we cannot excuse ourselves before him for disobeying one of them, on the ground that all our energies are absorbed in securing obedience to another. The perfection of Christian character consists in the harmonious development of the Christian graces. This is the "stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus"—a man who has no deformity, who is complete in all his faculties and members.

01.07. Reading and Studying of the Holy Scriptures

Reading and Studying of the Holy Scriptures To a true child of God, nothing is so precious as the volume of inspiration. It is like a mine of all sorts of metals and precious stones, overlaid with gold and silver. That which is most necessary for the common purposes of life lies on the surface. These are the simple truths of the gospel, which are essential to salvation. But below these are the iron, the tin, the copper—the strong truths, the doctrines, the practical principles, which tax the powers of the mind to develop, but which give strength and consistency to the Christian character. Yet beyond these is an inexhaustible treasure of precious stones, every examination of which discovers new gems of surpassing luster and surprising beauty. The Bible is the charter of the Christian's hopes, the deed of his inheritance. Is he a wayfaring man in a strange land? This book contains a description of the country to which he is bound, with a map of the way, on which all the cross-ways and by-paths are designated. Is he a mariner on the stormy ocean of life? This is both his chart and compass. Here he finds all the shoals and reefs distinctly marked, and monuments placed upon many dangerous places, where others have made shipwreck.

Seeing, then, we have such a treasure put into our hands, it cannot be a matter of surprise that we should be directed to search after the precious things it contains, nor that Christians should love to ponder its sacred pages. "Your word," says the Psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." It is like a lantern, which sheds light on our path, amid the darkness of the night, to direct the steps of our feet. The sincere Christian will therefore search the word of God, for a knowledge of his will, with more eagerness than he would search for hidden treasures of gold and silver. In obedience to the command of God, he will set his heart to the work. After the giving of the law, Moses says, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day." To set our hearts upon any object, implies such a love for it, and desire after it, as leads to a strong determination to make every possible effort to obtain it; and this ought to be the settled and permanent feeling of our hearts, in regard to a knowledge of the will of God, as revealed in his word. And, as we obtain this knowledge, we should imitate the Psalmist, who said, "Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against you." His object, in hiding the word in his heart, was to know how to regulate his conduct so as not to sin against God. So must we hide the word of God in our hearts, and for the same reason. We must study it as the directory of life. Whenever we open this blessed book, this should be the sincere inquiry of our heart: "Lord, what will you have me to do?" Let us come to it with this childlike spirit of obedience, and we shall not fail to learn the will of God. When we have learned our duty in God's word, the next thing is, to do it without delay. First, there must be an earnest desire to know present duty, and then a steadfast and settled determination to do it as soon as it is known. The pressure of obligation rests upon the present moment; and, when present duty is ascertained, the delay of a single moment is sin. With these remarks, I submit a few practical directions for the profitable reading and study of the Holy Scriptures.

I. Read the Bible in your closet, or under circumstances which will secure you from interruption, either by the conversation of others, or the attraction of other objects. Do not attempt to fill up little

broken intervals of time with the reading of God's word. Leave these seasons for lighter reading. Reading the Scriptures is conversing with God, who speaks to us when we read his holy word. His all-seeing eye rests upon our hearts; and he knows whether we are engaged in trifling with solemn things. If we read his word so carelessly as not to understand its meaning, and drink in its spirit—we treat him as we would disdain to be treated by an earthly friend. Let us, then, never approach the word of God but with feelings of reverence and godly fear.

II. Go to the word of God with a preparation of heart. If we were going to visit some person of great consequence, whose favor and esteem we wished to secure, we should take care to have everything about our persons adjusted in the most befitting manner. So let it be with our minds when we come to converse with God. Let us shut out all worldly thoughts, and strive to secure a tranquil, holy, and tender frame—so that the truths we contemplate may make their proper impression upon our hearts.

III. Seek the aid of the Holy Spirit. Christ promised his disciples that, when the Holy Spirit would come, that he would "guide them into all truth." Without his enlightening influences, we cannot understand the word of God; and without his gracious influences, we shall not be disposed to obey it. But we have the most abundant encouragement to seek the aid of this divine Instructor. Christ assures us that God is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Before opening God's word, therefore, we should pray that he would show us the truth, the rule of our duty, and incline our hearts to obey it; and, as we proceed, keep our hearts silently lifted up to God for the same object.

IV. Read with self-application. Whenever you have discovered any truth, ask what bearing it has upon present duty. If it relates to spiritual affections, compare with it the state of your own heart. If it relates to the spirit and temper of Christians, in their fellowship with one another, or with the world, compare it with your own conduct. If it relates to some positive duty, inquire whether you have done it. And, wherever you find yourself deficient, endeavor to exercise repentance, and seek for pardon through the blood of Christ, with grace to enable you to correct what is wrong.

V. Read the Scriptures regularly. A daily supply of refreshment is no less necessary for the soul than for the body. The word of God is the bread of eternal life, "the food of the soul." Take, then, your regular supplies, that your soul may not famish. Choose for this purpose those seasons when you are least liable to interruption; when you can retire and shut out the world; when you can best command the energies of your mind. There is no time more fit and suitable for this than the morning. Then the mind is clear, vigorous, unencumbered, and prepared to receive impressions. There is also a propriety in consulting God's word at the close of the day. But this depends much on the state of the body. If you become exhausted and dull, after the labors of the day, I would rather recommend taking the whole time in the morning. But by no means confine yourself to these stated seasons. Whenever the nature of your pursuits will admit of your seclusion for a sufficient length of time to fix your mind upon the truth, you may freely drink from this never-failing fountain the water of life.

VI. Study the Scriptures systematically. If you read at random, here a little and there a little, your views of divine truth will be partial and limited. This method may, indeed, be pursued in regard to reading strictly devotional; but only when other time is taken for obtaining a connected view and a critical understanding of the whole Bible. The Holy Scriptures are like a dish of savory dainties.

There is almost every variety of style and matter. There is history, biography, doctrinal teaching, and poetry. Although these various kinds of writing are contained in a great number of books, written by various authors, at different times, without concert; yet a remarkable unity of design pervades the whole; and perfect harmony of sentiment prevails throughout. Everything, from the very beginning, points to the glorious plan of redemption revealed in the gospel. Although we may, at first view, feel the lack of a regular system of divinity, yet a careful attention to the subject will discover Divine Wisdom in the present arrangement. We have here the principles of his government exhibited in living examples; which give us a clearer view, and more vivid impression of them, than we could obtain from the study of an abstract system. In the systematic and thorough study of the Bible, the following hints may be of use—

1. Keep before your mind the grand design of the Scriptures; which is, to convince mankind of their lost and ruined condition, make known the way of salvation, and persuade them to embrace it.

2. Make it your constant aim to ascertain what is the plain and obvious meaning of the writer; for this is the mind of the Spirit. To aid you in this, observe the following particulars—

- (1.) Endeavor to become acquainted with the peculiarity of each writer's style. Although the Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit, yet it was so done that each writer employed a style and manner peculiar to himself. This does not invalidate the evidence of their divine origin, but the rather shows the wisdom of the Spirit; for, if the whole Bible had been written in a uniform style, it would have given opposers a strong argument against its authenticity; while the lack of that uniformity furnishes conclusive evidence that it could not have been the work of a single impostor. Again, a continued sameness of style would make the reading of so large a book as the Bible tedious and unpleasant; but the rich variety presented by the various authors of this blessed book, helps our infirmities, and makes the reading of it pleasing and delightful.

- (2.) "Inquire into the character, situation, and office of the writer; the time, place, and occasion of his writing; and the people for whose immediate use he intended his work." This will enable you to understand his allusions to particular circumstances and customs, and to see the practical application of the principles he advances.

- (3.) Consider the principal scope or aim of the book; or what was the author's object, design, or intention, in writing it. Notice, also, the general plan or method which he has pursued. This will enable you to discover his leading ideas, if it is a doctrinal work; or the particular instructions of God's providence, if it is historical.

- (4.) Where the language is difficult to be understood, pay strict attention to the context, and you will generally find the author's meaning explained. But, if not, consider whether the difficult phrase is a peculiarity of the writer's style. If so, look out the place where he has used it in a different connection, and see what meaning is attached to it there. But if this does not satisfy you, examine the passages in other parts of the Scriptures which relate to the same subject, and compare them with the one under consideration. This will generally clear up the darkest passages. But if you still feel in doubt, you may find assistance from consulting commentators, who have made themselves acquainted with the particulars I have mentioned; which, with a knowledge of the language in which the book was originally written, may have enabled them to remove the difficulty. But, in reading commentaries, always bear in mind that they are the productions of fallible men, whose

opinions are not to be taken for Scripture. You may, however, avail yourself of their knowledge, without submitting your mind implicitly to their judgment; and this you will be compelled to do, because, on many points, they differ in opinion.

3. Do not task yourself with a certain quantity of reading at the regular seasons devoted to the study of the Bible. This may lead you to hurry over it, without ascertaining its meaning or drinking into its spirit. You had better study one verse thoroughly, than to read half a dozen chapters carelessly. The nourishment received from food depends less on the quantity, than on its being perfectly digested. So with the mind: one clear idea is better than a dozen confused ones; and the mind, as well as the stomach, may be overloaded with undigested food. Ponder upon every portion you read, until you get a full and clear view of the truth which it teaches. Fix your mind and heart upon it, as the bee lights upon the flower; and do not leave it until you have extracted the honey it contains.

4. Read in course. By studying the whole Bible in connection, you will obtain a more enlarged view of its contents, and perceive more distinctly its unity of purpose. But I would not have you confine yourself entirely to the regular reading of the whole Bible in course. Some portions of the historical parts do not require so much study as that which is more doctrinal; and some parts of the word of God are more devotional than others, and therefore better fitted for daily practical use. A very good plan is, to read the Old and New Testaments in course, a portion in each every day. If you begin at Genesis, Job, and Matthew, and read a chapter every day, at each place, omitting the first and reading three Psalms on the Sabbath, you will read the whole Bible in a year, while on every day you will have a suitable variety.

Besides this, the more devotional and practical books should be read frequently. The Psalms furnish a great variety of Christian experience, and may be resorted to with profit and comfort, in all circumstances. This is the only book in the Bible which does not require to be read in course. The Psalms are detached from each other, having no necessary connection. The other books were, for the most part, originally written like a sermon or a letter. They have, for convenience, since been divided into chapters and verses. If you read a single chapter by itself, you lose the connection; as, if you should take up a sermon and read a page or two, you would not get a full view of the author's subject. I would therefore recommend that, in addition to your daily reading in the Old and New Testaments, you always have in a course of thorough and critical study, some one of the most difficult and fruitful of these books. But, if you attend the Sabbath school, either as teacher or pupil, the lessons there studied will be sufficient for this purpose.

Before beginning the study of a book, you ought to take an opportunity to read the whole of it rapidly at one sitting, in order to learn the author's scope and design. You will find this a profitable practice, whenever you have time for it; and you will be especially interested to review, in this way, the books you have studied; and the more thoroughly they have been studied, the more deeply will you be interested in the review. You will find great advantage from the use of a reference Bible and concordance. By looking out the parallel passages, as you proceed, you will see how one part of the Scriptures explains another, and how beautifully they all harmonize. But, for the reading of the Scriptures, a paragraph Bible, without the divisions of chapters and verses, when you become accustomed to it, will be more pleasant and profitable than the common Bible.

5. In reading the Scriptures, there are some subjects of inquiry which you should carry along with you constantly—

(1.) What do I find here which points to Christ? Unless you keep this before your mind, you will lose half the interest of many parts of the Old Testament; and much of it will appear to be almost without meaning. It is full of types and prophecies relating to Christ, which, by themselves, appear dry, but, when understood, most beautiful and full of instruction.

(2.) The Bible contains a history of the church. Endeavor, then, to learn the state of the church at the time of which you are reading. For the sake of convenience, and a clearer view of the subject, you may divide the history of the church into six periods:

1. From the fall to the flood;
2. From Noah to the giving of the law;
3. From Moses to David and the prophets;
4. From David to the Babylonian captivity;
5. From the captivity to Christ;
6. From Christ to the end of time, which is called the gospel dispensation. From the commencement you will see a gradual development of God's designs of mercy, and a continually-increasing light. Take notice of what period of the church you are reading; and from this you may judge of the degree of obligation of its members; for this has been increasing with the increase of light, from the fall to the present day; and it will continue to increase to the end of time. Note, also, the various declensions and revivals of religion which have occurred in every period of the church, and endeavor to learn their causes and consequences. By this, you will become familiar with God's method of dealing with his people; from which you may draw practical lessons of caution and encouragement for yourself.

(3.) Inquire what doctrinal truth is taught, illustrated, or enforced, in the passage you are reading; and also what principle is recognized. Great and important principles of the divine government and of practical duty are often implied in a passage of history which relates to a comparatively unimportant event. Let it be your business to draw out these principles, and apply them to practice. Thus you will be daily increasing your knowledge of the great system of divine truth.

(4.) Note every promise and every prediction; and observe God's faithfulness in keeping his promises, and fulfilling his prophecies. This will tend to strengthen your faith. You will find it profitable, as you proceed, to take notes of these several matters particularly; and, at the close of every book, review your notes, and sum them up under different heads.

6. Read the Gospels with great care, for the purpose of studying the character of the blessed Jesus. Dwell upon every action of his life, and inquire after his motives. By this course you will be surprised to find the Godhead shining through the manhood in little incidents which you have often read without interest. Look upon him at all times in his true character, as Mediator between God and man. Observe his several offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. See in which of these characters he is acting at different times; and inquire what bearing the particular action you are

considering has upon his mediatorial character. Observe, also, the particular traits of character which appear conspicuous in particular actions—as, power, energy, manly hardihood, dignity, condescension, humility, love, meekness, pity, compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, etc. Take notes; and when you have finished the course, draw from them, in writing, a minute and particular description of his character. This will be of great service to you as a pattern. You will also, by this means, see a peculiar beauty and fitness in Christ for the office he has undertaken, which you would not otherwise have discovered. But do not stop with going through this course once. Repeat it as often as you can consistently with your plan of a systematic study of the Holy Scriptures. You will always find something new; and upon every fresh discovery, you can revise your old notes.

7. In reading the historical and biographical parts of Scripture, observe—

(1.) The histories contained in the Bible are the histories of God's providence. Notice his hand in every event, and inquire what principle or law of his moral government is exemplified, carefully observing its application to nations, communities, and individuals.

(2.) When you read of particular mercies or judgments, look back for the cause; that you may discover the principles on which God administers his most holy, wise, and just government.

(3.) In the biographies of the Bible, study the motives and conduct of the characters described. If they are unconverted men, you will learn the workings of human depravity, and discover what influence a correct religious public sentiment has in restraining that depravity. If they are godly men, you will see, in their good actions, living illustrations of the great doctrines of the Bible. Endeavor to learn by what means they made such attainments in holiness, and strive to imitate them. If any of their actions are bad, look back and inquire into the cause of their backslidings. If you discover it, you will find a way-mark, to caution you against falling into the same pit.

8. The poetical and didactic parts of the Scriptures are scattered throughout the whole Bible. These abound with highly-wrought figures of speech. This is probably owing partly to the insufficiency of ordinary language to express the lofty and sublime ideas presented to the minds of the writers by the Spirit of truth, and partly to the method of communicating ideas which always prevails in the infancy of language. Endeavor to understand the figures used. They are often taken from prevailing habits and customs, and from circumstances peculiar to the countries where the Scriptures were written. These habits and circumstances you must understand, or you will not see the force of the allusions. Others are taken from circumstances peculiar to particular occupations in life. These must also be thoroughly studied, in order to be understood. But where the figures are drawn from things perfectly familiar, you will not perceive their surprising beauty and exact fitness to express the idea of the sacred penman, until you have carefully studied them, and noted the minutest circumstances. Beware, however, that you do not carry out these figures so far as to lead you into fanciful and visionary interpretations.

9. The books of the prophets consist of reproofs, exhortations, warnings, threatenings, predictions, and promises. By carefully studying the circumstances and characters of those for whom they were written, you will find the principles and laws of God's government set forth, in their application to nations, communities, and individuals. From these you may draw practical rules of duty, and also learn how to view the hand of God, in his providence, in different ages of the world. The predictions contained in these books are the most difficult to be understood of any part of the

Bible. In reading them you will notice—

(1.) Those predictions whose fulfillment is recorded in the Bible, and diligently examine the record of their fulfillment. You will see how careful God is to fulfill every jot and tittle of his word.

(2.) There are other prophecies, the fulfillment of which is recorded in secular history; and others still which are yet unfulfilled. To understand these, it will be necessary to read ancient and modern history, in connection with the explanation of the prophecies, by those writers who have made them their study. Attention to this, so far as your circumstances will admit, will be useful in enlarging your views of the kingdom of Christ. But beware of becoming so deeply absorbed in these matters as to neglect those of a more practical nature; and, especially, be cautious of advancing far into the regions of speculation, as to what is yet future.

10. You will find it an interesting and profitable employment, occasionally to read a given book through for the purpose of seeing what light it throws upon some particular point of Christian doctrine, duty, practice, or character. For example, go through with Acts, with your eye upon the doctrine of Christ's divinity. Then go through with it a second time, to see what light it throws on the subject of Revivals of Religion. Pursue the same course with other books, and in respect to other subjects. In this way, you will sometimes be surprised to find how much you have overlooked in your previous reading. The foregoing suggestions may appear formidable, on account of the time and study requisite to carry them into execution. But it is to be remembered that the young Christian has his lifetime before him, and that his great business is to obtain a knowledge of divine things. The plan is not sketched with the expectation that everything here recommended will be accomplished in a single year—but with the view of laying out business for life.

01.08. Prayer

PRAYER

Christ and the apostles insist much on the duty of prayer; and this service has ever been the delight of the true children of God. In ancient times, it was considered the distinguishing mark of the pious that they "called upon God." All the holy men of God, of whom we read in the Scriptures, abounded in prayer. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, erected altars to the Lord wherever they pitched their tents. Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, and other eminent saints, under the Old Testament, were mighty in prayer. The Jews regarded this as so essential to a pious life, that their houses were furnished each with an apartment for private devotion; and, in the mountains and desert places, little oratories were erected, to which devout people retired, for more protracted seasons of communion with God. The Lord Jesus, our great Pattern, has set before us a life of prayer. The spirit of devotion characterized all that he did. He observed special seasons of prayer, before engaging in matters of importance. After having been employed in the work of his ministry, in the most laborious manner, during the day, we find him retiring to the mountains, or to some desert place, to commune with his Father; sometimes spending the whole night in prayer to God. And his example was followed by his apostles, whom he endowed with inspiration and miraculous gifts, to qualify them for settling the order of the Christian dispensation. But, if it became inspired apostles, and even the Lord of life and glory, to spend much time in prayer, how much more such weak and sinful creatures as we are, who are surrounded with temptations without, and beset with corruptions within! The ADVANTAGES of prayer are twofold. It secures to us the blessings which we need, and also brings us into a proper attitude for receiving them. The Lord does not need to be informed of our needs, for they are open to his view before they are known to us; but he has been pleased to require us to ask for the things which we desire, as one condition of granting them. And surely it is a reasonable requirement, that we should thus acknowledge our dependence upon Him "from whom comes down every good and perfect gift." Moreover, the necessity of so doing leads us to a sense of our need, to feel our unworthiness, and to keep in view our dependence upon God. It likewise exercises our faith in his existence, and confidence in his promises. This is the great channel of fellowship between man and his Maker, and should, therefore, be esteemed not merely a duty, but a most blessed privilege. As to the NATURE of prayer, it is the offering up of the sincere desires and devout emotions of the heart to God. It consists of the several parts of-- adoration, confession, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving. Adoration is an expression of a sense of the infinite majesty and glory of God. Confession is an humble acknowledgment of our sins and unworthiness. Supplication is pleading for blessings upon ourselves. Intercession is prayer for others. Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude to God for his goodness and mercy towards us and our fellow-creatures. All these several parts are embraced in the prayers recorded in Scripture, though all of them are not generally found in the same prayer. The prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, commences with adoration, and proceeds with supplication and intercession. The prayer of Daniel, in the time of the captivity, commences with adoration, and proceeds with confession, supplication,

and intercession. The prayer of the Levites, in behalf of the people, after the return from captivity, commences with thanksgiving and adoration, and proceeds with confession, supplication, and intercession. The prayers of David are full of penitential confession and thanksgiving. The prayer of Habakkuk consists of adoration, supplication, and thanksgiving. The prayer of the disciples, after the joyous return of the apostles from the council of their persecutors, consists of adoration, a particular rehearsal of their circumstances, and supplication. Paul particularly enjoins "prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving." The prayers recorded in Scripture, though probably only the substance of what was said on the several occasions when they were offered, are excellent models. Their simplicity, fervor, and directness, show them to have been the language of the heart--and this is prayer. The Lord's prayer furnishes a comprehensive summary of the subjects of prayer; and the prominent place assigned to the petition, "Your kingdom come," shows that, in all our prayers, the glory of God should be our leading desire. But it is evident that Christ did not intend this as a particular form of prayer, to be used on all occasions; although it includes all that is necessary. We are affected with a particular consideration of the subjects in which we are interested; and therefore it is necessary to specify our particular circumstances, needs, and desires. We find our Lord himself using other words, to suit particular occasions; and so did the apostles and early Christians. This is only intended as a general pattern; nor is it necessary that all the petitions contained in the Lord's prayer should ever be made at the same time.

Prayer must always be offered in the name of Christ. There is no other way of approach to God; neither is there any other channel through which we can receive blessings from him. Jesus is our Advocate with the Father. He stands on the right hand of God, to make intercession for us. If you were desirous of obtaining the favor of some exalted person, you would not go directly to him yourself; but you would endeavor to enlist the kind offices of someone who had influence with him, to intercede for you. And especially, if a criminal desires pardon of a king or a governor, he will not send a petition in his own name, but endeavor to obtain the intercession of others. We are all condemned criminals before God, and in the eye of his law; and therefore we cannot come directly to him in our own name. But with Jesus he is ever well pleased. Him he always hears. And Jesus will intercede for all who come unto God by him. But this does not forbid us to pray directly to Christ, as God manifest in the flesh, which was a common practice with the apostles.

It is truly amazing that the Infinite God should condescend to be influenced in his administration, by the creatures which his own hand has made; and much more so, that he should listen to the petitions, and grant the requests, of such unworthy and sinful creatures as we are. Yet no one who attentively considers the promises which he has made to his people, can doubt the fact. Nor does this interfere with the immutability of God; since, in the counsels of eternity, his determinations were formed in view of the prayers of his saints; so that his administration is eternally and unchangeably affected by them.

David addresses God as the hearer of prayer, as though that were a distinguishing trait in his character. He says, also, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Solomon says, "The prayer of the upright is his delight;" and, "He hears the prayer of the righteous." The apostle James declares that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Peter says, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers." And Christ himself has assured us, in the strongest possible terms, of the disposition of God to give spiritual blessings to those that ask for them. He says, "Keep asking,

and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." And then, anticipating the difficulty of our believing a truth so wonderful and glorious, he appeals to the tenderest sympathies of our natures, and asks if any father would insult the hungry cries of his beloved son, when fainting for a morsel of bread, by giving him a stone; or, if he asks an egg, to gratify his appetite, will he give him a venomous scorpion, to sting him to death? He then argues that, if sinful men exercise tender compassion towards their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father, whose very nature is love, regard the wants of his children who cry unto him!

These promises are confirmed by striking examples, in every age of the church. Thus Abraham prayed for Sodom; and, through his intercession, Lot was saved. Jacob wrestled all night in prayer, and prevailed, and received the blessing which he sought. Moses prayed for the plagues to come upon Egypt, and they came; again, he prayed for them to be removed, and they were removed. It was through his prayers that the Red Sea was divided, the manna and the quail were sent, and the waters gushed out of the rock. And through his prayers, many times, the arm of the Lord was stayed, which had been lifted up to destroy his rebellious people. Samuel—that lovely example of early piety, and the judge and deliverer of Israel—was given in answer to the prayer of his mother. When the children of Israel were in danger of being overcome by the Philistines, Samuel prayed, and God sent thunder and lightning, and destroyed the armies of their enemies. Again, to show their rebellion against God, in asking a king, he prayed, and God sent thunder and lightning upon them in the time of wheat-harvest. In order to punish the idolatry and rebellion of the Israelites, Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not for three years and six months. Again, he prayed that it might rain, and there arose a little cloud, as small as a man's hand, which spread, and covered the heavens with blackness, until the rain descended in torrents. Hezekiah, when about to die, had fifteen years added to his life, in answer to prayer; and, when Jerusalem was invaded by the army of Sennacherib, and menaced with destruction, he prayed, and the angel of the Lord entered the camp of the invader, and, in one night, slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. When all the wise men of Babylon were threatened with death, because they could not discover Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel and his companions prayed, and the dream and its interpretation were revealed.

It was in answer to the prayer of Zacharias that the angel Gabriel was sent to inform him of the birth of John the Baptist. It was after ten days of united prayer that the Holy Spirit came down, on the day of Pentecost, "like a mighty rushing wind." Again, while the disciples were praying, the place was shaken where they were assembled, to show that God heard their prayers. It was in answer to the prayers of Cornelius that Peter was sent to teach him the way of life. When Peter was imprisoned by Herod, the church set apart the night of his expected execution for special prayer in his behalf. The Lord sent his angel, opened the prison doors, and restored him to the agonizing band of brethren. And when Paul and Silas were thrown into the dungeon, with their feet fast in the stocks, they prayed, and there was a great earthquake, which shook the foundations of the prison, so that all the doors were thrown open. But the faithfulness of God to his promises is not confined to Scripture times. Although the time of miracles is past, yet every age of the church has furnished examples of the faithfulness of God in hearing the prayers of his children. These, however, are so numerous, that a selection only can be here referred to. When the Arians, who

denied the Deity of Christ, were about to triumph, the bishop of Constantinople, and one of his ministers, spent a whole night in prayer. The next day, Arius, the leader of his party, was suddenly cut off by a violent and distressing disease. This prevented the threatened danger. Augustine was a wild youth, sunk in vice, and a violent opposer of religion. His mother persevered in prayer for him nine years, when he was converted, and became the most eminent minister of his age. The life of Francke exhibits many signal answers to prayer. His orphan-house was literally built up and sustained by prayer. Mr. West became pastor of the Congregational church in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, while destitute of piety. Two pious females of his congregation often lamented to each other that they received no edification from his preaching. At length, they agreed to meet once a week, to pray for him. They continued this for some time, under much discouragement. But, although the Lord tried their faith, yet he never allowed them both to be discouraged at the same time. At length their prayers were heard. There was a sudden and remarkable change in his preaching. "What is this?" inquired one of them. "God is the hearer of prayer," replied the other. The Spirit of God had led Mr. West to see that he was a blind leader of the blind. He was converted, and changed his cold morality for the cross of Christ, as the basis of his sermons. A pious slave in Newport, R. I., was allowed, by his master, to labor for his own profit whatever time he could gain by extra diligence. He laid up all the money he earned in this way, for the purpose of purchasing his freedom, and that of his family. But, when some of his Christian friends heard what he was doing, they advised him to spend his gained time in fasting and prayer. Accordingly, the next day that he gained he set apart for this purpose. But, before the close of the day, his master, not knowing how he was employed, sent for him, and gave him a written certificate of his freedom. This slave's name was Newport Gardner. He was a man of good character and ardent piety; and, in 1825, he was ordained deacon of a church of colored people who went out from Boston to Liberia.

Instances of surprising answers to prayer, no less striking than these, are continually occurring at the present day. But of these I will mention only one. A few years ago, a pious widow had a son at college, who was a wild youth, and a great trial to her. On a certain occasion, he visited the metropolis, where there was, at the time, a religious awakening. Going out, one evening, to seek his pleasure, he strolled into the theater; but, without being conscious of the cause, he began to feel uneasy in his mind, lost his interest in the play, and went out into the street. Seeing lights in the vestry of a church not far distant, he went in, and there was deeply affected. In the course of a few days, he became, as was believed, a "new creature." Soon after, he received a letter from his mother, who stated that, having heard of his intended visit to the city, and knowing that there was an awakening there, she had called together some of her friends to pray for him; and it appeared, from the date, that this meeting for prayer in his behalf was held the evening when he was at the theater! With the evidence here presented, who can doubt that God hears and answers prayer? But the objection arises, "If this doctrine is true--why is it that Christians offer up so many prayers without receiving answers?" The apostle James gives some explanation of this difficulty. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss." It becomes us, then, seriously and diligently to inquire how we may ask aright, so as to secure the blessings so largely promised in answer to prayer. In relation to this subject, there are several things to be observed.

1. We must sincerely desire the things which we ask. If a child should ask his mother for a piece of bread, when she knew he was not hungry, but was only trifling with her, instead of granting his

request, she would have cause to punish him for mocking her. And do we not often come to the throne of grace when we do not really feel our dire need of the things we ask? God sees our hearts; and he is not only just in withholding the blessing we ask, but in chastising us for trifling in solemn things.

2. We must desire what we ask, that God may be glorified. "You ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts." We may possibly ask spiritual blessings for self-gratification; and, when we do so, we have no reason to expect that God will bestow them upon us.

3. We must ask for things agreeable to the will of God. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." The things that we ask must be such, in kind, as he has indicated his disposition to bestow upon us. Such are spiritual blessings on our own souls, the supply of our necessary temporal needs, and the extension of his kingdom. These are the kind of blessings that we are to ask; and the degree of confidence with which we are to look for an answer must be in proportion to the positiveness of the promises. Our Lord assures us that our heavenly Father is more willing to give good things, and particularly his Holy Spirit, to those who ask him--than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children; and he declares, expressly, that our sanctification is agreeable to the will of God. The promises of the daily supply of our necessary temporal needs are equally positive. We may also pray for a revival of religion in a particular place, and for the conversion of particular individuals, with strong ground of confidence, because we know that God has willed the extension of Christ's kingdom, and that the conversion of sinners is, in itself, agreeable to his will. But we cannot certainly know that he intends to convert a particular individual, or revive his work in a particular place, at a particular time; nor can we be sure that the particular temporal blessing that we desire is what the Lord sees to be needful for our present necessities; though our hope and expectation of receiving these blessings may be greatly strengthened by the freedom of access to the mercy-seat, and the sweet and confiding acquiescence in the will of God, which we experience in asking for them.

4. We must ask in faith. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the winds, and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord." Much has been said and written respecting the "prayer of faith;" and different opinions have been expressed in relation to the exercise of the soul which is so designated by the apostle James. I shall advance no theory on the subject. The main thing is, to maintain such a nearness to God as shall secure an experimental knowledge of it. Two things, however, are essential to the prayer of faith. There must be strong confidence in the existence and faithfulness of God. "He who comes unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." The prayer of faith must also be dictated by the Holy Spirit. Faith itself is declared to be "the gift of God;" and the apostle says, "The Spirit also helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." "He makes intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." When this is understood, we are no longer astonished that God should assure us, by so many precious promises, that he will hear and answer our prayers.

Christians are called the Temple of the Holy Spirit; and if the Holy Spirit dwells in us, to guide and direct us in all our ways, will he forsake us in so important a matter as prayer? O, then, what a solemn place is the Christian's closet, or the house of prayer! There the whole Trinity meet in

solemn concert. The Holy Spirit there presents to the Everlasting Father, through the Eternal Son--the prayers of a mortal worm! Is it any wonder that such a prayer should be heard? With what holy reverence and godly fear should we approach this consecrated place!

5. We must ask in a spirit of humble submission, yielding our will to the will of the Lord, committing the whole case to him, in the true spirit of our Lord's agonizing prayer in the garden, when he said, "Not my will, but yours, be done." It is often the case that a blessing is delayed until we come into just this frame of spirit—when we seem to have no will of our own, but are willing that God should exercise his holy and wise sovereignty, and dispose of the whole case according to his good pleasure; and then the blessing comes, often with greater measure than we had dared to ask.

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS.

1. Maintain a constant spirit of prayer. "Continuing instant in prayer." "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." "And he spoke a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The meaning of these passages is, not that we should be all the time exclusively engaged in prayer, to the neglect of everything else; but that we should maintain such a prayerful frame, that the moment our minds are disengaged, our hearts will rise up to God.

Intimately connected with this is the practice of ejaculatory prayer, which consists of a short petition, silently and suddenly sent up from the heart. This may be done any where, and under all circumstances. Nehemiah offered up a silent prayer to God, as he presented the cup to the king of Persia, that he might find favor, in the request which he was about to make; and so may we do, in all circumstances of difficulty. This kind of prayer is indispensable to the Christian warfare. It helps us in resisting temptation; and by means of it we can seek divine aid in the midst of the greatest emergencies. But to maintain this incessant spirit of prayer is a very difficult work. It requires unwearied care and watchfulness, labor and perseverance. Yet no Christian can thrive without it.

2. Observe stated and regular seasons of prayer. Some make so much of the foregoing, as to neglect all audible and formal prayer. This is evidently unscriptural. Our Savior directs us to enter into our closet, and, when we have shut the door, to pray to our Father who is in secret. And to this precept he has added the sanction of his own example. In the course of his history, we find him often retiring to solitary places, to pour out his soul in prayer. Other examples are also recorded in Scripture. David says, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." And again, "Seven times a day do I praise you." It was the habitual practice of Daniel to kneel down in his chamber, and pray three times a day. But this practice is so natural, and so agreeable to Christian feeling, that no argument seems necessary to persuade those who have any piety to observe it. It has been the delight of the saints in all ages to retire alone, and hold communion with God. No very definite rule can be given, as to the particular TIME of prayer. There is a peculiar propriety in visiting the throne of grace in the morning, to offer up the thanksgiving of our hearts for preservation, and to seek grace for the day; and also in the evening, to express our gratitude for the mercies we have enjoyed, to confess the sins we have committed, seek for pardon, and commit ourselves to the care of a covenant-keeping God, when we retire to rest. It is also very suitable, when we suspend our worldly employments in the middle of the day to refresh our bodies, to renew our visit to the fountain of life, that our souls may also be replenished. The twilight of the evening is likewise a favorable season for devotional exercises. But it is of the greatest importance that everyone

should set apart stated and regular seasons, every day, for private devotion. This is necessary in order to secure the end—to "pray without ceasing;" which means that we should pray, not occasionally, as we happen to feel disposed, but habitually. These seasons should be regarded as engagements with God; and when unavoidably interrupted, the first time at our command should be observed instead of the regular season. But, when our souls delight in communion with God, we shall be disposed, in addition to these regular and stated seasons, to retire often to pour out our hearts before him, and receive fresh communications of his grace. This we need, to prevent our hearts from coming under the power of sensible objects, and clinging to earth. For devotional exercises, we should select those times and seasons when we usually find our minds vigorous and our feelings lively. As the morning is, in many respects, most favorable, it is well to spend as much time as we can in the closet before engaging in the employments of the day. An hour spent in reading God's word, and in prayer and praise, early in the morning, will give a heavenly tone to the feelings; which, by proper watchfulness, and frequent draughts at the same fountain, may be carried through all the pursuits of the day. As already remarked, our Lord, in the pattern left us, has given a very prominent place to the petition, "may your kingdom come." This is a large petition. It includes all the instrumentalities which the church is putting forth for the enlargement of her borders and the salvation of the world. All these ought to be distinctly and separately remembered; and not, as is often the case, be crowded into one general petition, at the close of our morning and evening prayers. General truths do not much affect the heart; and therefore we need to particularize, in order to interest our feelings. I would therefore recommend the arrangement of these subjects under general heads for every day of the week, and then divide the subjects which come under these heads, so as to remember one or more of them at stated seasons, through the day, separate from your own personal devotions. Thus you will always have your mind fixed upon one or two objects; and you will have time to enlarge, so as to remember every particular relating to them. This, if faithfully pursued, will give you a deeper interest in every benevolent effort.

3. Observe special seasons of prayer. Before engaging in any important matter, make it a subject of special prayer. For this you have the example of the blessed Jesus. When he was baptized, before entering upon his ministry, he prayed. Before choosing his twelve apostles, he went out into a mountain, and spent a whole night in prayer. The Old Testament saints were also in the habit of "inquiring of the Lord," before engaging in any important enterprise. And Paul enjoins upon the Philippians, "in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," to let their requests be made known to God. Also, whenever you are under any particular temptation or affliction; whenever you are going to engage in anything which will expose you to temptation; whenever you perceive any signs of declension in your own soul; when the state of religion around you is low; when your heart is affected with the condition of individuals who are living in impenitence; or when any subject lies heavily on your mind—make the matter, whatever it is, a subject of special prayer. There is a peculiar fitness in this which must commend itself to every pious heart. In seasons of peculiar difficulty, or when earnestly seeking any great blessing, you may find benefit from setting apart days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. This is especially suitable whenever you discover any sensible decay of spiritual affections in your own heart. Fasting and prayer have been resorted to on special occasions, by eminent saints, in all ages of the world. The practice was very common among the Old Testament saints. Nor is the New Testament without warrant for the same. Our Lord himself set the example by a long season of fasting, when about to endure a severe conflict

with the Tempter. And he has further sanctioned the practice by giving directions respecting its performance. We have examples also in the Acts of the Apostles. The prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch fasted before separating Barnabas and Paul as missionaries to the heathen. And when they ordained elders in the churches, they prayed, with fasting. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of their giving themselves to fasting and prayer, as though it were a frequent custom.

You will find, also, in examining the lives of people of great spiritual attainments, that most of them were in the habit of observing frequent seasons of fasting and prayer. There is a peculiar fitness in this act of humiliation. It is calculated to bring the body under control, and to assist us in denying self. The length of time it gives us in our closets also enables us to get clearer views of divine things. But there is great danger of trusting in the outward act of humiliation, and expecting that God will answer our prayers--for the sake of our fasting. This will evidently bring upon us disappointment and leanness of soul. This is the kind of fasting so common among Roman Catholics and other nominal Christians. But it is no better than idolatry. When you set apart a day of fasting and prayer, you ought to have in view some definite objects. The day should be spent in self-examination, meditation, reading the Scriptures, confession of sin, prayer for the particular objects which bear upon your mind, and thanksgiving for mercies received. Your self-examination should be as practical as possible; particularly looking into the motives of your prayers for the special objects you are seeking. Your confession of sin should be minute and particular; mentioning every sin you can recollect, whether of thought, word, or deed, with every circumstance of aggravation. This will have a tendency to affect your heart with a sense of guilt, produce earnest longings after holiness, and make sin appear more hateful and odious. Moreover, confession of sin is one of the conditions of pardon. Your meditations should be upon those subjects which are calculated to give you a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the abounding mercy of God in Christ. Your reading of the Scriptures should be strictly devotional. Your prayers should be very particular; mentioning everything relating to the object of your desires, and all the hinderances you have met in seeking it. Carry all your burdens to the foot of the cross, and there lay them down. Your thanksgiving, also, should be very minute and particular; mentioning every mercy and blessing which you can recollect, with your own unworthiness, and every circumstance which may tend to magnify the love, condescension, and mercy of God.

4. Come to the mercy-seat with preparation of heart. We ought, indeed, to maintain so habitually a devout spirit, as to be always prepared to approach the throne of grace. But our minds are so liable to be injured by contact with the world, that it seems befitting in us to spend some time in collecting our thoughts and stirring up our affections, before approaching the Majesty of heaven. When you enter your closet, shut out the world, that you may be alone with God. Bring your mind into a calm and heavenly frame, and endeavor to obtain a deep sense of the presence of God, "as seeing him who is invisible." Think of the exalted nature of the transaction in which you are about to engage; think of your own unworthiness, and of the way God has opened to the mercy-seat; think of your own needs, or of the necessities of those for whom you intercede; think of the exhaustless fullness of Christ; think of the many precious promises of God to his children, and come with the spirit of a little child to present them before him.

5. Persevere in prayer. In the eleventh and eighteenth chapters of Luke, our Lord shows, by two impressive parables, the importance of importunity in prayer. In the first, he presents the case of a

man who was prevailed upon to do his friend a kindness, because of his importunity, when he would not have done it for friendship's sake; and in the other, of an unjust judge, who was persuaded by importunity to do justice. And from these he argues that God, who is disposed, by his own benevolence and mercy, to listen to the cries of his children, will much more be affected by the importunity of those whom he loves. He adds, with emphasis, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bears long with them? I tell you he will avenge them speedily." But the delay of a blessing which has been earnestly sought should lead to self-examination. If the thing sought is agreeable to the will of God, you may have been asking amiss, perhaps with selfish desires, and too little regard for the glory of God; perhaps you have not sufficiently felt your dependence, or have not humbled yourself enough to receive the blessing; or perhaps you have regarded iniquity in your heart, in which case the Lord will not hear you. Still, it is possible the blessing may be delayed for the further trial of your faith. Look at the woman of Syro-Phoenicia, who came to beseech Jesus to heal her daughter. Here is an example of faith, worthy of imitation. She continued to beseech Jesus to have mercy on her, although he did not answer her a word. The disciples entreated Christ to send her away, because she troubled them with her cries; yet she persevered. And even when Christ himself told his disciples that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and compared her to a dog seeking for the children's bread, yet, with all these repulses, she would not give up her suit, but begged even for the dog's portion, the children's crumbs. When by this means our Lord had sufficiently tried her faith, he answered her prayer. So likewise persevere in your prayers, and "in due time you shall reap--if you faint not."

01.09. Temptation

TEMPTATION

There is, in the Holy Scriptures, abundant evidence of the existence of an evil spirit, who is permitted, in various ways, to tempt mankind. This appears in the very beginning of the history of our race; for, according to the apostle John, in the Revelation, "that old serpent," which deceived our first parents, was "the Devil and SATAN." The same malicious being was also permitted to tempt the "second Adam," in the beginning of his mediatorial work for the recovery of lost man. He is represented as the father of the wicked, and as putting evil designs into the hearts of men. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." "You child of the devil." "You are of your father the devil." "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." "The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him." "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" Wicked men are spoken of as being carried captive by him at his will; and he is also represented as the adversary of the people of God, seeking to lead them into sin, and, if possible, to destroy them. "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour."

These, with numerous other passages, fully establish the fearful truth that we are continually beset by an evil spirit, who is seeking to injure and destroy our souls; and that, in some mysterious manner, which we cannot explain, he has access to our minds. It is of great importance, then, that we should know something of the character of our great adversary, and of his devices to deceive and ruin our souls. From the representations of Scripture, we learn the following things respecting him—

1. He is powerful. He is called "prince of this world," "prince of darkness," and "the god of this world." These titles denote the possession of power, and the exercise of dominion. The people over whom he exercises dominion are, other fallen spirits, called "his angels," and all mankind in their natural state. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, represents that, in their former state, before their conversion, they walked "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience;" and all unconverted men are children of disobedience. Hence, when any are converted, they are said to be turned "from the power of Satan unto God."

But, besides exercising dominion over natural men, he is permitted to tempt and try the true children of God. This is evident from the numerous cautions that are given them against his devices. He is also called Destroyer; and is said to walk about, seeking whom he may devour. So great was his power, and so mighty his work of ruin and destruction, that it became necessary for the Son of God to come into the world to destroy his works. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

But, although he is powerful, yet his power is limited. This you see in the case of Job. No doubt his malice would have destroyed that holy man at once. But he could do nothing against him until he was permitted; and then he could go no farther than the length of his chain. God reserved the life

of his servant. Jude speaks of the devils as being "reserved in chains;" which means that they are kept perfectly under the control of the Almighty, so that they can do nothing without his permission. But the question arises, "Why is Satan permitted to exercise any power at all?" Perhaps it is not consistent with proper reverence for the Supreme Being to entertain this objection; for he is a righteous Sovereign, in no way accountable to us, or to any being but himself, for the measures of his administration; and "he gives not account of any of his matters." Nevertheless, it appears, from the Scriptures, that the temptations of Satan, and the power which he is permitted to exercise, are wisely overruled for good. The children of God on earth are in a state of trial and discipline; and these are among the means which the Lord uses to prove and develop their characters. Instance the case of Job. Satan had slandered that holy man, by accusing him of serving God from selfish motives. By allowing him to take away all he had, the Lord proved this accusation to be false; and Job came out of the furnace greatly purified. The apostle James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience." If the children of God were never tempted, they would never have an opportunity to prove the sincerity of their faith. But they have the blessed assurance that God will not allow them to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. Satan is likewise permitted to exercise his power for the discovery of hypocrites, and for the punishment of sinners. "These have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." "But, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not."

2. Satan has much knowledge. He knew the command of God to our first parents, and therefore tempted them to break it. When those who were possessed with devils were brought to Christ, they cried out, "We know who you are; the Holy One of God." Satan has also a knowledge of the Bible; for he quoted Scripture in his temptation of Christ. And, as he has had a long experience in this world, he must have much knowledge of human nature, so as to be able to suit his temptations to the peculiar constitutions of individuals.

3. He is wicked. "The devil sins from the beginning." He is called the wicked one; or, by way of eminence, "the wicked." He is altogether wicked. There is not one good quality in his character.

4. He is crafty, and full of deceit and treachery. He lays snares for the unwary. That he may the more readily deceive the people of God, he appears to them in the garb of religion. "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." In consequence of his cunning and craft, he is called the serpent. He is likewise represented as deceiving the nations. Hence we are cautioned against the wiles of the devil.

5. He is a liar. The first thing recorded of him is the lie which he told our first parents, to persuade them to disobey God. Hence our Savior calls him a "liar from the beginning."

6. He is malicious. As Satan is the enemy of God, so he hates everything good. He is continually bent on mischief. If his power were not restrained, he would introduce general disorder, anarchy, and confusion into the government of God. He loves to ruin immortal souls, and takes delight in vexing the people of God. Hence he is called destroyer, adversary, accuser, tormentor, and murderer.

Now, since we are beset by an adversary of such knowledge and power, so sly and artful, so false and so malicious—it behoves us to be well acquainted with his arts, that we may be on our guard against them. Paul says, "For we are not ignorant of his devices." O that every Christian could say so! How many sad falls would be prevented! I will mention a few of the devices of Satan, which are manifest both from Scripture and experience. It is the opinion of some great and good men, that the devil can suggest thoughts to our minds only through the imagination. This is that faculty of the mind by which it forms ideas of things communicated to it through the senses. Thus, when you see, hear, feel, taste, or smell anything, the image of the thing is impressed upon the mind by the imagination. It also brings to our recollection these images when they are not present. It is thought to be only by impressing these images upon the imagination, that he can operate upon our souls. Hence we may account for the strange manner in which our minds are led off from the contemplation of divine things by a singular train of thought, introduced to the mind by the impression of some sensible object upon the imagination. This object brings some other one like it to our recollection, and that again brings another, until our minds are lost in a maze of intellectual trifling.

Satan adapts his temptations to our peculiar temperaments and circumstances. In youth, he allures us by pleasure, and bright hopes of worldly prosperity. In manhood, he seeks to bury up our hearts in the cares of life. In old age, he persuades to the indulgence of self-will and obstinacy. In prosperity, he puffs up the heart with pride, and persuades to self-confidence and forgetfulness of God. In poverty and affliction, he excites discontent, distrust, and repining. If we are of a melancholy temperament, he seeks to sour our tempers, and promote habitual sullenness and despondency. If we are naturally cheerful, he prompts to the indulgence of levity. In private devotion, he stands between us and God, to prevent us from realizing his presence, and seeks to distract our minds, and drive us from the throne of grace. In public worship, he disturbs our minds by wandering thoughts and foolish imaginations. When we enjoy a comfortable and happy frame of mind, he stirs up pride in our hearts, and leads us to trust in our own goodness, and forget the Rock of our salvation. Even our deepest humiliations he makes the occasion of spiritual pride. Thus we fall into darkness, and thrust ourselves through with many sorrows. If we have performed any extraordinary acts of self-denial, or of Christian beneficence, he stirs up in our hearts a vainglorious spirit. If we have overcome any of the corruptions of our hearts, or any temptation, he excites a secret feeling of self-satisfaction and self-delight. He puts on the mask of religion. Often, during the solemn hours of public worship, he beguiles our hearts with some scheme for doing good; taking care, however, that self be uppermost in it. When we are in a bad frame, he stirs up the unholy tempers of our hearts, and leads us to indulge in peevishness, moroseness, harshness, and anger, or in levity and unfitting mirth.

There is no Christian grace which Satan cannot counterfeit. He cares not how much religious feeling we have, or how many good deeds we perform, if he can but keep impure and selfish motives at the bottom. There is great danger, therefore, in trusting to impulses, or sudden impressions of any kind. We ought to "try the spirits, whether they be of God." The Spirit of grace does not reveal truth or duty directly to us. He has finished his work of Revelation, and put the record of it into our hands, as our only rule of truth and duty. His office now is, to enlighten our minds to perceive the truth, and to stir us up to perform the duties required in his word. If, therefore, we find a secret impulse operating upon our minds to persuade us to perform known

duty, we may know it is from the Spirit of God. But, if our conviction of duty arises from the impression upon our mind, we shall be liable to be led astray, and carried about by every wind. The fact that our religious feelings are not produced by ourselves, but that they arise in our mind in a manner for which we cannot account, is no evidence, either that they come from the Spirit of God, or that they do not.

Satan is sometimes transformed into an angel of light. He is often the author of false comforts and joys, very much resembling those which are truly gracious. Nor is it certain that religious feelings are holy and spiritual because they come with texts of Scripture, brought to the mind in a remarkable manner. If the feeling is produced by the truth contained in the Scriptures so brought to the mind, and is, in its nature, agreeable to the word of God, it may be a spiritual and holy affection. But, if it arises from the application of the Scripture to our own case, on account of its being so brought to our mind, it is probably a delusion. Satan has power to bring Scripture to our minds; and he can apply it with dexterity, as we see in his temptations of the blessed Savior. Besides, our hearts are exceedingly deceitful, and our indwelling corruptions are in league with the adversary. How easily, then, may he succeed in cheating our souls with false peace and selfish joys!

Satan, no doubt, often brings the most sweet and precious promises of God to the minds of those he wishes to deceive. But he misapplies the promises, as he did to our Lord, when he attempted to persuade him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, on the strength of the promise, "He shall give his angels charge concerning you; and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone." We must be satisfied that the promises belong to us, before we take them to ourselves. We have "a more sure word of prophecy," by which we are to try every impulse, feeling, and impression, produced upon our minds. Anything which does not agree with the written word of God, does not come from him; for he "cannot deny himself."

Satan manages temptation with the greatest subtlety and adroitness. He asks so little at first, that, unless our consciences are very tender, we do not suspect him. If he can persuade us to parley, he perhaps leaves us for a while, and returns again, with a fresh and more vigorous attack. He is exceedingly persevering; and, if he can induce us to give place to him at all, he is almost sure to overcome us at last. So it was with Eve. She parleyed at first; then listened to the suggestions of the tempter; then lusted after the fruit of the forbidden tree; then took and ate. Such is the progress, and such the end, of those who parley with temptation.

We are also liable to temptation from the world without, and from the corruptions of our own hearts within. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." The riches, honors, pleasures, and fashions, of this world are great enemies to serious piety. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed." Remaining corruption is the greatest evil that besets the Christian. The temptations of Satan alone would be light, in comparison with the inward conflict he is compelled to maintain against the lusts of his own heart. But the devil makes use of both these means of temptation to accomplish his ends. The former he uses as outward enticements, and the latter act as traitors within. Thus you may generally find a secret alliance between the arch deceiver and the corruptions of your own heart. It is not sin to be tempted; but it is sin to give place to temptation. "Neither give place to the devil." The heart is very properly compared to a castle or fort. Before conversion, it is in the possession of the great enemy of souls, who has fortified

himself there, and secured the allegiance of all our moral powers. But, when Jesus enters in, he "binds the strong man armed," and takes possession of the heart himself. Yet Satan, though in a measure bound, loses no opportunity to attempt regaining his lost dominion. Hence we are directed to "keep the heart with all diligence." Now, we know how a castle, fort, or city, is kept in time of war. The first thing done is to set a watch, whose business is to keep constantly on the look out, this way and that way, to see that no enemy is approaching from without, and no traitor is lurking within. Hence we are so frequently exhorted to watch. "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation." "Take heed, watch and pray." "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be strong like men." "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving." "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." "Let us watch and be sober." "Watch, then, in all things." "Watch unto prayer." "Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." If we were in a house surrounded by a band of robbers, and especially if we knew there were people in it who held a secret correspondence with them, we would be continually on our guard. Every moment we should be watching, both within and without. But not unlike this is our case. It is therefore with good reason that we are so frequently cautioned on this point, and directed to watch in all things. But there are particular seasons when we should set a double watch.

1. We are directed to watch unto prayer. When you approach the mercy-seat, watch against a careless spirit. Do not allow your mind to be drawn away by anything, however good and important in itself, from the object before you. If the adversary can divert your mind, on the way to that consecrated place, he will be almost sure to drive you away from it without a blessing.
2. We are required to watch not only unto, but in, prayer. Satan is never more busy with Christians than when he sees them on their knees. He well knows the power of prayer; and this makes him tremble.

"Satan trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees."

You should, therefore, with the most untiring vigilance, watch in prayer against all wandering thoughts and distraction of mind. You will often experience, on such occasions, a sudden and vivid impression upon your mind, of something entirely foreign from what is before you; and this, we have reason to believe, is the temptation of Satan. If you are sufficiently upon your watch, you can banish it without diverting your thoughts or feelings from the subject of your prayer, and proceed as though nothing had happened. But, if the adversary succeeds in keeping these wild imaginations in view, so that you cannot proceed without distraction, turn and beseech God to give you help against his wiles. You have the promise, that if you resist the devil, he will flee from you. These remarks apply both to secret prayer and public worship.

3. We have need of special watchfulness when we have experienced any comfortable manifestations of God's presence. It is then that Satan tempts us to consider the conflict over, and relax our diligence. If we give way to him, we shall bring leanness upon our souls.
4. We have need of double watchfulness, when gloom and despondency come over our minds; for then the adversary seeks to stir up all the perverse passions of the heart.

5. Watch, also, when you feel remarkably cheerful. Satan will then, if possible, persuade you to indulge in levity, to the wounding of your soul, and the dishonor of religion.
6. We have need of special watchfulness in prosperity, that we forget not God; and in adversity, that we murmur not at his dealings with us.
7. Set a watch over your tongue, especially in the presence of the unconverted. "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity." David says, "I will keep my tongue with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." I do not mean that you should ever engage in any sinful conversation in the presence of Christians. Some professors of religion will indulge in senseless garrulity among themselves, and put on an air of seriousness and solemnity before those whom they regard as unconverted. This they pretend to do for the honor of Christ. But Christ says, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." God abhors lip-service. However, in the company of sinners and formal professors, we are peculiarly exposed to temptation, and have need, therefore, to set a double guard upon our lips. A single unguarded expression from a Christian may do great injury to an unconverted soul.
8. Watch over your heart, when engaged in doing good to others. It is then that Satan seeks to stir up pride and vainglory.
9. Set a double watch over your easily-besetting sin. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us." Most people have some constitutional sin, which easily besets them. Satan takes the advantage of this infirmity, to bring us into difficulty.
10. Finally, keep a constant watch over the imagination. Since this is the medium through which temptation comes, never allow your imagination to rove without control. If you mortify this faculty, it may be a great assistance to your devotion. But, if you let it run at random, you will be led captive by Satan at his will. Strive, then, after a sanctified imagination, that you may make every power of your soul subservient to the glory of God.

01.10. Self-Denial

SELF-DENIAL The duty of self-denial arises from the unnatural relation which sin has created between us and God. The first act of disobedience committed by man was a setting up of himself in opposition to God. It was a declaration that he would regard his own will in preference to the will of his Creator. Self became the supreme object of his affections. And this is the case with all unregenerate people. Their own happiness is the object of their highest wishes. They pursue their own selfish interests with their whole hearts. When anything occurs, the first question which arises in their minds is, "How will this affect me?" It is true they may often exercise a kind of generosity towards others; but, if their motives were scanned, it would appear that self-gratification is at the bottom of it. The correctness of these assertions no one will doubt, who is acquainted with his own heart. All unconverted people live for themselves. They see no higher object of action than the promotion of their own individual interests. The duty in question consists in the denial of this disposition. And a moment's attention will show that nothing can be more reasonable. We belong to a grand system of being, of which God is the Sun and Center; and no individual has a right to attach to himself any more importance than properly belongs to the place he occupies in this system. It is by this place that his value is known. If he thinks himself of more consequence than the station he occupies will give him, it leads to discontent and murmuring; and this is setting up the wisdom and will of the creature in opposition to the Creator. This was probably the origin of the first act of disobedience. Satan thought himself entitled to a higher station in the system of being than God gave him; therefore he rebelled against the government of the Most High. This act of rebellion was nothing more than setting up his own selfish interests against the interests of the universe. And what would be the consequence, if this selfish principle were carried out in the material universe? Instance our own planetary system: if every planet should set up an interest separate from the whole, would they move on with such beautiful harmony? No; everyone would seek to be a sun. They would all rush towards the common center, and universal confusion would follow.

God is the Sun and Center of the moral universe; and the setting up of private, individual interests as supreme objects of pursuit, if permitted to take their course, would produce the same general confusion. This it has done, so far as it has prevailed. Its tendency is to create a universal contention among inferior beings for the throne of the universe, which belongs to God alone. But the interests of God—if I may be allowed the expression—are identified with the highest good of his intelligent creation. Hence we see the perfect reasonableness of the first commandment—"You shall have no other gods before me." There can be no selfishness in this; because the best interests of the universe require it. But, by pursuing our own selfish interests as the chief good, we make a god of self. The religion of Jesus Christ strikes at the root of this selfish principle. The very first act of the newborn soul is a renunciation or giving up of self—the surrender of the whole soul to God. The entire dedication which the Christian makes of himself, soul, body, and property, to the Lord, implies that he will no longer live to himself, but to God. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." "For none of us lives to himself." "Those who live should

not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." "Whether, therefore, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Self-denial, then, is the surrendering of our will to the will of God. It is an adoption of the revealed will of God as the rule of duty, and a steadfast, determined, and persevering denial of every selfish gratification which comes between us and obedience to this rule. It is seeking the glory of God and the good of our fellow-creatures, as the highest objects of pursuit. In short, it is to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, might, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves." By carrying out this principle, in its application to our feelings and conduct, we learn the practical duty of self-denial; which Christ declares to be an indispensable term of discipleship. "If any man will come after me," says he, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me;" and, "He who loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever will save his life shall lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." "If any man comes to me, and hates not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple." "He who loves his life, shall lose it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." "If your right eye offends you, [or causes you to offend,] pluck it out, and cast it from you." We must follow Christ. Here we are taught that, unless we put away self-seeking, and willingly surrender the dearest objects of affection on earth, yes, and our own lives also, if need be—we have no claim to the character of disciples of Christ. The glory of God, and the general good, must be our ruling principle of action; and we must not gratify ourselves, in opposition to the will of God or the interest of our fellow-beings.

Every action must be brought to this test. Here is heart work, and life work. Self must be denied in all our spiritual feelings, and in all our devotions, or they will be abominable in the sight of God. Here is work for self-examination. Every exercise of our minds should be tried by this standard. We must likewise deny self in our conduct. And here we have the examples of many holy men, recorded in Scripture, with a multitude of martyrs and missionaries, but especially of our Lord himself, to show what influence the true spirit of self-denial exerts upon the Christian life. Our Lord declares that, in order to be his disciples, we must follow him. And how can this be done, but by imitating his example? He was willing to make sacrifices for the good of others. He led a life of toil, hardship, and suffering, and gave up his own life, to save sinners. His immediate disciples did the same. They submitted to ignominy, reproach, suffering, and death itself, for the sake of promoting the glory of God in the salvation of men.

Cultivate, then, this spirit. Prefer the glory of God to everything else. Prefer the general good to your own private interest. Be willing to make sacrifices of personal interest, ease, and feeling, for the benefit of others. Carry this principle out in all your social fellowship, and it will greatly increase your usefulness. It will likewise promote your own interest and happiness. Nothing renders a person more amiable and lovely in the sight of others than unselfish benevolence. Think no sacrifice too great to make, no hardship too painful to endure, if you can be the means of benefiting perishing souls. Remember, it was for this that Jesus gave up his life; and he requires you to be ready to give up everything you have, and even life itself, if the same cause shall require it. But let me caution you against placing self-denial chiefly in outward things. We are not required to relinquish any of the comforts and enjoyments of this life, except when they come in competition

with our duty to God and our fellow-creatures. "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving;" and godliness has the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come. The religion of some people seems to consist chiefly in denying themselves of lawful enjoyments; and you will find them very severe and censorious towards others, for partaking freely and thankfully of the bounties of God's providence. This, however, is but a species of self-righteous mockery, characterized by Paul as a "voluntary humility." Instead of being self-denial, it is the gratification of self in maintaining an appearance of external sanctity. It may, however, be not only proper, but obligatory upon us—to sacrifice these lawful enjoyments, when we may thereby promote the interests of Christ's kingdom, which requires the exercise of a self-sacrificing spirit.

01.11. Public Worship

PUBLIC WORSHIP PRACTICAL HINTS IN RELATION TO PUBLIC WORSHIP.

1. Attend on the stated ministrations of your pastor. If there is more than one church professing your own sentiments in the place where you reside, select the pastor who is most spiritual, and will give you the best instruction. But, when you have made this selection, consider yourself bound to wait on his ministry. Do not indulge yourself in going from place to place, to hear this and that minister. This will give you "itching ears," and cultivate a love of novelty, and a critical mode of hearing, very unfavorable to the practical application of the truth to your own soul. If you wish to obtain complete views of truth—if you wish your soul to thrive—attend, as far as possible, upon every appointment of your pastor. Ministers generally adopt some plan of instruction, which they believe to be adapted to the state of their people, and frequently pursue a chain of subjects in succession, so as to present a complete view of the great doctrines of the Bible. Whenever you absent yourself, you break this chain, and lose much of your interest and profit in your minister's preaching. I do not say but, on special occasions, when some subject of more than usual importance is to be presented at another place, it may be proper for you to leave your own church. But, in general, the frequent exchange of pulpits between neighboring ministers, and the occasional appearance of a stranger in the pulpit, will furnish as great variety as you will find profitable.

2. Be punctual in attending at the stated hour of public worship. This, though of great importance, is sadly neglected by many congregations. Punctuality is so necessary in matters of business, that a man is hardly considered honest when he fails to meet his friend at the hour of engagement. And why should it be thought of less consequence to be exact and punctual in our engagements with God than with man? The person who enters the house of God after the service has commenced, embarrasses the preacher, and disturbs the devotions of others. Besides, he shows great lack of reverence for the sacredness of the place, time, and employment. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Always calculate to be seated in the sanctuary a few minutes before the time appointed for the commencement of worship; that you may have time to settle your mind, and to lift your soul in silent prayer to God for his blessing.

3. Go to the house of God with a preparation of heart. First visit your closet, and implore the influences of the Holy Spirit, both upon yourself and your fellow-worshipers, that your and their hearts may be prepared to receive the truth; and, if possible, go immediately from your closet to the house of worship. On the way, shut out all thoughts except such as are calculated to inspire devotional feelings; and, if in company, avoid conversation. Whatever may be the nature of such conversation, it will be very likely to produce a train of thought which will distract and disturb your mind during public worship.

4. When you approach the house of worship, remember that the Lord is there in a peculiar manner. He has promised to be where two or three shall meet in his name. It is in the assembly of

his saints that he makes known the power of his Spirit. As you enter his house, endeavor to realize the solemnity of his presence, and walk softly before him. Avoid carelessness of demeanor, and let your deportment indicate the reverence due to the place where "God's honor dwells." "Guard your feet when you go to the house of God." I do not like to specify any particular acts which are unbecoming in the house of God, lest I should seem to imply that a young lady may be guilty of a public breach of the rules of good breeding; but, if you bear in mind continually that you are a guest in the house of the Lord, and that the Lord almighty is there to witness all you do, you will be likely to be serious and circumspect. When seated in the place of worship, set a watch over the senses, that your eyes and ears may not cause your mind to wander upon forbidden objects. There is great danger that the attraction of people, characters, and dress, may dissipate the serious thoughts with which you entered the sanctuary, so that you will lose the benefit of the means of grace. Set a watch, also, over your imagination. This is a time when Satan is peculiarly busy in diverting the fancy; and, unless you are doubly watchful, he may lead away your mind by some phantom of the imagination, before you are aware of it. Keep these avenues of temptation guarded, and seek to bring yourself into a prayerful frame of mind, that you may be suitably affected by the various exercises of public worship.

5. Unite in spirit with the devotional part of the service. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." Sing with the spirit and with the understanding, and see that you do not mock God with an empty song of praise, which finds no response in your heart. Endeavor, also, in prayer, to follow the words of the person who leads, applying the several parts of the prayer to yourself in particular, when they suit your case, and yet bearing in mind the various subjects of petition which relate to the congregation and the world; remembering that God abhors hypocritical worship, in which men appear outwardly as worshipers, but have no spiritual apprehension of the meaning of the solemn service in which they are engaged. In all the exercises of public worship, labor and strive against wandering thoughts. This is the time when Satan will beset you with all his fury. Now you must be well armed, and fight manfully. Be not discouraged, though you may be many times foiled. If you persevere in the strength of Jesus, you will come off conqueror at last.

6. "Take heed how you hear." Consider the speaker as the ambassador of Christ, sent with a message from God to yourself. "Now, then," says the apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we beg you, in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God." The figure here used is borrowed from the practice of one government sending a person on a particular errand to another. The analogy, however, does not hold good throughout. It is like a sovereign sending an ambassador to persuade rebels against his government to submit to him, and accept of pardon. But, in such a case, it would be possible, either for some person who was not sent, to deliver a false message in the name of the king, or for one who was really sent, to deliver a different message from the one sent by him. So it is in relation to preachers of the gospel. There are many whom Christ has never sent, who are spreading abroad lies over the land; and there are others, really sent by Christ, who have, in some respects, misapprehended their instructions, and therefore do not deliver his message just as he has directed. But our blessed Lord, foreseeing this, has wisely and kindly given us a check-book, by which we may discover whether those who speak in his name tell the truth. Hence we are commanded to "search the Scriptures," and to "test the spirits, whether they be of God." And the Bereans were commended as more noble, because they

searched the Scriptures daily, to know whether the things preached by the apostles were so. If, then, they were applauded for testing the preaching of the apostles by the word of God, surely we may try the preaching of uninspired men by the same standard. But beware of a fault finding spirit. There are some people who indulge such a habit of finding fault with preaching, that they never receive much benefit from it. Either the matter of the sermon, the apparent feeling of the preacher, or his style, or manner of delivery, does not suit them; and therefore they throw away all the good they might have obtained from his discourse. Remember that preachers of the gospel are but men. So weak are they, that the apostle compares them to "earthen vessels." Do not, then, expect perfection. Bear with their infirmities. Receive their instructions as the bread which your heavenly Father has provided for the nourishment of your soul. Do not ungratefully spurn it from you. What would you think to see a child throwing away the bread his mother gives him, because it does not suit his dainty appetite? But the instruction delivered to you by the ministers of Christ, if it agrees with the word of God, is the bread which your heavenly Father has provided as the food of your soul. It may not suit your taste. It may not be savory enough. It may be coarse food. It may not have any such dressings as render it palatable to a capricious appetite. Or it may be, in your estimation, too strong meat. Still it is the food which God has provided for your soul; and you will suffer incalculable loss, if you are so dainty as to throw it away. But, if there appears really to be a deficiency in your minister's preaching, pray for him, that he may preach better. See to it, however, that the fault be not with yourself, in not keeping your heart in such a state as to be able to appreciate good preaching. Many sermons, which appeared dry and dull the first time they were delivered, on being repeated in a time of awakening, and heard with a new ear, have been pronounced excellent, and full of instruction.

Hear, also, with self-application. From almost any passage in the Bible the Christian may draw a practical lesson for himself. Some truths may not be immediately applicable to your present circumstances; yet you ought to be affected by them. Even a sermon addressed exclusively to impenitent sinners is calculated to excite the most intense feelings of the Christian's soul. It reminds him of the exceeding wickedness of his past life; it shows him what an awful gulf he has escaped; it leads him to mourn over his ingratitude; and it calls forth his prayers and tears in behalf of the perishing. Strive to bring home the truth, so far as it is applicable to yourself, in the most searching manner. Examine your own heart diligently, that you lose nothing which belongs to you. Do not hear for others. Let everyone make his own application of the truth. Many are so intent on finding garments for others, that they lose their own.

Hear with a prayerful frame of mind. If any part of the discourse is intended for professors of religion, let your heart continually ascend to God for the Holy Spirit to apply it to yourself and to every Christian present. If any part of it is designed for impenitent people, let your soul put forth an agony of prayer, that it may be blessed for their conversion.

Remember and practice what you hear. We are exhorted to give earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. James tells us, "If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in the glass; for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was." Alas, how many thus hear! But, in regard to them, our Savior likens them to a man that built his house upon the sand, which, when the storm came, was swept away with a terrible destruction. How many, who have paid a decent respect to the worship of God, without practicing the self-denying duties

inculcated in his word, will find their foundation swept from under them in the terrible storm which is at hand, none can tell. Let us see to it that we are not among the many who will say, in that day, "Lord, Lord," without having obeyed his word; that he should say to us, "Depart from me, you who work iniquity."

MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

Intimately connected with public worship are social meetings for prayer. We have examples of these in the primitive church. The disciples held a ten days' prayer-meeting, before the advent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. When the apostles returned from before the council, they held a prayer-meeting, and the place was shaken where they were assembled. When Peter was imprisoned, the church held a prayer-meeting in the night, and an angel delivered him out of the prison. We read of a place by the river side, where prayer was "accustomed to be made." And at Miletus, Paul held a precious prayer-meeting with the elders of the church of Ephesus. These meetings have been maintained among evangelical Christians in every age. They are the life of the church. They are the mainspring of human agency in revivals of religion. Without a spirit of prayer, sufficient to bring God's people together in this way, I see not how vital piety can exist in a church. The feelings of a lively Christian will lead him to the place of prayer. But it will not do to follow our feelings at all times, because they are variable. If you allow yourself to be guided by the mere impulse of feeling, you can never be depended on as a stable and consistent Christian. We ought the rather to be guided in all things by settled and permanent principle. Those who are so governed are the only Christians who can be relied on in an emergency. The follower of Christ is called a soldier; but the main thing with a soldier, and without which he would be good for nothing, is, that he is always to be found at his post. But what would become of an army, or of the country which they defend, if, when called to duty, but a small proportion of them should be found there? And what will become of the cause in which the great Captain of our salvation is engaged, if but few of the soldiers of the cross are to be found at the place of rendezvous? Let it be a settled principle with you, then, to be always at your post. Let nothing but absolute necessity keep you from the place of prayer. THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

I cannot persuade myself, in this connection, to pass over an institution which occupies so prominent a place in the employments of the holy Sabbath, as the Sabbath school; and I think I may presume on the interest which those for whom I am writing feel in this department of Christian effort and improvement. I know of no means of intellectual and spiritual improvement, accessible to all, which will by any means compare with this. It furnishes a stimulus to intellectual effort, of great value to people of all ages, and in every department of life. It is one of the best means of self-education which the times afford; for there is no study better adapted to develop, enlarge, and strengthen the mind than the investigation of Scriptural truth. And it has this peculiar advantage, that it combines moral and spiritual improvement with intellectual cultivation. There is perceptible in the minds of those who have been for a number of years connected with the Sabbath school, a wakefulness of mind, an acuteness of perception, and a definiteness in their views of truth, not often to be found among those who have not had this advantage. It creates the necessity for study, and obliges everyone to learn something new every week; and this keeps the mind active, and secures a constantly progressive advancement in knowledge. It tends, also, to keep alive religious feeling, by keeping the truth before the mind, and bringing different minds together, to act upon one another. I can hardly persuade myself that it is necessary to advise young Christian

females to become connected with the Sabbath school; for it would seem that their own feelings would lead them to a place of so great interest and improvement; and I suppose the majority of those into whose hands this book may fall, have been trained up in the Sabbath school, and have never left it. And I trust none of them will ever feel that they are too old to continue to attend as pupils. In many parts of the country, it is the custom for the whole congregation, both old and young, to be formed into a Sabbath school; and a most excellent custom it is. May I not hope that the young ladies for whom I am writing will be everywhere forward to encourage so good a custom? But young Christian ladies ought to calculate upon qualifying themselves to teach in the Sabbath school, in case their services in this department shall be required. It may be personally more agreeable to sit as a learner; but duty requires that we should always prefer an opportunity of imparting, to that of receiving, a spiritual benefit. Indeed, this is the true way of securing a personal benefit; for our Lord has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and he verifies his word, by pouring the richest spiritual blessings into the souls of those who lay themselves out most for the benefit of others. This is especially the case with Sabbath school teachers. They are excited, by the responsibilities of their station, to greater study in the preparation of their lessons, and in acquiring information to impart to those they teach; and this secures a greater intellectual benefit. Their pupils, also, give direction to their desires, prayers, and efforts, and thus their piety is cultivated, strengthened, and increased. If successful, too, they are permitted to rejoice in the fruit of their labors. Every faithful Sabbath school teacher, therefore, knows, from experience, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." I may presume, therefore, that every young lady who loves the Savior will esteem it a privilege to be a Sabbath school teacher.

But, should you be called upon to engage in the interesting and responsible work of Sabbath school instruction, enter upon it heartily. If you cannot do this, I advise you not to attempt it. If you engage in such a work without being deeply interested in it yourself, and laying yourself out upon it, you will find neither pleasure, profit, nor success, therein. Presuming, therefore, that you will be desirous of using all the means in your power to qualify yourself for such a work, I offer for your consideration the following hints, which are given under the impression that your pupils are children or young people—

1. Endeavor to obtain just views of the importance and responsibility of the work. In a certain subordinate sense, the Sabbath school teacher is the pastor of a little flock. He is appointed, in his sphere, to watch for their souls, everyone of which is of more value than the whole world. The influence which he exerts upon these souls may give direction not only to their character and influence in this life, but to their character and destiny throughout eternity. The responsibility is therefore fearful indeed.

2. Keep before your mind the objects to be attained by Sabbath school instruction, and pursue these objects with directness of purpose and effort. These objects are, the conversion of the souls of the pupils, if they are unconverted; and their sanctification, and preparation for usefulness, if converted. To attain either of these objects, it is necessary that they should have a clear and discriminating knowledge of those truths of God's word which teach them their lost and ruined condition by nature, and the way of salvation revealed in the gospel; because it is through these that the Holy Spirit operates in the conversion and sanctification of souls. These truths must, therefore, be so illustrated, simplified, and brought down to their capacities, that they will see their application to themselves, and learn from them their duty. But, to prepare them for usefulness,

energy of mind, and habits of deep thought and close study, are of great importance, and must, therefore, be cultivated in the Sabbath school.

3. Labor to obtain clear, full, and discriminating views of gospel truth yourself. This is indispensable, if you would impress the same upon the minds of others. If your general views of truth are obscure, indefinite, and unsatisfactory to yourself, your instructions will be of the same character.

4. Study to become skillful in the sacred art of communicating divine truth to the minds of children. Little as this may be esteemed, it is one of the most valuable talents you can possess. I know of no other which females can so profitably employ in the service of Christ. You must, therefore, study the juvenile mind. Endeavor to understand the philosophical principles of its early development, and reduce them to practice. Be familiar with children. Become acquainted with their language and modes of thinking, and strive to adapt yourself to their capacities. You may also obtain many valuable hints by reading some of the many excellent works which have been published on the subject of education, some of which are especially designed for Sabbath school teachers.

You must also aim at drawing out the minds of the children, and teaching them to study, and to think, with clearness and precision, for themselves. There is a great difference between conversing with children and talking to them. By the former, you call their minds into exercise, and get hold of their feelings. Thus you will secure their attention. But the latter will be much less likely to interest them; for, being the recipients of thought, instead of thinking for themselves, they participate less in the exercise. By engaging them in conversation, and leading that conversation in the investigation of truth, you teach them to think.

If we simply explain to a child the meaning of a passage of Scripture, the whole benefit lies in the instruction he receives at the time; but, if we show him practically how to ascertain the meaning himself, and bring him under the mental discipline which it requires, we give him a kind of key to unlock the meaning of other passages. By an ingenious mode of catechizing, children's minds may be led to perceive and understand almost any truth much more distinctly and clearly than by any direct explanation which a teacher can make. By catechizing, I do not mean the repeating of catechisms, but the calling out of their minds upon any Scripture truth that may be before them, by a series of simple questions, leading them to see the truth as though they had discovered it themselves. But it should be a leading object to secure the thorough study of the lessons by themselves. The teacher should never answer a question until it has passed round the class; and remarks should be brief, and directly to the point, intended either to bring out the meaning of the Scripture more fully than their answers do, or else to impress the truth practically upon their minds. But never forget that you are dependent upon the Holy Spirit for the proper direction of the powers of your mind. Pray, then, for clearness of perception and discrimination of judgment, that you may understand the truth, and for skill to communicate it to your class. Study every Sabbath school lesson in your closet, with these ends in view. Persevere in your efforts until you become mistress of the art of teaching.

5. To be a successful Sabbath school teacher, you must have a rich, fertile, and growing mind. Nothing else will compensate for the lack of this. You cannot, for any length of time, sustain the interest of a class, unless there is a constant growth in your own mind. If there is a continued repetition of the same thoughts, remarks, or exhortations, you will soon grow dull and

uninteresting. But, in regard to the manner in which this is to be accomplished, I must refer you to a subsequent chapter, on mental improvement.

6. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the lesson. Study the portion of Scripture which is to be the subject of your lesson, with all the helps you can obtain, until you have satisfied your mind on every point involved in it, and until you can answer every question which you intend to propound to your scholars. Unless you do this habitually, you cannot be qualified for a teacher. If the teachers of the school with which you are connected hold a meeting of mutual consultation upon the lesson, never fail to attend, when it is in your power. These meetings are essential to a well-conducted and successful Sabbath school; and, when properly managed, they are both interesting and profitable to those who attend them. And you will contribute very much to this interest and profit, if you are always present, with your lesson thoroughly studied.

7. Let your own heart be affected with the truth you are endeavoring to teach. Upon this, so far as your instrumentality is concerned, greatly depends your success. Unless you feel the force of the truth yourself, it will be very difficult for you to convince your scholars that you are in earnest. While preparing the lesson in your closet, endeavor to obtain a realizing sense of the personal interest which you and your class have in the subject you are contemplating. See what bearing it has upon their eternal destiny, as well as your own; and pray for the Holy Spirit to impress it powerfully upon your heart. Always, if possible, spend a little season in your closet, as an immediate preparation for the duties of the Sabbath school. Get your heart refreshed, in view of the practical truth contained in the lesson, and go before your class deeply impressed with its solemn import.

8. Make a personal application of the practical truths contained in the lesson, and embrace frequent opportunities of conversing separately and privately with everyone of your scholars in regard to their religious feelings. If they give no evidence of piety, explain to them the duty of immediate repentance and submission to God, and urge them to perform it without delay. Do this under the solemn impression that it may be your last opportunity, and that you will soon meet them at the judgment-seat of Christ.

If you have reason to believe their hearts have been renewed, show them the importance of holy living. Urge upon them the duties of watchfulness, self-examination, studying the Scriptures, and prayer. Show them, also, the necessity of carrying out their religion into every action of their lives. Show them that the design of true religion is to make them better, to give them better dispositions, to keep them humble, and make them more amiable, obedient, and dutiful, in everything. Teach them, also, the great importance of improving their minds while young, to fit them for the service of Christ. You may have before you some future Harriet Newell, or Mrs. Judson, who may willingly surrender all the comforts of this life to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the benighted heathen.

9. Be earnest and importunate for the Holy Spirit to bless your labors. Without this, all your efforts will be in vain. Feel continually that you are but an instrument in the hand of God, and that all your success must depend upon him. Yet he has promised to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Let no day pass without presenting before the throne of grace every individual of your class, rehearsing, as particularly as possible, the circumstances and feelings of each. Visit them as often as you can, and, if possible, persuade them to meet with you once a week for prayer. But make no effort in your own strength. Search well your motives, and see that self-seeking has no place in your heart. If you seek the conversion of your class, that you may be honored as the instrument,

you will be disappointed. God must be glorified in all things.

01.12. Meditation

MEDITATION

Christian meditation is a serious, practical, and devout contemplation of divine things. It was the delight of holy men of old, as it is now delightful to all who set their affections on things above. It is inseparably connected with our growth in grace; for it is by "beholding the glory of the Lord," that we are "changed into the same image." And how can we behold the glory of the Lord, but by the devout contemplation of his infinite perfections? The natural tendency of our minds is to assimilate to those objects which we contemplate. If, then, our thoughts are occupied with earthly things, our minds will be earthly. Moreover, the word of God is "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;" but, if we do not open our eyes to its truths, how can they guide our steps? It is by the practical contemplation of the Scriptures, that we are to understand our duty; and, by a devout contemplation of them, that we are to drink into their spirit, and hold communion with their Author.

Meditation should be incessant. Divine truth is the element in which the devout mind moves, as the fish plays in the depths of the sea, and the bird mounts aloft in the air. When deprived of its accustomed element, the fish is like one thrown upon the dry land; and the bird is like one pent up in a cage. Like the magnetic needle, when violently turned from the pole, such a mind will revert to the object of attraction, when the force which held it is removed. Its tendency is upward, as the needle to the pole. David says of the godly man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night. "O, how love I your law! it is my meditation all the day." This is true Christian feeling; and we ought to be in such a frame continually that our minds will dwell voluntarily upon the precious doctrines, facts, precepts, and promises, of the word of God. But, so long as we are beset with temptations without, and compelled to maintain a warfare with indwelling corruptions, we must labor and watch, with great diligence, to maintain a devout mind, and keep our hearts affected with spiritual things.

Indeed, nothing is to be attained, in the divine life, in our present state, without great labor and strife; "for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another; so that you cannot do the things that you would." One of the most difficult matters in Christian experience is to keep the mind habitually upon heavenly things, while engaged in worldly employments, or surrounded by objects which affect the senses. Satan will be continually seeking to divert your mind, and indwelling corruptions will rebel. Vain thoughts will intrude; but if you hate them, and love the law of the Lord, you will not allow them to lodge with you. The Bible saints were fervent in spirit, even while engaged in business; and we have accounts of pious people in every age, who have been like them. This is for our encouragement; for what they have done, we, by the grace of God, may do likewise. A heavenly mind is worth the labor of many years. Rest not until you attain it.

Meditation should be mingled with all our devotional reading, particularly with our reading of the Holy Scriptures. And it is well, in the morning, to fix upon some subject, or some passage of Scripture, for the mind to dwell upon, while we are engaged in our ordinary pursuits. But, in

addition to this, it is profitable to set apart particular seasons every day, or as often as practicable, for fixed and holy meditation. We have examples of this among the saints of old; and they embraced the most favorable opportunities for this devout exercise. Isaac went out into the field to meditate in the stillness and solemnity of the evening. David sometimes chose the calmness of the morning. At other times, he fixed his thoughts in holy meditation during the wakeful hours of the night. "I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches." "All night long I lie awake, to meditate on your word." But this is a work of so much difficulty, requiring such labor of mind, that it is probable you will neglect it, unless you set apart stated and regular seasons for the purpose, and consider them as devoted to this sacred exercise. Select some subject, and think upon it deeply, systematically, practically, and devoutly. 'System' is a great assistance in everything. We can never obtain clear views of any complex object without separately viewing the various parts of which it is composed. We cannot see the beautiful mechanism of a watch, nor understand the principles which keep it in motion, without taking it in pieces, and viewing the parts separately. So, in contemplating any great truth which contains many different propositions, if we look at them all at once, our ideas will be confused and imperfect; but, if we separate them, and examine one at a time, our views will be clear and distinct. Our meditation must be practical, because every divine truth is calculated to make an impression upon the heart; and, if it fails of doing this, our labor is lost. Make, then, a direct personal application of the truth on which your thoughts are fixed. But our meditations must also be devout. They must be mixed with prayer. As an example of what I mean, I refer you to the 119th Psalm. The Psalmist, in the midst of his meditations, continually lifts up his soul in prayer. His devout aspirations are breathed forth continually. And in proportion as you follow his example, will you succeed in this heavenly employment. As for the subjects of meditation, the word of God furnishes an endless variety. You may, however, find advantage, in your seasons of fixed and solemn meditation, by fastening your mind on some particular portion of divine truth, and carrying it out in its various relations and applications. In my little work entitled "The Closet," which has grown out of a sense of my own needs, I have selected and arranged a considerable variety of topics, from which you may find some assistance. These are, however, intended as mere suggestions, and are, therefore, both imperfectly stated and partially carried out. One great difficulty in this exercise is, always to be able to fix the mind on some portion of truth in such a manner as to secure variety, and to contemplate truth in its proper proportions. I have arranged these subjects in such a manner, that, if taken in course, they will lead to the contemplation of divine truth, with some reference to its proper proportions, although they do not completely cover the ground. But any particular topic can be selected, according to your circumstances or inclination. Many of the subjects are divided under various heads; and, in some cases, one or two heads may be found sufficient for one season of meditation. But no mere mechanical attention to the matter, as a task imposed upon yourself, will be of any avail. Your heart must be in it—and then it will be an easy and delightful service.

01.13. Bodily Health

BODILY HEALTH A healthy and vigorous state of the body is important to a high degree of usefulness. The services which God requires of us, as laborers in his vineyard, are such as to call for vigor of body and strength of mind. A feeble state of health, other things being equal, must be a hindrance in the divine life. True, the Lord may make use of it as a chastisement, and so overrule it for our spiritual growth. But, with an equal degree of faithfulness, the healthy person has a great advantage over the unhealthy and feeble, in the pious life. When the bodily powers are prostrated, the mind suffers with them; and many of the supposed spiritual maladies, which afflict the people of God, probably arise from bodily infirmity. But especially do we need bodily health, in our endeavors to benefit others. Works of usefulness are generally attended with laborious effort, either of body or of mind, or both; and frequently they require the sacrifice of personal ease, and those comforts of life which are necessary to the invalid. It is true that some individuals have lived very devoted lives, and been eminently useful, with frail and sickly bodies. But this does not prove that, with the same degree of faithfulness, and a sound body, they might not have made much higher attainments, and been much more useful. I think no one can read the memoirs of Baxter, Brainerd, Martyn, and Payson, without receiving the impression that, with the spirit which they possessed, in strong and vigorous bodies, they might have done much more good than they did, and perhaps arrived at a much higher degree of personal sanctification. During much of their lives, they were borne down and depressed by feeble health, and all but one of them died in the prime of life. But suppose them to have been as devoted as they were, with strong and vigorous constitutions, until they had arrived at the period of old age; might they not have brought forth much more fruit? Then God would have been so much the more glorified in them; for Christ says, "Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." Is it not our duty, then, to use all proper means for maintaining a sound, healthful, and vigorous bodily constitution? True, life and health, as well as every other blessing, come from God; but he does not bestow them without the intervention of second causes. He has made our physical nature subject to certain fixed laws; and when even his own children violate these laws, he will work no miracle to preserve their health or save their lives. We have no right to act on the supposition that our lives are our own; and that the injury we bring upon our bodies, by imprudence and neglect, concerns nobody but ourselves. Our bodies, as well as our spirits, belong to God, by virtue of creation, preservation, redemption, and personal consecration. We are, therefore, bound to use all lawful means for the preservation of life and health, that both may be prolonged for the glory of God and the benefit of our fellow-creatures.

But, when I speak of the means to be used for the preservation of health, I do not intend that excessive attention to remedies which leads so many people to resort to medicine upon every slight illness. But I mean the study of the laws or principles of our physical existence, and a diligent care to live according to those laws. In short, I mean living according to nature. Disease is the consequence of living contrary to nature; and probably a large proportion of the sickness which prevails might be directly traced to the violation of the great laws which govern our present mode of existence.

Within the compass of a single chapter I cannot be very particular on this subject. But I would recommend to you to read approved writers on health, and endeavor to understand the principles upon which this truly wonderful machine is kept in motion. You will find the subject interesting. You will see the evidence of a mighty intellect in the construction of the human body. You will also be able to draw from it practical lessons to guide you in the most common concerns of life. I am the more earnest in this recommendation, because I think you will discover that many of those habits and customs of society, which are peculiarly under the control of ladies, need reforming. I am seriously of the opinion that the general health of society depends far more upon the ladies than upon the physicians. The former direct the preparation of the daily supplies of food designed to sustain, refresh, and keep in motion the human system. The latter can only give prescriptions for regulating this delicate machinery, when, by mismanagement, it has got out of order.

But, in advising you to read on health, I would caution you against taking up medical writers, containing the description of diseases and their symptoms, and, comparing these descriptions with your own feelings, to ascertain whether you have the symptoms of the diseases of which you are reading. Such a course would almost certainly work on your imagination, and make you hypochondriac, if not actually induce the diseases themselves.

But, without further prologue, I will give a few simple rules for the preservation of health, which, though incomplete, will be of great benefit, if faithfully followed. From experience, study, and observation, you will, no doubt, be able to add to them many improvements.

I. Make attention to health a matter of conscience, as a religious duty. Pray for wisdom and self-denial, that you may be able to avoid whatever is injurious, and to persevere in the judicious use of such means as are necessary to promote sound health and energy of body.

II. Maintain habitual cheerfulness and tranquility of mind. Perhaps few people are fully aware of the influence which this has upon the health of the body. The opinion has been advanced that the stomach is affected chiefly by the influence of the brain on the nervous system. If this theory is correct, it adds very much to the importance of the suggestions under this head. If you are constitutionally inclined to melancholy, endeavor to avoid it as a sin dishonoring to God and destructive of your own health and happiness. It is dishonoring to God, because it is calculated to give the world a gloomy and repulsive idea of religion. It is sinful, because it destroys confidence in God, and leads to repining.

Melancholy differs entirely from sorrow for sin, sympathy for distress, and concern for the perishing. Godly sorrow is a melting exercise, which softens the heart, and brings it low before God; while a sight of the cross of Christ, and a sense of pardoning love, bring a holy calm and heavenly peace over the soul. But despondency comes over us like the withering blasts of winter. It congeals the tender emotions of the heart, and casts an icy gloom over every object. It hides from our view everything lovely. It makes us insensible to the mercies of God which he is daily lavishing upon us. It shuts up the soul to brood alone, over everything dark and hideous. It is no less unfriendly to the exercise of holy affections, than levity of conversation and manners. Although often created by bodily infirmity, it reacts, and renders disease doubly ferocious. Yet it is so far under the control of the will, that grace will enable us to subdue it.

There is a very intimate connection between the mind and body. The one acts upon the other. Depression of spirits enfeebles all the physical powers, and particularly disturbs digestion, thereby deranging the whole system. If, therefore, you ever feel a gloomy depression of spirits, try to bring your mind into a serene and grateful frame, by meditating on the mercies you enjoy, and exercising a cheerful submission to the will of God. Remember that God directs all your ways, and that you have just as much of every comfort and blessing as he sees fit to give you, and infinitely more than you deserve. Rise above yourself, and think of the infinite loveliness of the divine character. But, if this is not sufficient, walk out and view the works of nature, and try to forget yourself in contemplating the wisdom and glory of God, as manifest in them; and the bodily exercise will assist in driving away this disturber of your peace. Or seek the society of some Christian friend, who is not subject to depression of spirits, whose heavenly conversation may lead you to lose sight of yourself in the fullness and glory of God. But avoid, at such times, the society of those who, like yourself, are subject to depression, unless they have made so much progress in subduing this infirmity as to be able not only to sympathize with you, but to give you encouragement. Sympathy alone will but increase the evil. Any violent emotion of the mind, or exercise of strong passions of any kind, is likewise exceedingly injurious to the health of the body.

III. Be REGULAR in all your habits. Ascertain, as nearly as you can, from your own feelings and experience, how many hours of sleep you require. No general rule can be adopted on this subject. Some people need more sleep than others. The lack of sleep—or excessive indulgence in it—alike operate to enervate both body and mind. Probably every constitution may be safely brought between five and eight hours. Of this you will judge, by making a fair trial. That period of sleep which renders both body and mind most energetic and vigorous should be adopted. John Wesley states that he was, in the early part of his life, in the habit of sleeping late in the morning; but that he found himself wakeful and restless in the middle of the night, and nervous all day. He commenced rising earlier every morning, until he could sleep soundly all night, and found himself much improved in health. He went farther, and endeavored still more to diminish his sleep; but the effect was to render him weak and nervous. He continued, through a long life, to rise at four, with improved health and spirits. But young people require more sleep than those in advanced life. If possible, take all your sleep in the night. Fix upon an hour for retiring and an hour for rising, and then conscientiously keep them. Let nothing but stern necessity tempt you to vary from them in a single instance; for you may not be able in a week to recover from the effects of a single derangement of your regular habits.

We are the creatures of habit; but if we would control our habits, instead of allowing them to control us, it would be greatly to our advantage. It is also important that the hours of retiring and rising should be early. Upon the plan proposed, early retiring will be necessary to early rising, which is a matter of the first importance. Early rising promotes cheerfulness, invigorates the system, and in many other ways contributes to health. It also assists devotion. There is a solemn stillness before the dawn of day, in a winter morning, peculiarly favorable to devotional feelings; and nothing is better calculated to fill the mind with grateful and adoring views of the beneficence of the Creator, than the refreshing sweetness of a summer morn. Whoever sleeps away this period, loses half the pleasures of existence. To sally forth and enjoy the calmness and serenity of such a season; to listen to the sweet warbling of the birds; to behold the sparkling dewdrops, and the gayety of the opening flowers, as all nature smiles at the approach of the rising sun; to join the

music of creation, in lifting up a song of softest, sweetest melody, in praise of their great Author, is no common luxury.

IV. Spend at least two hours every day in active EXERCISE in the open air. This time may be divided into such portions as you find most convenient. The proper seasons for exercise are, about an hour either before or after a meal. This you may do without regard to the weather, provided you observe the following precautions, when it is cold, damp, or wet: 1. Exert yourself sufficiently to keep moderately warm. 2. Do not stop on your way, or you will get chilled. 3. On returning, change any garment that may be wet or damp, before sitting down. This course will not only keep up your regular habits, but produce a hardiness of constitution which will greatly increase your usefulness in life. It is a great mistake to suppose that exposure to a damp, vapory atmosphere is injurious to health. The danger lies in exposing yourself when the system is in a relaxed state, as it is during rest after exercise. But, while a general action is kept up by vigorous exercise, nature itself will resist the most unfriendly vapors of the atmosphere.

There is a great and growing evil in the education of ladies of the middling and higher classes, at the present day. The tender and delicate manner in which they are bred enfeebles their constitutions, and greatly diminishes their usefulness in every station of life. Many of them are sickly, and few of them are able to endure the slightest hardships. To show that this is the fault of their education, we need only refer to the condition of those young women whose circumstances in life render it necessary for them to labor. In most cases, they possess hale and vigorous constitutions, and are even more capable of enduring hardships than most men of sedentary habits. There may be some exceptions to this remark; but, in these cases, we know not what other causes have contributed to a contrary result. As a general fact, I think the remark will hold good; though it is equally true that excessive labor and exposure, in the period of youth, often destroy the health. I do not see how the delicate training to which I have alluded can be reconciled with Christian principle. If we have devoted ourselves to the Lord, it is our duty not only to do all the good we can in the world, but to make ourselves capable of doing as much as possible. The man in the parable was condemned for not improving and increasing his talent. Anything, then, which has a tendency to diminish our usefulness should be regarded as sin. Exposure to all kinds of weather has this advantage also—it renders a person much less likely to take cold, and, of course, less subject to sickness; for a great proportion of diseases owe their origin to common colds. No part of a code of health is of more importance than exercise. Without it, everything else will fail. And it is as necessary that it should be regular, every day, and at nearly the same hours every day, as it is that meals should be regular. We might as well omit eating for a day as to neglect exercise. The one is as necessary as the other to promote the regular operations of the physical functions.

But, when your situation will admit of it, I would advise you to take a portion of your exercise in those domestic employments which require vigorous exertion. If you open your windows, you will have the fresh air; at the same time, you will enjoy the satisfaction of rendering your hours of relaxation useful.

Every lady, whatever may be her situation in life, ought to have a practical knowledge of household affairs; and no one will be any the less respected by those whose opinion is worth caring for, on account of employing her hands in any department of housekeeping. Nor will any

young lady be more highly esteemed for avoiding labors of this kind, especially if the labors and cares of her mother should in consequence be increased.

V. Bathe frequently. About five-eighths of the food taken into the stomach passes off, by insensible perspiration, through the pores of the skin; and with it is thrown off whatever impure matter is found in any part of the system. When this perspiration is obstructed, general derangement succeeds. It is chiefly to promote this, that exercise is required. But the matter thrown off is of a very poisonous nature, and, if not removed, may be absorbed again into the system. It also collects upon the surface, and obstructs the regular discharge from the pores. Frequent bathing is, therefore, highly necessary.

It is also essential to personal cleanliness. There is an odor in this insensible perspiration, which becomes offensive when the impurities collecting upon the surface of the skin are not frequently removed. The entire surface of the body should be washed every day; and, if this is done, on rising in the morning, with cold water, and followed by brisk rubbing with a coarse towel, it will furnish an effectual safeguard against taking cold. This, however, should be omitted when there is any danger to be apprehended from the sudden application of cold, or serious consequences may follow. Warm water, with soap, should occasionally be used at night, in order to remove all impurities from the skin.

VI. Pay attention to the quality and quantity of FOOD taken into the stomach. Nothing more necessarily affects both the health of the body and the vigor of the intellect. It is from this that the blood is formed, and the continual waste of the system supplied. And through the blood it acts on the brain, which is supposed to be the seat of the intellect. Yet, notwithstanding this, those whose peculiar province it is to direct the preparation of our food, seldom inquire into the chemical effect any such preparation may have upon the stomach, and, through it, upon the whole system. Indeed, the business is generally left to people entirely ignorant of chemistry and the principles which govern the human constitution. It is no wonder, then, that a large proportion of our culinary preparations are decidedly unfriendly to it. But, in relation to this matter, I cannot here be very particular. I will only give some general rules, by which you may discover the bounds of moderation, and what articles of food ought to be avoided. The effect of an excessive quantity of food is first felt by an uneasiness and oppressive fullness of the stomach. These are succeeded by a general distention or fullness of the blood-vessels, particularly about the head, general lassitude, sluggishness and dullness of intellect, with a great aversion to mental effort. These sensations are accompanied by a general uneasiness throughout the whole system, with more or less pain. It also seriously affects the temper. It makes people fretful, impatient, and peevish. The best disposition may be ruined by the improper indulgence of the appetite. I have been particular in describing these symptoms, because people are often subject to many uncomfortable sensations, for which they cannot account, but which might be traced to this source. A large share of our unpleasant feelings probably arise either from the improper quality or excessive quantity of the food taken into the stomach; and the bounds of moderation are more frequently exceeded by all classes of people than many imagine. But, for a more full examination of this subject, I must again refer you to the works of judicious writers on health, and the means of preserving it. This is a matter so intimately connected with the sphere of a lady's influence, that every female should give it a careful examination.

Take care to observe those articles of food which you find injurious, and avoid them. Observe, also, as nearly as you can, the quantity which agrees with your stomach, and see that you never exceed it. Take no food between your regular meals. The stomach is employed from three to five hours in digesting a meal; and if more food is taken during that time, it disturbs and impedes digestion, making it more laborious. And, after one meal is digested, the stomach needs rest before another is taken. In connection with these general hints, attention to the two following rules will generally be sufficient—

1. Avoid highly-seasoned food, hot condiments, and stimulating drinks.
2. Select the simplest dishes, and make your meal of a single course. Mixed dishes are more likely to be injurious; and a second course will almost certainly lead to excess. But do not give your attention so much to this subject as to become contentious. The imagination has a great influence upon physical feeling; and, if you are always watching the digestion of your food, you will be sure to find dyspeptic symptoms; and, by humoring your stomach too much, you will weaken its capacity of accommodating itself to the kind of nutriment it receives. Having fixed your principles of regimen, adhere to them as rigidly as you can without inconvenience to others. But, having done this, let your mind dwell as little as possible on the subject, and do not make it a matter of frequent conversation. Especially do not make trouble to the friends who entertain you, when away from home, by excessive particularity. You may find some wholesome dish on the most luxurious table; and, if the table is lean, you need not fear. As we are commanded, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God, it may not be amiss to inquire how we may glorify God in eating and drinking.

1. We may eat for the purpose of strengthening our bodies, to enable us to engage in the active service of the Lord.
2. When we partake, in moderation, of the bounties of Providence, it is right that our animal appetites should be feasted with the delicious taste of the fruits of the earth. But we must see the glory of God in it. Here the benevolence of his character shines forth in the wonderful provision which he has made for the gratification of our appetites. Hence we may argue the ineffable sweetness of the bread of life—the food of the soul. This mortal body is but a tent pitched in the wilderness, for the residence of the soul during its pilgrimage. If, then, God has opened the treasures of the animal and vegetable kingdoms to please the mere bodily taste—how much more abundant the provision for feasting the soul with pure spiritual food—with eternally-increasing knowledge of the divine character and perfections! But we cannot so partake of those rich and hurtful dainties invented by man. The delight thus experienced is the glory of man, not of God. And the effect produced is the destruction of those delicate organs of taste, which he has provided that we may discern the exquisite sweetness of the natural fruits of the earth. By the same means, also, we destroy our health, and unfit ourselves for his service. 3. But I suppose the apostle had in his mind chiefly the idea of acknowledging God when we partake of his bounty, and of honoring him by doing everything in obedience to his commands. Strict and intelligent regard to these points would generally direct us aright in the matter of eating and drinking. Do not, by any means, think this subject beneath your attention. The greatest and best of men have made it a matter of practical study. Those who have given us the brightest specimens of intellectual effort have been remarkable for rigorous attention to their diet. Among them may be mentioned Sir Isaac Newton,

John Locke, and Jonathan Edwards. Temperance is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is, therefore, the duty of every Christian to know the bounds of moderation in all things, and to practice accordingly. But it may be necessary to throw in a caution here against excessive abstinence. There is a strong tendency, especially in the ardor of youth, to carry everything to extremes. It is a dangerous experiment to live so low as to enfeeble the physical powers. You may, from such imprudence, suffer through life; or, if attacked with an acute disease when the system is very much reduced, there is no room for depletion, and recovery is extremely difficult.

VII. As much as possible, avoid taking medicine. The practice of resorting to remedies for every unpleasant feeling cannot be too strongly reprobated. Medicine should be regarded as a choice of two evils: it may throw off a violent attack of disease, and save life; but it must inevitably, in a greater or less degree, impair the constitution. Medicine is unnatural and unfriendly to the human system. Its very effect, which is to disturb the regular operation of the bodily functions, proves this. But, when violent disease is seated upon any part, this may be necessary; and the injury received from the medicine may be minimal, in comparison with the consequences which would follow if the disease were left to take its course. In such cases, the physician should be called immediately, as delay may be fatal. But the great secret lies in avoiding such attacks by a scrupulous attention to the laws of nature. Such attacks may generally be traced either to violent colds, or the interruption of some of the regular functions of the body. The most important of these may, with proper attention, be brought almost entirely under the control of habit; and all of them may generally be preserved in healthy action by prudence and care, and proper attention to diet and exercise. But careless and negligent habits in these respects will ruin the most hardy constitution, and bring on a train of disorders equally detrimental to mind and body. But, in most cases of moderate, protracted disease, a return to the regular system of living according to nature will gradually restore lost health; or, in other words, a strict examination will discover some violation of the principles of the human constitution as the cause of derangement; and, by correcting this error, nature will gradually recover its lost energies, and restore soundness to the part affected.

It is proper, however, to remark, in qualification of the foregoing observations, that we are living in a world of death. Sin has deranged the course of nature, and the very elements have turned against us. The seeds of disease are often propagated by hereditary descent. The stimulating causes of disease are floating on the breeze, and concealed in the food and drink which we take to nourish our bodies. It is not always possible, therefore, to trace the origin of a particular disease; nor is it always our own fault when we are sick. But our wisdom is, as much as possible, by the care we take of ourselves, not to excite the latent diseases which lurk within us, and to avoid everything which we know tends to their development. It is, therefore, important that we study our own constitution. For this purpose, it may be of great benefit to consult a skillful physician—even in apparent health.

01.14. Mental Cultivation. READING

Mental Cultivation. READING In the parable of the talents, our Lord teaches us that we shall be called to account for all the means of usefulness he has bestowed upon us, and that we are under obligation not only to employ our talents in his service, but to increase them as we have opportunity. Among these talents stand foremost the powers of mind which he has given us; and therefore, if we neglect the proper cultivation of our intellectual faculties, we shall come under the condemnation of the servant who hid his talent in the earth. But, when I speak of the improvement of the mind, I do not mean reading merely, but such discipline as will call into exercise the intellectual powers, and enable us to employ them in the investigation of the truth. This discipline is a necessary preparation for profitable reading.

It is a great mistake to suppose that mental ability is entirely innate, or that only a few possess intellectual faculties capable of searching into the deep recesses of knowledge. It is true, some have talents of a superior order; but none, except idiots, are incapable of improvement; and many of the greatest minds have been formed upon a foundation which appeared, in the early stages of their education, to consist of little else than dullness and stupidity. The most crooked and unpromising twig may, by proper care and culture, become a great and beautiful tree. The proper objects of education are, to give the ability of acquiring knowledge, and to prepare for usefulness. We are not to disregard ourselves; and knowledge is an object of intrinsic value to us. God is glorified in us in proportion as we are filled with knowledge and spiritual understanding. But we are to love others as ourselves, and seek their good as our own. Although our heads may be filled with knowledge, yet, if we have not the capacity of employing it for practical purposes, it will be comparatively of little value. Many people excuse themselves for neglecting to improve their minds, upon the ground that they are incapable of doing anything great or brilliant. But this arises from a foolish pride. If we have but a single talent, we are equally under obligation to improve it in the service of our Master as if we had ten. And it was upon this principle that the servant was condemned to whom but one talent was given. The discipline of which I speak may be effected in many ways. But the method I shall propose is one that can be pursued without an instructor, while employed most of the time in active pursuits. The course already recommended in relation to meditation and the study of the Scriptures, will be found a valuable means of mental discipline. But other means should likewise be employed. I know of nothing which more effectually calls out the resources of the mind, than WRITING. To a person unaccustomed to this exercise it appears very difficult; but a little practice will make it a pleasing and delightful employment. The mind is more deeply interested with its own discoveries or productions than it is with second-hand thoughts, communicated through the medium of the senses; and all the intellectual faculties are strengthened and improved by exertion.

I would therefore advise you to pursue a regular plan of written exercises. This will be very easy, if you only learn to think methodically. Select chiefly practical subjects; which your Sabbath school lessons, your subjects of meditation, and your daily study of the Scriptures, will furnish in great abundance. One reason why young people find this exercise so difficult is, that they select abstract

subjects, which have little to do with the common concerns of life. On this account, it will be greatly to your advantage to choose some Scripture truth as the subject of your exercise. The Bible is a practical book, and we have a personal interest in everything it contains. When you have selected your subject, carefully separate the different parts or propositions it contains, and arrange them under different heads. This you will find a great assistance in directing your thoughts. If you look at the whole subject at once, your ideas will be obscure, indefinite, and confused. But this difficulty will be removed by a judicious division of its parts. Take time, as often as you can, to devote to this exercise; and make up your mind to it, with the determination that you will succeed. Do not indulge the absurd notion that you can write only when you feel like it. Your object is to discipline the mind, and bring it under the control of the will; but this you will never accomplish, if you allow your mind to be controlled by your feelings in the very act of discipline. Finish one division of your subject every time you sit down to the exercise, until the whole is completed; then lay it aside until you have finished another. After this, review, correct, and copy, the first one. The advantage of laying aside an exercise for some time before correcting it is, that you will be more likely to discover its defects than while your first thoughts are fresh in your mind. But never commence a subject, and leave it unfinished. If you do so, you will nourish a fickleness of mind which will unfit you for close study and patient investigation. Finish what you begin, however difficult you may find it, or however unsatisfactory your performance may be when it is done. Scarcely any habit is of more practical importance than perseverance. Do not be discouraged, even if you should be able to bring forth but one idea under each division of your subject. You will improve with every exercise. And you will permit me to say, for your encouragement, that, the first attempt I made at writing, with all the study of which I was capable, I could not produce more than five or six lines. Carefully preserve all your manuscripts. By referring to them occasionally, you will discover your progress in improvement. In these exercises, you can make use of the knowledge you acquire in reading, whenever it applies to your subject. You will find advantage, if you have a friend who is willing to take the trouble of criticizing your performances. But do not be discouraged, if the criticisms should make them appear lowly in your own eyes; neither be displeased with your friend's severity. It will do you good; and, if you persevere, you will always be thankful for the advantage of having your defects pointed out. When you have practiced so as to have acquired considerable facility of expression, it will be a stimulus to effort, occasionally, to send a piece to some periodical for publication. And, if you find your writings acceptable, it will increase your means of usefulness. In my early attempts at writing, I had no instruction, and no one to aid or encourage me; but, from the moment my first piece appeared in print, I felt a stimulus, leading me to exertion which I would never have made without it. But, in everything, remember your dependence upon God, and seek the direction of his Holy Spirit; and carefully guard against being elated with success, or puffed up with the idea that you possess extraordinary talents. Such a notion will only subject you to mortification when you discover your mistake. But, should it be true, it would be no ground of pride; for you have nothing but what you have received from God. What can be more contemptible than being proud of our talents? It is like a beggar being puffed up with the idea that he is rich, because someone has given him a few coppers.

READING is likewise an important means of intellectual improvement. But you should never engage in reading for mere amusement or mental excitement; but have always in view the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of your mind. And, when you read, do not make your mind a mere reservoir, to hold the waters that are poured into it; but, when you read the

thoughts which others have penned, think them over, and make them your own, if they are good, or mark their defects, and reject them, if they are bad. And, when you read history or news, let it always be accompanied with reflections of your own. But the first thing which claims attention is the kind of books to be read. It would hardly seem necessary to caution the class of people I am addressing against the reading of pernicious books; because serious piety generates a chastened taste, which turns away from whatever conflicts with its spirit. Yet, since the question as to what kinds of reading are pernicious is by no means settled in the Christian community, and as the "last new NOVEL" finds a place on the center-tables of many professedly religious people, I have thought it might be useful, in this place, to enter into a discussion of the tendencies of this kind of reading. I shall not stop to define the terms novels and romances, because their popular acceptance is sufficiently definite for my purpose. Nor is it necessary to inquire whether there may not be exceptions to the charges preferred against them; because the objections lie against the general character of a whole class of writings, and grow naturally out of this general character. It would be strange, indeed, if there were no gems of intellect, no fine sentiments, in the deluge of productions emanating from the exuberant imaginations of novel writers; but to attempt to separate the precious from the vile, would be like diving into a common sewer to hunt for pearls!

Says Mr. Hall, "If we would divide the novels of the present day into a thousand parts, five hundred of these parts must be at once condemned as so contemptibly frivolous as to render the perusal of them a most criminal waste of time! Four hundred and ninety-nine of the remaining five hundred parts are positively corrupting in their influence. They are as full of representations which can have no other tendency than to mislead, corrupt, and destroy, those who habitually peruse them. There remains, then, but the thousandth part, in defense of which anything can be said. Perhaps highest merit than that can be attributed to novels, is that they are 'innocent and amusing compositions.' This merit, small as it is, is greater than can be conceded. All books are not innocent, which may be exempt from the charge of disseminating secularism and licentiousness. If they convey false impressions of life, excite a distaste for its duties, and divert the mind from real life to fantasies of its own creation—they are decidedly pernicious! This, to a greater or less extent, is the effect of all novels. Every discerning reader knows this to be the fact."

But, without further preliminary remarks, I proceed to specify some of the objections to novel reading; and, in doing so, I shall endeavor to establish my positions by the testimony of competent witnesses.

1. Novel reading produces a morbid appetite for mental excitement. The object of the novelist generally is, to produce the highest possible degree of excitement, both of the mind and the passions. The effect is very similar to that of intoxicating liquors on the body. Hence the confirmed novel reader becomes a kind of literary inebriate, to whom the things of eternity have no attractions, and whose thirst cannot be slaked, even with the water of life. As intoxication enfeebles the body and engenders indolent habits, so this unnatural stimulus enfeebles the intellectual powers, induces mental indolence, and unfits the mind for vigorous effort. Nothing less stimulating than its accustomed excitement can rouse such a mind to action, or call forth its energies. Being under the influence of such mental intoxication, dethrones and misdirects reason, and destroys the power of self-control.

2. Novel reading promotes a sickly sensibility. A medical writer, speaking of the too powerful excitement of the female mind, says, "In them the nervous system naturally predominates. They are endowed with quicker sensibility, and far more active imagination, than men. Their emotions are more intense, and their senses alive to more delicate impressions. They therefore require great attention, lest this exquisite sensibility, which, when properly and naturally developed, constitutes the greatest excellence of woman—should either become excessive by too strong excitement, or suppressed by misdirected education."

Novel reading produces just the kind of excitement calculated to develop this excessive and diseased sensibility; and the effect is, to fill the mind with imaginary fears, and produce excessive alarm and agitation at the prospect of danger, the sight of distress, or the presence of unpleasant objects; while no place is found for the exercise of genuine sympathy for real objects of compassion. That sensibility which weeps over imaginary woes of imaginary beings, calls forth but imaginary sympathy. It is too refined to be excited by the vulgar objects of compassion presented in real life, or too excitable to be of any avail in the relief of real distress. It may faint at the sight of blood, but it will shrink back from binding up the wound. If you wish to become weak-headed, unstable, and good for nothing, read novels! I have seen an account of a young lady who had become so nervous and excitable, in consequence of reading novels, that her head would be turned by the least appearance of danger, real or imaginary. As she was riding in a carriage over a bridge, in company with her mother and sister, she became frightened at some imagined danger, caught hold of the reins, and backed the carriage off the bridge, down a precipice, dashing them to pieces! This excessive sensibility renders its possessor exquisitely alive to all those influences which are unfriendly to human happiness, while it diminishes the power of endurance. Extreme sensibility, especially in a female, is a great misfortune, rendering the ills of life insupportable. Great care should therefore be taken, that, while genuine sensibility is nourished, its extremes should be avoided, and the mind fortified by strengthening the higher powers. On this subject, Hannah More has the following sensible remarks: "Serious study serves to harden the mind for more trying conflicts; it lifts the reader from sensation to intellect; it abstracts her from the world and its vanities; it fixes a wandering spirit, and fortifies a weak one; it corrects that spirit of trifling which she naturally contracts from the frivolous turn of female conversation, and the petty nature of female employments; it concentrates her attention, assists her in a habit of excluding trivial thoughts, and thus even helps to qualify her for pious pursuits. Yes—I repeat it—there is to woman a Christian use to be made of sober studies; while books of an opposite cast, however unexceptionable they may be sometimes found in point of expression, however free from evil in its more gross and palpable shapes, yet, from their very nature and constitution, they excite a spirit of relaxation, by exhibiting scenes and suggesting ideas which soften the mind and set the imagination at work; they take off wholesome restraints, diminish sober-mindedness, and, at best, feed habits of improper indulgence, and nourish a vain and visionary indolence, which lays the mind open to error and the heart to seduction!"

3. Novel reading gives erroneous views of life. The testimony of Fenelon, on this point, is valuable, as showing that the influence of novels, a hundred years ago, in another country, was the same as it now is among us. He says, "Uninstructed and ignorant girls are always possessed of an erratic imagination. For lack of solid nourishment, all the ardor of their curiosity is directed toward vain and dangerous objects. Those who are not without talent often devote themselves entirely to the

perusal of books which tend to cherish their vanity; they have a passionate fondness for novels, plays, narratives of romantic adventures, in which licentious love occupies a prominent place; in fine, by habituating themselves to the high-flown language of the heroes of romance, their heads are filled with visionary notions. In this way, they even render themselves unfit for society; for all these fine sentiments, these adventures which the author of the romance has invented to gratify the imagination, have no connection with the true motives that excite to action and control the interests of society, or with the disappointments invariably attendant on human affairs. A poor girl, full of the tender and the marvelous, which have charmed her in the perusal of such works—is astonished not to find in the world real characters resembling these heroes. She would wish to live like those imaginary princesses, who, in the fictions of romance, are always charming, always adored, always placed beyond the reach of necessary duties. What must be her disgust when compelled to descend from these flights of fancy—to the humble details of domestic life!" But the following testimony of Goldsmith is, if possible, still more valuable, as the writer's wisdom, like Solomon's, is experimental, he having written one of the least objectionable novels in the English language. "Above all things," he says, in a letter to his brother, "never let your son touch a romance or a novel. These paint beauty in colors more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive, are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the young mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which Fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave. And, in general—take the word of a man who has studied human nature more by experience than precept—take my word for it, I say, that such books teach us very little of the world."

4. Novel reading strengthens the evil passions, weakens the virtues, and diminishes the power of self-control. Multitudes may date their ruin from the commencement of this kind of reading; and many more, who have been rescued from the snare, will regret, to the end of their days, its influence in the early formation of their character. The novel writer, having no higher object in view than to amuse the reader, and being deficient in moral principle, appeals to the imagination and the passions, as the readiest way of access to the heart. A love affair, of some sort, is indispensable to this species of writing. Indeed, both novel writers and novel readers seem to be worshipers at the shrine of an imaginary sentiment, denominated 'love'—but which, if traced to its source, would be found to have a much more questionable origin than the sentiment which leads to marital union. To a very great extent, these works unite in the same person some of the noblest traits of character with secret or open immorality; thus clothing vice in a garb of loveliness, and insensibly undermining virtuous principle. Yet, in many of them, the subtle poison is so diffused as not to be seen by its victims until it is too late to apply a remedy. To substantiate this charge, I shall produce the authority of one whose literary character and position in society gave her the most ample opportunity of judging correctly. Though the principal drift of the following remarks of Mrs. Hannah More is directed against a particular class of these writings, yet, from the commencement, it will be seen that she meant to apply them indiscriminately to novels and romances of every description, at least in their ultimate tendencies. It may be true that, in regard to some of them, the picture is highly wrought; yet the more covert and insidious the poison, the greater is the danger. If there are any, of the whole tribe of novels and romances, which are not obnoxious to these charges, they all fall under those already enumerated; and they will all be found tending towards the imminent dangers here portrayed; for the appetite, once created, will demand still stronger and

stronger stimulus, until it has tasted the whole. It may, however, be safely asserted that no work of imagination, the incidents of which are interwoven with a love affair, can be wholly free from these dangers.

5. Novel reading is a great waste of time. Few will pretend that they read novels with any higher end in view than mere amusement; while, by the strong excitement they produce, they impose a heavier tax on both mind and body than any other species of mental effort. If anything valuable is to be derived from them, it may be obtained with far less expense of time, and with safety to the morals, from other sources. No Christian, who feels the obligation of "redeeming the time because the days are evil," will fail to feel the force of this remark. We have no more right to squander our time and waste our energies in frivolous pursuits, than we have to waste our money in extravagant expenditures. We are as much the stewards of God in respect to the one as the other.

6. Novel reading is a great hindrance to serious piety. Such is the mental intoxication produced by it, that we might as well attempt to reach the conscience of the inebriate with the truths of God's word, as that of the novel reader! The heart that can be feasted on such vile dainties cannot have sufficient relish for the "sincere milk of the word" to "grow thereby." The following testimony bears intrinsic evidence that the writer speaks from experimental knowledge. Mr. Hall says, "The fictions of a disordered imagination annihilate, as it were, the realities of the future world, as well as of the present. They place men, just so far as they produce their legitimate influence, in the midst of idealistic scenes—which are remote from eternal realities. There are objects of idolatry in the land of shadows, which may as effectually exclude the soul from heaven—as the riches of the miser, or the pleasures of the sensualist. It is truly melancholy to think that any should be led by the actual concerns of time to neglect the interests of eternity. How much greater folly, then, to be diverted from so momentous an affair—by mere phantoms of the imagination! That the productions of the novelist have precisely the tendency which I am attributing to them, cannot be denied. I make my appeal with confidence to those who have for a time indulged in such reading, but at length awakened from the spell of the enchantress. Say, did not you find your interest in true religion, to diminish exactly in proportion as your attachment to works of fiction increased? Were not the hours which you devoted to them your hours of greatest stupidity in regard to your souls? Was not the Bible then a tedious and neglected book to you? Did you not shun the praying circle, and your closets, and the society of devout Christians? Were not your thoughts unfixed and wandering in the sanctuary? There will be, I am confident, but one answer to these questions. The experience of thousands will bear witness that the conscience never slumbers so profoundly as over the pages of the novelist! The mind is then insensible alike to the hopes and the fears of eternity. The ear is so full of other sounds, that God is unheard, though he speak. He may even whet his sword of vengeance, but the fascinated victim sees not its terrible gleam!"

If such is the effect of novel reading, how can one, who has solemnly devoted himself to the service of God, spend the precious moments, given him here for discipline and preparation for a higher and nobler sphere, in thus counteracting the gracious designs of God towards his soul? How dangerous thus to parley with temptation! What an example to set before impenitent friends, which, if they follow it, will place an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of their conversion! How ungrateful to Him who "died for all, that those who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again!"

Before leaving this subject, a class of works denominated RELIGIOUS NOVELS claim some attention. They may, perhaps, find more friends among religious people than common romances, because they profess to recommend religion. But, though they may be free from everything gross and directly tending to irreligion or licentiousness, yet it is believed that the same general objections lie against them as against all others. All that has been said of the influence on the imagination and sensibility, of morbid excitement, and of erroneous views of life, lies equally against religious novels! And, besides these, there is another objection, of sufficient weight to counterbalance all that may be said of their unexceptionable morals. It is, that they give false views of religion. Mrs. More, in a note appended to her description of popular novels, says, "It is to be lamented that some, even of those more virtuous novel writers, who intend to espouse the cause of religion, yet exhibit false views of it. I have lately seen a work of some merit in this way, which was meritoriously designed to expose the impieties of the new philosophy. But the writer betrayed his own imperfect knowledge of the Christianity he was defending, by making his hero, whom he proposed as a pattern, fight a duel!" On the same subject, Mr. Hall observes, "I would not except from these remarks those productions which, by a strange misnomer, are called religious novels. They have, in some instances, no doubt, been written by men of piety, and from good motives. Such people have, however, it is but too manifest, in this case, misjudged, and done serious injury to the cause which they meant to advance. The objection which is so strong against other works of fiction, lies with equal weight against them. The views of life which the former give are not more erroneous than the representations of religion contained in the latter. Incalculable evil may be the consequence of this. The effect of turning from those images of Christian perfection, which the religious novel presents, to the mixed characters which even godly men exhibit, must be either petulant censoriousness or distrust of all pretensions to piety. This is not all. Apply the test which should always determine your estimate of books. Do romances of this class increase your attachment to the Bible? Are you able, at any moment, to lay them aside, and resume the sacred volume with undiminished interest? Do they prepare your minds for more delightful communion with God? Do they dispose you to more frequent acts of sympathy and benevolence? If any have, even in a slight degree, experienced such effects, they are examples of an exception to the general law. The testimony on this subject bears with overwhelming preponderance the other way. All, except those who are fascinated to delusion, know that the mind may be full of the excitement which a religious novel awakens, while it is enmity itself against God. The danger that those who feel such emotion may substitute it for the subduing power of the gospel, is one which those only will think trifling who know little respecting the deceitfulness of the human heart." But I would not advise you to read any books, merely because you can obtain no other, nor because there is nothing bad in them. There are many books which contain nothing particularly objectionable, which, nevertheless, are not the best that can be obtained. There are so many books at the present day, that there is no necessity for wasting precious time upon crude, ill-digested, or unprofitable works.

There is such a thing, also, as reading too much. The mind may be filled with ideas and facts which it cannot digest. You may likewise read in such a miscellaneous, desultory manner, as to derive little benefit from it. A house may contain abundance of rich furniture, yet, if it is all stowed away in the attic, it will be of little use. The mind and character may also receive great injury from an undue proportion of such light reading as is useful in its place, but injurious when indulged to excess. The following remarks of Mrs. More deserve serious attention, in this connection: "I

venture to remark, that real knowledge and real piety, though they may have gained in many instances, have suffered in others, from that profusion of little, amusing, sentimental books, with which the youthful library overflows. Abundance has its dangers, as well as scarcity. In the first place, may not the multiplicity of these alluring little works increase the natural reluctance to those more dry and uninteresting studies, of which, after all, the rudiments of every part of learning must consist? And, secondly, is there not some danger (though there are many honorable exceptions) that some of those engaging narratives may serve to infuse into the youthful heart a sort of spurious goodness, a confidence of personal virtues? and that the benevolent actions, with the recital of which they abound, when they are not made to flow from any source but feeling, may tend to inspire a self-delight, a self-gratulation, a 'Stand aside, for I am holier than you'? May not the success with which the good deeds of the little heroes are uniformly crowned, the invariable reward which is made the instant attendant of well-doing, furnish the young reader with false views of the condition of life, and the nature of the divine dealings with men? May they not help to suggest a false standard of morals, to infuse a love of popularity, and a concern for praise, in the place of that simple and unostentatious rule of doing whatever good we do—because it is the will of God"?

It is not my purpose, however, to condemn all works of fiction, nor to censure the judicious cultivation of the imagination and the taste. Fictions of the allegorical and parabolical kind, have their place in the illustration of truth, and are sanctioned by Scripture. Those of another class, which give just representations of life, without the accompaniment of a love story, may, to a limited extent, be allowed. You may, also, devote some time, pleasantly and profitably, to the best English classics, both in poetry and prose, which, for the lack of a better term, I shall include under the head of belles lettres, for the purpose of cultivating the imagination, improving the taste, and enriching your style. These should be selected with great discrimination and care, with reference both to their style and their moral tendency. Poetry, to a limited extent, tends to elevate the mind, nourish the finer sensibilities of the heart, and refine the taste.

But, if you cannot obtain books which furnish you a profitable employment for your hours of leisure, devote them to the study of the Bible. This you always have with you, and you will find it a never-failing treasure. The more you study it, the more delight it will afford. You may find new beauties in it, and "still increasing light," as long as you live; and, after death, the unfolding of its glorious mysteries will furnish employment for a never-ending eternity! The selection of books to be read depends so much on the peculiar circumstances of each individual, that it is not an easy matter to recommend a general list which will meet the needs of all. I would advise you, by all means, to consult your pastor in making your selection. If you are able, it is better to purchase than to borrow the books which you read. You will not be able to keep borrowed books long enough to read them thoroughly, especially if you attempt to carry along together the various kinds, in due proportions, as is desirable; and you can make much more of your reading, if you possess your books, so as to be able to refer to them again. In order to read with profit, you must adopt some plan which will secure a suitable variety. To assist you in forming your plan, I shall arrange my remarks on the various kinds of reading, under the heads of History, Biography, Doctrine, and Miscellany; and you should so regulate your reading as to keep along a suitable proportion of each. Either give to each kind particular days of the week; or, if this does not suit your circumstances, read through one work on one of these branches, and then take a work on

another, and so on, until you have read something on each; and then begin again upon the branch where you commenced. But, if you have the books and the time at your command, I should recommend that you keep on hand something on each of these departments of knowledge, devoting stated times to each. Yet do not suffer your inability to carry out any definite plan which may be recommended, or which you may form, to prevent your attempting a systematic course of reading. Your plans must conform to your circumstances; and you will never be able to accomplish all that you purpose. But never permit yourself to yield to discouragement. With these remarks, I proceed to speak of the several kinds of reading which I have mentioned, each by itself.

I. HISTORY. This is usually considered under three divisions, namely, sacred, ecclesiastical, and profane. The first of these terms is applied to the BIBLE histories; the second, to the history of the church since the canon of Scripture was completed; and the third, to the histories of the world, written by uninspired men. But, as I have already treated of the first, I shall now speak only of the others; both of which are highly necessary to everyone who desires an enlarged view of the affairs of the world, and the dealings of God with mankind in general, and with his church in particular. In reading PROFANE history, observe—

1. The providence of God in directing the affairs of men. Look for the hand of God in everything; for he controls the actions even of wicked men, to accomplish his own purposes. The Bible is full of this great truth. Scarcely a page can be found where it is not recognized. "The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whoever he will." He calls the king of Assyria the "rod of his anger," for chastising the hypocritical Jews; but adds, "Howbeit, he means not so, neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." And, in a subsequent verse, he says, when he has performed his whole work by this wicked king, he will punish his stout heart, and the glory of his high looks. But it is not in great matters alone that the hand of the Lord is to be seen. He exercises a particular providence over the least, as well as the greatest, of his works. Even a single sparrow, says our Lord, shall not fall to the ground without our heavenly Father. And this is one of the brightest glories of the divine character. He who fills immensity with his presence, condescends to care for the minutest beings in the universe.

2. Observe the connection of the events recorded in history with the fulfilment of prophecy. I do not, however, suppose you will be able to see this very clearly, without reading some authors who have made the prophecies their particular study. And this you will not be prepared to do with much profit, until you have the leading events of history fixed in your mind.

3. Observe the depravity of the human heart, and the evil nature of sin, as manifested in the conduct of wicked men, who have been left without restraint, and in the consequences resulting from such conduct.

4. See the hatred of God towards sin, as displayed in the miseries brought upon the world in consequence of it. In reading history, we find that individuals, whom God could have cut off by a single stroke of his hand, have been permitted to live for years, and spread devastation, misery, and death, everywhere around them. The infidel would pronounce this inconsistent with the character of a God of infinite benevolence. But the whole mystery is explained in the Bible: all this wretchedness is brought upon men for the punishment of their sins.

5. Observe the bearing of the events recorded on the church of Christ. One great principle in the divine administration appears to be, that the Lord overrules the affairs of men with reference to the kingdom of Christ. Often, events which seem, at first glance, to be foreign to the interests of his kingdom, appear, upon a closer examination, to be intimately connected with it. Instance the conquests of Alexander the Great. As the life of this extraordinary man stands out alone, unconnected with the subsequent history of the church, we see nothing but the wild career of mad ambition. But, on a more enlarged view of the subject, we discover that he was the instrument which God employed for spreading over a large portion of the world one common language, and so to prepare the way for the introduction of the gospel. Wherever the arms of Alexander extended, the Greek language and Greek literature were made known; thus preparing the way for the universal reception of the gospel, which was first published in that language. Who knows but every event of history has a bearing, equally direct, on the interests of Christ's kingdom?

But, in order to keep all these things before your mind, you must maintain, in the midst of your reading, a constant spirit of prayer. In reading CHURCH history, you will have occasion to observe the same things, because the history of the church is necessarily connected with the history of the world. But there are some things to be noticed, wherein the history of the church differs from that of the world. The dealings of God with his own people differ from his dealings with his enemies. The afflictions which he brings upon the former are the wholesome corrections of a tender father, and designed for their good; those he brings upon the ungodly, are either designed to lead them to repentance, or they are just judgments, intended for the destruction of those who have filled up the measure of their iniquities. But be careful, in reading church history, that you do not lose sight of the true church of Christ. Many of the histories which have been written are filled either with accounts of individuals, or of bodies of wicked men who could lay no claim to the character of the church of Christ. A church consists of a society of people professing the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and practicing them in their lives; or, in other words, having both the form and power of godliness. Without these, no body of men have any right to be called the church of Christ. If you observe this, you will relieve yourself from much perplexity of mind, which the careless reader experiences, from supposing that all the evils described in any period of the history of the nominal church do really exist in the true church. For, during many ages, of which church history treats, the true church appears to have been confined chiefly to small bodies of poor and persecuted people, who were regarded as heretics; while the nominal church had departed from both the faith and practice of the true gospel. I do not mean to say that there may not be many evils, and some wicked men, in the true church; but, when the body generally is corrupt, it cannot be acknowledged as the church of Christ. The church is compared to the human body; and, if the whole body is corrupt, all the limbs must be; though there may be some withered or decaying limbs, while the body is sound.

II. CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY is, perhaps, the best kind of practical reading. It is, in many respects, very profitable. It furnishes testimony to the reality and value of the religion of Jesus, by the exemplification of the truths of revelation in the lives of its followers. It also points out the difficulties which beset the Christian's path, and the means by which they can be surmounted. Suppose a traveler just entering a dreary wilderness. The path which leads through it is exceedingly narrow, and difficult to be kept. On each side it is beset with thorns, and briars, and miry pits. Would he not rejoice to find a book containing the experience of former travelers who

had passed that way, in which every difficult spot is marked, all their contests with wild beasts and serpents, and all their falls, described, and a warning sign set up wherever a beaten track turns aside from the true way? All this you may find in Christian biographies. There the difficulties, trials, temptations, falls, and deliverances, of God's people are described. You may profit from their examples.

Yet even these works must be read with some caution. Bear in mind that you are reading the history of fallible men, whose example and experience are to be followed no farther than they agree with the word of God. If you find anything contrary to this unerring standard, reject it. Satan is ever busy, and may deceive even good men with false experiences. Besides, there is, in everyone's religious experience, a great mixture of human infirmity. It is seldom, and perhaps never, the case that these experiences are, in all respects, what they ought to be. Some, whose lives have been written, dwell too much on the dark side of their characters, and others too much on the bright side; some are tinged with melancholy, and others may not show as much as they ought the depths of the human heart. Others are greatly marred by defective views of truth. They will be very profitable to you, if read with judgment and discrimination, and carefully compared with the Scriptures; but, if you take for granted that all their experiences were right, and therefore attempt to imitate them, they may lead you astray. You will find it profitable generally to keep on hand a volume of biography, and read a few pages at your daily seasons of devotion.

III. In relation to DOCTRINAL READING, I have already given general directions. I will only remark, in this place, that you must give it a prominent place in your systematic course of reading.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS READING. You may profitably keep on hand some approved practical work on Christian character, experience, or duty, to be read alternately with religious biography, as part of the devotional exercises of the closet. Illustrations of Scripture you will need in connection with the study of your Sabbath school lessons; and the lighter works, here recommended, you can take up as a relaxation from severe mental effort. You will need, likewise, to read newspapers and periodical publications sufficiently to keep in your mind the history of your own times, and to understand the subjects which interest the public mind, as well as to observe the signs of the times in relation to the progress of Christ's kingdom. But, if you are careful of your shreds of time, you may accomplish this at intervals when you could not sit down to a book. But do not allow yourself to acquire an unhealthy appetite for this kind of reading, and by no means attempt to read everything contained in these publications; but cast your eye over them, with the swiftness, dexterity, and skill, with which the bee lights on the flower; and in imitation of his industry and prudence, do not tarry where you find no honey.

Newspapers and periodicals contain much trash; and you may easily fritter away all your leisure time upon them—to the great injury of your mind and heart! Endeavor to acquire the habit of reading them rapidly, and of passing over at a glance what is not worth reading. But especially beware of the popular tales with which many of these publications abound. All the objections against novels lie equally against them; and if you begin to indulge in reading them, you know not where it will end. Religious papers, and periodicals containing missionary intelligence, are, however, generally worthy of an attentive perusal. The work laid out in the foregoing pages may seem so great, at first sight, as to discourage you from making the attempt. But a little calculation will remove every difficulty. If you read but twenty pages in a day, at the close of the year you will

have read more than six thousand; which would be equal to twenty volumes of three hundred pages each. Pursue this plan for ten years, and you will have read two hundred volumes, containing sixty thousand pages. You can, at least, read twenty pages in an hour; and I think you will not say it is impossible to spare this portion of time every day, for the purpose of acquiring useful knowledge. Think what a vast amount may thus be treasured up in the course of a few years.

You will find it a profitable exercise to keep a journal, and at the close of every day, or some time the next day, write the substance of what you have read briefly from memory, together with such reflections as occur to your mind while reading, particularly the several points to be noted in history, and the lessons which you learn from biography and other practical writings. But, to do this, or, indeed, to profit much by reading—you must take sufficient time thoroughly to understand what you read.

01.15. Improvement of TIME

IMPROVEMENT OF TIME. PRESENT OBLIGATION. When you entered into solemn covenant with the Lord, you consecrated your whole being to his service. Your time, then, is not your own, but the Lord's. If you waste it, or spend it unprofitably—you rob God; for it is one of the talents which he has entrusted to you as his steward. You are not at liberty even to employ it exclusively for yourself; but you must glorify God in the use of it, which you will do by employing it in the way that will be most beneficial to your whole being, and to your fellow-creatures. I need not caution you against wasting your time in vain amusements or frivolous pursuits; for, addressing myself, as I do, to those who have commenced the Christian life, I can hardly suppose it possible that they should have any inclination to do so. The Christian who properly considers the great work he has to perform in his own soul, as well as the wide field of benevolent exertion which opens everywhere around him, and reflects how exceedingly short his time is—will not be disposed to trifle away its precious moments. Hence we are exhorted to redeem, or rescue, the time, as it flies. A very common fault lies in not estimating the value of a moment. This leads to the waste of immense portions of precious time. It is with time as with an estate. The old adage is, "Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves." So, if we take care of the moments, the hours will take care of themselves. Our whole life is made up of moments. A little calculation may startle those who carelessly trifle away small portions of time. Suppose you waste only ten minutes at a time, six times in a day; this will make an hour. This hour is subtracted from that portion of your time which might have been devoted to active employments. Sleep, refreshment, and personal duties, generally occupy at least one half of the twenty-four hours. You have, then, lost one-twelfth of the available portion of the day. Suppose you live to the age of seventy years. Take from this the first ten years of your life. From the sixty remaining years, you will have thrown away five years! These five years are taken from that portion of time which should have been employed in the cultivation of the mind, and in the practical duties of piety! The common excuse for neglecting the improvement of the mind and the cultivation of personal piety, is the lack of time. Were you to employ one half of this time in reading, at the rate of twenty pages an hour, you would be able to read more than eighteen thousand pages, or sixty volumes, of three hundred pages each. If you employ the other half in devotional exercises, in addition to the time you would spend in this manner, upon the supposition that these five years are lost, what an influence will it have upon your personal piety! Or, if you spend the whole of it in the active duties of Christian benevolence, how much good may you accomplish! Think what you might do by employing five years in the undivided service of your Master. But the grand secret of redeeming time lies in systematic arrangements. The wise man says, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." If we so divide our time as to assign a particular season for every employment, we shall be at no loss, when one thing is finished, what to do next; and one duty will not crowd upon another. For lack of this system, many people suffer much needless perplexity. They find a multitude of duties crowding upon them at the same time, and they know not where to begin to discharge them. Much of their time is wasted in considering what they shall do. They are always in a hurry and bustle; yet, when the day is gone, they have not half finished its duties. All

this would have been avoided, had they parceled out the day, and assigned particular duties to particular seasons. They might have gone quietly to their work, pursued their employments with calmness and serenity, and, at the close of the day, laid themselves down to rest, with the satisfaction of having discharged every duty.

Form, then, a systematic plan, to regulate your daily employments. Give to each particular duty its appropriate place; and, when you have finished one, pass rapidly to another, without losing any precious intervals between. Bear in mind that every moment you waste will make your life, or the period of your probation, so much shorter; and every moment you redeem will be adding so much to it. Yet do not try to crowd too much into the compass of a single day. You will always be liable to numerous and unavoidable interruptions. You have friends, who claim a portion of your time: it is better to interrupt your own affairs, than to treat them rudely. You have also many accidental duties, which you cannot bring into the regular routine of your employments. Give, then, sufficient latitude to your system to anticipate these, so that your affairs may not be thrown into confusion by their unexpected occurrence. The duty of being systematic in our arrangements is enforced by several considerations—

1. By the example of our Creator. In the first chapter of Genesis, you will see that God assigned a particular portion of the creation to each day of the week, and that he rested on the seventh day. He could as easily have made all things at once, by a single word of his power, as to have been occupied six days in the creation. As for resting the seventh day, the Almighty could not be weary, and therefore needed no rest. What, then, could have been his design, but to set us an example of order? Our Savior also set a beautiful example of order, on the morning of his resurrection. Those who first went into the sepulcher found the linen clothes lying in one place, and the napkin folded and laid by itself.

2. This duty is also enforced by the analogy of the visible creation. The most complete and perfect system, order, and harmony, may be read in every page of the book of nature. From the minutest insect, up, through all the animal creation, to the structure of our own bodies, there is a systematic arrangement of every particle of matter. So, from the little pebble that is washed upon the sea-shore, up to the loftiest mountain, and even to the whole planetary system, the same truth is manifest.

3. This duty is enforced by our obligation to employ all our time for the glory of God. If we neglect it, we lose much precious time, which might have been employed in the service of the Lord.

NATURE OF OBLIGATION. The very idea of obligation supposes the possibility of the thing being done, that is required. There can be no such thing as our being under obligation to do what is, in its own nature, impossible. This principle is recognized by our Lord in the parable of the talents. The man only required of his servants according to their ability. Nothing, then, is duty, except what can be done at the present moment. There are other things which may be duty hereafter; but they are not present duty. The obligation of duty, therefore, rests on the present moment. This is a principle of great importance in practical life. It lies at the foundation of all Christian effort. It is the neglect of it which has ruined thousands of immortal souls, who have sat under the sound of the gospel. It is the neglect of it which prevents Christians from rising to the true standard of personal piety. If it is the duty of a sinner to repent, it is his duty to do it now; and every moment's delay is a new act of rebellion against God. If it is the duty of a backslider to return and humble himself

before God, it is his duty to do it now; and, every moment he delays, he is going farther from God, and rendering his return more difficult. If it is the duty of a Christian to live near to God, to feel his presence, to hold communion with him, to be affected with the infinite beauty and excellence of his holy nature, the obligation of that duty rests on the present moment. Every moment's delay is sin. And so of every other duty. Our first object, then, is to know present duty; our second, to do it. We cannot put off anything which we ought to do now, without bringing guilt on our souls. An eminent living minister has said, "What ought to be done can be done." When taken in connection with a proper sense of dependence upon God, this is true; and, when adopted as a principle of Christian conduct, it is a truth of great practical force. The person who acts constantly under the impression of this maxim, will never be moved by obstacles in his way, when he is satisfied that anything ought to be done. He will always be efficient in action; nor will he live in vain—but his life will show that something can be done.

01.16. Christian Activity

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY The spirit of Christianity, at the present day, is distinguished for its enterprises of benevolence. Whoever drinks deeply into the spirit of his Master, will find his soul going out in fervent desire for the melioration of human wretchedness, and the salvation of perishing souls. Whatever tends to the accomplishment of these objects will, therefore, be regarded as of deep interest. Indifference towards the enterprises of love, which the benevolent spirit of this age has brought into existence, must, therefore, indicate a destitution of the spirit of Christ, without which we are none of his. It is important, then, that we should know what we can do towards advancing these enterprises; for obligation is coextensive with ability. Christ commended the woman who poured the ointment on his head for doing "what she could." If you do more than any within the circle of your acquaintance, and yet leave undone anything that you can do, you do not discharge your obligations. You have entered into the service of the Lord, and he requires you to do what you can. It, then, becomes a matter of serious inquiry, "What can I do?" It is an interesting fact that the benevolent operations to which I have alluded have, to a great extent, been sustained by the energy of female influence. This influence is felt in every department of society wherever Christianity has elevated your gender to the station which properly belongs to them. Yet, where correct principles prevail, it will be exerted in an unostentatious, noiseless manner, without assuming to act in a sphere which "nature itself teaches" does not belong to woman. I will, therefore, endeavor to point out some of the principal channels through which female influence may, with propriety, be put forth for the promotion of benevolent objects.

I. You may make your influence felt in the Bible Society. The object of this society is, as you know, to furnish the Holy Scriptures to the destitute. The spirit of Christ is a spirit of the most expansive benevolence. If you possess it, and value the sacred treasure contained in God's word as you ought, you will feel a thrilling interest in this cause; your heart will overflow with compassion for those poor souls who do not possess the word of life. What, then, must be your emotions, when you consider that many hundreds of millions of your fellow-beings, as good by nature as yourself, are destitute of the Bible? The population of the whole world is estimated at seven hundred and thirty-seven million people. Of these, five hundred and nine million are heathen, and one hundred and fifty-six million are Roman and Greek Catholics; nearly all of whom are destitute of the word of God. This leaves but seventy-two million who are called Protestants; but a vast number of these, even in our own highly-favored land, are living without the Bible. Can you say, with the Psalmist, "O, how love I your law! It is my meditation all the day"? How, then, must your heart bleed, in view of these facts! "But," perhaps you reply, "what can I do for these perishing millions?" I answer, Do what you can. This is all that God requires of you. You can become a member of the Bible Society; you can contribute, at least, your mite; you can act as a visitor and collector, both to ascertain and supply those families which are destitute of the word of life, and to obtain the means of supplying others; and you can exert an influence upon others, to induce them to enlist in this heavenly enterprise. This may seem to you very insignificant; but it will not appear so, if you contemplate the aggregate of similar benefactions. In a mountainous region, in the south-western part of the state

of New York, there are innumerable little rills, running in different directions, some, whose sources are within a mile of each other, taking opposite courses. Interspersed throughout the same region are a multitude of little lakes, opening their placid bosoms to the sun, as his rays fall obliquely upon them through the mountains, converting the little ripples which play upon their surface into the appearance of a thousand sparkling gems. The careless observer, as he gazes with rapture upon the broad surface of the lovely lake, takes no notice of the little rill that murmurs its quiet way through the forest. Yet, while the beautiful lake, in apparent self-delight, opens its fair bosom to the admiring gaze of the passing stranger, the modest rill is patiently pursuing its unwearied course along the sides of the mountains, through deep ravines, and across the verdant valley, mingling with sister rills, increasing in size, swelling into streams, until stream meets stream, and river meets river, forming, in one direction, the noble Susquehannah, in another, the majestic St. Lawrence, and, in a third, the mighty Mississippi—pouring incessantly a flood of waters into the ocean. So, while a few splendid acts of love may, like the quiet lake, contribute to the self-delight of their authors, and draw upon them the admiring gaze of the multitude, it is the aggregate of the little rills that must form the great streams of benevolence, which are to flow on and fertilize the earth, and fill it with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the face of the great deep.

II. You can make your influence felt in the Tract enterprise. The circulation of Christian tracts has been greatly owned and blessed of God. It seems to be almost the only means of reaching some particular classes of people, who never wait upon God in his house. It is a cheap method of preaching the gospel both to the rich and the poor. For a quarter of a cent, a sermon may be obtained, containing a portion of divine truth sufficient, with God's blessing, to lead a soul to Christ. Engage actively in the various forms of this department of benevolent labor. The distribution of a tract to every family in a town once a month, when properly conducted, may be the means of doing great good. It furnishes an easy introduction into families where God is not acknowledged; and the matter contained in the tract will assist in the introduction of religious conversation. It will enable you to ascertain and relieve the needs of the poor, without seeming to be obtrusive. It will soften your own heart, and excite your compassion, in view of the objects of distress with which you meet. It also furnishes a convenient opportunity for collecting children into Sabbath schools. In distributing tracts, endeavor, as far as courtesy and propriety will admit, to engage those with whom you meet in direct personal conversation with regard to the concerns of their own souls; and when you meet only with the female members of the family, and circumstances favor it, pray with them. Thus you may be the instrument of saving many precious souls. Your labor will also reflect back upon yourself, and warm your own heart. You will get a deeper sense of the dreadful condition of impenitent sinners; and this will be the means of exciting a spirit of prayer in their behalf. Those engaged in this work should meet every month, after finishing the distribution, report all cases of interest, and spend a season in prayer for the divine blessing upon their labors. If you are a tract distributor, where the monthly distribution is sustained, begin your distribution early in the month, and always finish it before the middle; and never neglect to make a written report to the superintendent, as soon as you have finished it.

Endeavor always to have these little messengers of truth in your possession, whether at home, abroad, or on a journey, so that you may avail yourself of every opportunity that presents of scattering the "good seed." I was instructed, recently, by an anecdote of that benevolent lady, Mrs. Fry, who, having taken a coach to visit a friend, and forgetting her tract, stopped the coachman at

her friend's door until she could obtain a tract for him. This shows the persevering principle with which she carried out her benevolent desires for the good of immortal souls.

III. You can make your influence felt in the Missionary cause. This cause must be near the heart of every Christian. The spirit of missions is in unison with every feeling of the new-born soul. It is the spirit of universal benevolence—the same which brought our Lord from heaven to suffer and die for perishing sinners. His last command to his disciples, before ascending up again into heaven, was, that they should follow his example, in the exercise of this spirit, until the whole world should be brought to a knowledge of his salvation. But more than eighteen hundred years have passed away, and yet, at least, two thirds of the inhabitants of this fallen world have never heard the gospel; and probably not more than one seventieth part of them have really embraced it. This is a mournful picture, and calculated to call forth every feeling of Christian sympathy, and awaken a burning zeal for the honor and glory of God. O, think how Jesus is dishonored by his own people, who thus disregard his last, parting request! But here, again, you may inquire, "What can I do?" You can do much. Perhaps you may go yourself on this errand of mercy; but, if not permitted this privilege, you can help those who do go. Although your means may be limited, yet there are many ways in which you can do much for this cause with little means. By regulating your expenses upon Christian principle, you may save much, even of a small income, for benevolent purposes. But you may also exert an influence upon others. In your fellowship with other Christians, you may stir up a missionary spirit. To aid you in this, become acquainted with what has been done, and what is now doing, for the conversion of the heathen. Read missionary reports. Make yourself familiar with the arguments in favor of the cause. By this means, you may become a zealous and successful advocate of the claims of hundreds of millions of perishing heathen. As an opportunity occurs once a month for all to contribute to this cause, you know not what effect such efforts may have upon the amount contributed.

IV. You can make your influence felt in behalf of the poor. By frequenting the abodes of poverty and distress, you may minister to the needs of the afflicted, and call into exercise the feelings of Christian sympathy in your own bosom. By this means, also, you will be prepared to enlist others in the same cause. In large towns, much is done for the poor by the aid of benevolent associations; and you may assist in this department. But perhaps there is no way in which you can do so much for them as by assisting them with your own hands in their afflictions, and aiding them with your advice. Be careful, however, that you do not make them feel that you are conferring an obligation.

It is often objected against rendering assistance to the poor, that they are improvident, lacking in industry and economy; and that relieving their necessities has a tendency to make them indolent, and prevent them from helping themselves. This may be true to some extent; for intemperance has brought ruin and distress upon many families, and we cannot expect either industry, economy, or any other virtue, in a drunkard. But there is much suffering even among the virtuous poor. Sickness and misfortune often bring distress upon deserving people. The only way we can realize the sufferings of the poor is to suppose ourselves in their situation. Let a wealthy gentleman and lady, with five or six small children, be suddenly deprived of all their property, and compelled to obtain a support for their family by daily labor, in the lowest employments; would they think they could live comfortably upon a laboring man's wages, with perhaps the addition of a trifle laboriously earned with the mother's needle? Yet such is the situation of thousands of families,

even in this land of plenty. I have met with families of small children, in the severity of winter, destitute of clothing sufficient to cover them, and without shoes. And, upon inquiry into their circumstances and means of support, I could not see how the parents could make any better provision.

But, even supposing the wretchedness of the poor is brought on them by their own vices, is it agreeable to the spirit of Christ to refuse to relieve their distresses? Has not sin brought upon us all our wretchedness? If the Lord Jesus had reasoned and acted upon this principle, would a single soul have been saved? But he has commanded us to be merciful, even as our Father who is in heaven is merciful. And how is he merciful? "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." And are we to suppose that the poor in our day are any worse than they were when Christ was upon earth? Yet he greatly honored the poor, in appearing himself in a condition of extreme poverty. At his birth, his parents could provide him no better bed than a manger in a stable; and while wearing out his life in the service of a lost world, he had no place to lay his head! Yet, poor as he was, he set an example of giving. At the last supper, when he told Judas, "what you do—do quickly," his disciples supposed he had sent him to give something to the poor; from which we may infer that he was in the habit of alms-giving. He also exhorted others to give to the poor; and similar exhortations are frequent in the apostolical writings. But, even on the principle upon which the world acts, shall we neglect the sufferings of a deserving woman, because her husband is intemperate and wicked? Or should we allow the children to grow up without instruction, in ignorance and vice, because their parents are wicked? Be, then, the devoted friend of the poor; and seek to relieve distress wherever you find it, or whatever may be its cause.

It may be necessary, however, to use some caution against indiscriminate giving; so as not thereby to encourage idleness and dissipation. As a general principle, it is not best to give to beggars; as, by so doing, we encourage a practice that is demoralizing in the extreme. The more deserving poor are retiring, and unwilling to make known their needs. It is better to seek out such, as the objects of your love, than to give indiscriminately to those that ask for it. Still, it may be well to follow those who seek your charity to their places of residence, and ascertain their circumstances, lest there might be suffering which you could relieve. But there is not much confidence to be placed in those whose sensibilities have been blunted by the habit of begging; and we are very liable to be imposed upon by them. The best way in which you can help such people is to furnish them with employment; and this will test their honesty. If they are deserving aid, they will be willing to labor for it.

V. You may make your influence felt in the cause of Temperance. A false delicacy prevails among many ladies in relation to this subject. They seem to think that, as intemperance is not a common vice of their own gender, they have no concern with it. But this is a great mistake. No portion of society suffer so much from the consequences of intemperance as females. On them it spends its fury. The heart sickens when we contemplate the condition of the drunkard's wife. We turn from the picture with horror and disgust. But is there no danger that females themselves may fall under the power of this monstrous vice? Does not every town, village, and hamlet, furnish appalling evidence that they are not proof against it? But, independent of this, it is scarcely possible to dry up the secret elements of this wasting pestilence without the aid of female influence. If the curtain were lifted from the domestic history of the past generation, it would doubtless appear that many of the intemperate appetites which have exerted such a terrific influence upon society were formed in

the nursery. But, besides the formation of early habits, females exert a controlling influence over the public sentiment of the social circle. Here is the sphere of your influence. If young ladies would, with one consent, set their faces against the use of all intoxicating liquors, their influence could not fail to be felt throughout society. Make yourself acquainted with the subject, and lose no suitable opportunity of advocating the cause, or of doing whatever is right and proper for a lady to do in advancing it.

VI. You may make your influence felt in every circle in which you move, by directing conversation towards profitable subjects. The ability to converse is a talent put into our hands to cultivate for the glory of God; and we shall be called to account for the manner in which we improve it. To be able to converse well upon important subjects is an attainment worthy of great effort. And to give a right direction to the conversation of any circle in which we move, requires some skill, along with a spiritual and prayerful frame of mind. It is well, before going into company, to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, that our social fellowship may be profitable both to ourselves and others. And, by imitating the example of the Savior, we may improve circumstances and occasions, to direct the conversation in which we engage towards profitable subjects. Endeavor, by your own conversation, to give the lie to the sentiment that ladies cannot be interested in anything but frivolous chit-chat. But more of this hereafter.

VII. You may make your influence felt in bringing people within the sound of the gospel. There are multitudes, even in this Christian land, who live like the heathen. They do not appreciate the privileges they might enjoy. They live in the habitual neglect of public worship and the means of grace. This is especially the case with the poor in large towns. Poverty depresses their spirits, and they seem to feel that "no man cares for their souls." It is impossible to conjecture how much good one devoted female may do by gathering these people into places of worship. A lady can much more readily gain access to such families than a gentleman; and, by a pleasing address, and a humble and affectionate demeanor, she may secure their confidence, and persuade them to attend public worship. In this way she may be the means, under God, of saving their souls.

VIII. You may, with God's blessing, make your influence felt by those who are living in a careless state. That it is the duty of Christians to warn such of their danger, and direct them to the Savior, will appear from several considerations.

1. The apostle Peter says, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." And what was his example with reference to the subject under consideration? The spirit of Christ, in the great work of redemption, manifests itself in compassion for sinners, and zeal for the glory of God. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And in the near prospect of his agonies, his prayer was, "Father, glorify your name." It was, that mercy might be extended to the guilty, consistently with the honor of God, that he laid down his life. Behold him, deeply feeling the dishonor done to God by ungrateful and rebellious men, constantly reproving sin, weeping over the impenitence and obstinacy of his countrymen, and even exerting his power to drive out those who were profaning the temple. And he says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." To follow Christ is to imitate his example. Hence, unless we follow Christ in his general spirit, we have no right to be called after his name. And this we must do to the extent of our ability, and at the expense of any personal sacrifice, not excepting, if need be, even our own lives. This is the true spirit of the gospel; and, if it were carried out in the life of every

professor of the religion of Jesus, who can estimate the results which would follow?

2. We are required to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, might, and strength. When we love a friend, we are careful of his honor. If we hear him defamed, or lightly spoken of, or see him ill-treated, it gives us pain. We take part with him, and vindicate his character. But we see God dishonored, and his goodness abused, continually. Multitudes around us habitually cast off his authority, and refuse to honor him as the moral Governor of the universe. What can we do more for his honor and glory than to seek to reclaim these rebellious subjects of his government, and bring them back to loyalty and obedience?

3. We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. We profess to have seen the lost condition of impenitent sinners. We think God has taken our feet from the "horrible pit and miry clay." We profess to believe that all who have not embraced Christ are every moment exposed to the horrors of the second death. Can we love them as ourselves, and make no effort to open their eyes to their awful danger, and persuade them to flee from it?

4. The business of reclaiming a lost world is committed to the church, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. It is the business of the church to apply "the truth" to the consciences of the impenitent. It is the office of the Spirit to make it effectual to their salvation. "The Spirit and the bride [the church] say, Come." And even the hearer of the word is allowed to say, "Come." The Scriptures recognize the conversion of the sinner as the work of the Christian. "He who converts a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." "Then will I teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto you." It is true, we cannot, of our own power, convert souls. But, if we are faithful in the use of the means of God's appointment, he may employ us as instruments for accomplishing this great work. Everyone, who has truly come to Christ, knows the way, and can direct others to him. And in no way, perhaps, can the truth be rendered more effectual than by personal application to the conscience. David did not understand Nathan's parable until the prophet said, "You are the man!" As this is a plain, positive duty, it cannot be neglected with impunity. God will not bless his children while they refuse to obey him. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Were you to spend all your time on your knees, while living in the neglect of a plain duty, I do not see how you could obtain a blessing. We cannot expect to enjoy the presence of God while we refuse to point sinners to Christ. It is probable that the neglect of this duty is one of the principal causes of spiritual barrenness in the church. If, then, Christians wish their own hearts revived, they must persuade others to come to Christ. "He who waters, shall be watered also himself." If we wish to maintain constant communion with God, we must live in the habitual exercise of the spirit of Christ. The primitive Christians carried out the example of Christ, in this particular, in a manner worthy of our imitation. In the eighth chapter of Acts, we read that the church at Jerusalem were all scattered abroad, except the apostles. "And those who were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word." And afterwards, in the eleventh chapter, nineteenth verse, we hear of them as far as Cyprus, where they had traveled, preaching the word as they went. It is to be particularly remarked that these, or at least most of them, were the private members of the church; for the apostles still remained at Jerusalem. And what was the result of these joint labors of the whole church? Revivals of religion immediately spread all over the land of Judea and its vicinity. And so might we see revivals spreading over this land, and continuing with increasing power, and multitudes of sinners converted, if the church, as one, united in Christ,

would come up to her duty. Nor would it stop here: the fire thus kindled would burn brighter and brighter, and extend, with increasing rapidity, until it spread over the whole world. Should not all Christians, then, consider themselves placed, to some extent at least, in the situation of watchmen upon the walls of Zion? And, if they neglect to warn sinners, will they be guiltless of the blood of souls? How can they meet them at the bar of God? (Ezekiel 33:1-9.)

Few people are aware of what they might accomplish—if they would do what they can. I once knew a young lady, who was the moving spring of nearly every benevolent enterprise in a town of seven or eight thousand inhabitants. The Bible Society of the town appointed a number of gentlemen as visitors, to ascertain who were destitute of Bibles, and make collections to aid the funds of the society. But the time passed away in which the work was to have been accomplished, and nothing was done. The books were handed over to this lady. She immediately called in the assistance of a few friends in whom she could confide; and, in a very short time, the whole town was visited, collections made, and the destitute supplied. She imparted life and energy to the tract cause, putting into operation and sustaining, with the aid of a few friends, the monthly distribution. There had been, for some time, a small Temperance Society in the town; but its movements were slow and inefficient. She undertook to impart to it new life and vigor. The plans and efforts which she, in conjunction with her friends, put in operation, produced a sensation which was felt in every part of the town; and, in a few months, the number of members was increased from about fifty to three hundred. The amazing influence of one Christian, who lives out the spirit of Christ, is illustrated, in a still more striking manner, in the life of a lady who died, not long since, in one of the principal cities of the United States. I am not permitted to give her name, nor all the particulars of her life; but what I relate may be relied upon, not only as facts, but as far below the whole truth. She had been, for a long time, afflicted with a drunken husband. At length, the sheriff came, and swept off all their property, not excepting her household furniture, to discharge his drinking-bills. At this distressing crisis, she retired to an upper room, laid her babe upon the bare floor, kneeled down over it, and offered up the following petition: "O Lord, if you will in any way remove from me this affliction, I will serve you, upon bread and water, all the days of my life." The Lord took her at her word: her besotted husband immediately disappeared, and was never heard of again until after her death. The church would now have maintained her, but she would not consent to become a charge to others. Although in feeble health, and afflicted with the sick headache, she opened a small school, from which she obtained a bare subsistence; though it was often no more than what was contained in the condition of her prayer—literally bread and water. She had also another motive for pursuing some regular employment: she wished to avoid the reproach which would have arisen to the cause of Christ, from her being maintained upon the bounty of the church, while engaged in the system of Christian activity which she adopted. She remembered the duty of being diligent in business, as well as fervent in spirit. She was a lady of pleasing address, and of a mild and gentle disposition. "In her lips was the law of kindness." Yet she possessed an energy of character, and a spirit of perseverance, which the power of faith alone can impart. When she undertook any Christian enterprise, she was discouraged by no obstacles, and appalled by no difficulties. She resided in the most wicked and abandoned part of the city, which afforded a great field of labor. Her benevolent heart was pained at seeing the ale-shops open on the holy Sabbath. She undertook the difficult and almost hopeless task of closing these sinks of pollution on the Lord's day, and succeeded. This was accomplished by the mild influence of persuasion, flowing from the lips of kindness, and clothed with that power which always accompanies the true spirit of

the gospel. But she was not satisfied with seeing the front doors and windows of these moral pest-houses closed. She knew that little confidence could be placed in the promises of men whose consciences would permit them to traffic in human blood. She would, therefore, upon the morning of the Sabbath, pass round, and enter these shops through the dwellings occupied by the families of the keepers, where she often found them engaged secretly in this wickedness. She would then remonstrate with them, until she persuaded them to abandon it, and attend public worship. In this manner she abolished almost entirely the sale of liquors on the Sabbath, in the worst part of the city.

She also looked after the poor, that the gospel might be preached to them. She carried with her the numbers of those pews in the church which were unoccupied; and, upon Sabbath mornings, she made it her business to go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and persuade the poor to come in and fill up these vacant seats. By her perseverance and energy, she would remove every objection, until she had brought them to the house of God. She was incessant and untiring in every effort for doing good. She would establish a Sabbath school, and superintend it until she saw it flourishing, and then deliver it into the hands of some suitable person, and go and establish another. She collected together a Bible class of apprentices, which she taught herself. Her pastor one day visited it, and found half of them in tears, under deep conviction. She was faithful to the church and to impenitent sinners. She would not allow sin upon a brother. If she saw any member of the church going astray, she would, in a kind, meek, and gentle spirit, yet in a faithful manner, reprove him. She was the first to discover any signs of declension in the church, and to sound the alarm, personally, to every conscience. It was her habitual practice to reprove sin, and to warn sinners wherever she found them. At the time of her death, she had under her care a number of pious young men preparing for the ministry. These she had looked after, and brought out of obscurity. As soon as their piety had been sufficiently tested, she would bring them to the notice of her Christian friends. She persuaded pious teachers to give them gratuitous instruction, and pious booksellers to supply them with books. In the same way, she procured their board in the families of wealthy Christians; and she formed little societies of ladies, to supply them with clothing. There was probably no person in the city whose death would have occasioned the shedding of more tears, or called forth more sincere and heartfelt grief. Her memory was long and deeply cherished in the heart of her pastor;* who declared that he should not have felt as severely the loss of six of the most devoted men in his church.

* Mr. Patterson, of Philadelphia, who has gone to that "better land," where he has, no doubt, met the hearty greetings, not only of this dear fellow-laborer, but of scores whom he has been instrumental in plucking as "brands from the burning." And why may you not "go and do likewise"? It is amazing to see what can be accomplished by a single individual, by earnest effort and untiring perseverance, accompanied with a simple and hearty dependence upon God. If the individual members of the church would do what they can, what a tremendous shock would be felt in Satan's kingdom! What a glorious triumph would await the church! Therefore, "whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go." But the work of directing sinners to Christ is one of vast responsibility. How distressing the consequences, when the weary traveler is directed in the wrong way! How deeply so, if his way lie through the forest, where he is exposed, if night overtakes him, to stumble over precipices, sink in the mire, or be devoured by wild beasts! Yet what is this, in comparison with

leading astray the soul that is inquiring for the way of salvation? "He who wins souls is wise." I cannot, however, pursue this subject here; but must refer you to a little work, entitled "Friendly Counsel," in which I have given directions more in detail.

CAUTIONS.

1. Avoid every appearance of ostentation. Suppress every rising of self-delight on account of what you do, and of the success which attends your efforts. Such feelings are abominable in the sight of God; and, if indulged, will make you appear contemptible in the eyes of men. The Pharisees were active in many religious duties. They made long prayers, and were so particular in outward things as to pay tithes of the most common herbs. They also gave to the poor. But all this they did that they might have praise of men. They chose public places to pray; and when they were about to give anything to the poor, they caused a trumpet to be sounded before them, to give notice of their approach. All this was done to feed the pride of the carnal heart. And, notwithstanding their loud professions, and apparent good deeds, the heaviest curses the Lord Jesus ever pronounced were directed against them. Be modest, unobtrusive, and courteous, in all you do and say. Let the love of Jesus animate your heart, and the glory of God be your object. Make as little noise as possible, in everything you do. Never speak of what you have done, unless you see that some good can be accomplished by it. "When you give your alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does." Keep yourself out of view, and give all the glory of your success to God.

2. Great prudence and discretion are necessary in everything. Do nothing rashly. When you have any enterprise in view, first sit down and consider the matter seriously. Pray over it. Look at it in all its bearings, and inquire what good will be likely to result from it. When you have satisfied yourself on this point, inquire whether you have reasonable ground to hope for success. Then summon all your wisdom to contrive a judicious plan of operations. When this is done, proceed with energy and perseverance, until you have either accomplished your object, or become convinced that it is impracticable. Pay especial regard to the feelings and advice of those who act with you. Keep as much in the background as you can without hindering your efforts; and, whenever you can do it, put others forward to execute the plans you have devised. This will save you from becoming the object of jealousy, and also serve to mortify your pride.

3. Be resolute and persevering. When satisfied you are in the way of duty, do not be moved by ridicule. If some good people disapprove your conduct, thinking that you attempt too much, let it lead you to a candid and impartial reexamination of your course. If by this you become convinced that you are wrong in the particular matter in question, confess it, and change your conduct. But, if this review of the affair confirms you in the opinion that your course is right, pursue it with decision and firmness. There are some well-meaning people, of limited views, and excessive carefulness, who disapprove the best of measures, if these measures happen to be at variance with their long-established customs; or, more frequently, if they were not consulted before the particular enterprise was undertaken.

4. **BE MUCH IN PRAYER.** Upon this will greatly depend your success in all things. Feel that of yourself you can do nothing, but that you can do all things through Christ strengthening you. Before undertaking anything, pray that God would give you wisdom to direct, and strength to perform; and if it is anything in which the efforts of others will be required, pray that he would incline their hearts to engage in the work. Before you go out on an errand of mercy—first visit your

closet, and commit yourself to the direction of the Lord. Pray that he would give you wisdom, courage, and discretion; and that he would keep down the pride of your heart, and enable you to do all things for his glory.

01.17. Dress

DRESS

I am far from considering attention to dress as a matter of so great importance as many attach to it; and it is remarkable that so little is said about it in the Bible, while false systems of religion, as well as enthusiastic or fanatical sects, generally prescribe the form of dress, or vehemently proscribe certain fashions. This is false zeal. Nevertheless, the subject is one of sufficient consequence to be carefully considered, and regulated upon Christian principle. In Genesis 3:1-24, we learn that the object of dress at first was, to provide a decent covering for the body. It was the shame brought upon man by transgression which made this covering necessary. And it is in consequence of sin that the elements have been turned against him, so as to make clothing a necessary defense against the hostile influence of heat and cold. The immediate discovery of their nakedness, by our first parents, after their disobedience, is probably intended to show the nakedness and shame which sin has brought upon our souls; and the consequent exposure to the hostile elements aptly represents the exposure of the naked soul to the wrath of God. The invention of fig-leaf aprons may, perhaps, represent the self-righteousness of the natural heart; which leads unrenewed men to seek, by some invention of their own, to save themselves from the consequences of sin. But all their self-righteousness will be no better defense against the storms of God's wrath than fig-leaf aprons against the withering influence of a vertical sun, or the perpetual frosts of the arctic regions. The coats of skin which the Lord made for our first parents, seem well adapted to represent the righteousness of Christ, with which he would clothe his people. This opinion appears the more probable from the common use of this figure, when the righteousness of Christ is spoken of as imputed to Christians: "He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness." "And to her [the church] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the linen is the righteousness of the saints." The design of clothing, then, is—

1. to furnish a modest covering for the body;
2. to provide a defense against the hostile elements;
3. perhaps to remind us of our spiritual nakedness and exposure to the wrath of God, and our need to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. From these ends we ought not to pervert it to the gratification of pride and vanity. But, if you will observe the following things in regard to your apparel, you will probably not go far astray—

1. All that we have is the Lord's. We have nothing but what he has given us; and this we have solemnly promised to employ in his service. We have no right, therefore, needlessly to squander it upon extravagant clothing. The apostle Paul directs women to adorn themselves with modest apparel, and discountenances the wearing of costly ornaments and jewelry. Peter also says that, instead of these, their adorning should be the "hidden person of the heart." The love of finery, or a fondness for mirthful apparel, is contrary to the spirit of these passages; nor is it easy to see how

Christians can reconcile so much needless expense as is often lavished upon their dress, with the spirit of benevolence which the gospel breathes, when so many millions of precious souls are perishing without any knowledge of the only way of salvation, or while so many around them are suffering from poverty and need. This is certainly contrary to the spirit of Christ. He who for our sakes became poor, who led a life of self-denial, toil, and suffering, that he might relieve distress and make known the way of salvation, could never have needlessly expended upon his clothing, what would have sent the gospel to the destitute, or supplied the needs of poverty. Extravagance in dress is, therefore, obviously inconsistent with the Christian character! But no precise rule can be laid down in relation to this matter. It must be left to the sober judgment of Christians; and a sanctified conscience will readily discern the bounds of propriety. By asking yourself two or three questions, whenever you think of purchasing a new article of dress, you may very easily decide upon the path of duty—"Do I need this? Is it necessary for my comfort, or for my decent appearance in society? Can I glorify God in wearing it?"

2. Your time is the Lord's. You have no right to waste it in useless attention to dress. One of the greatest evils of extravagant modes of dress is, that so much precious time is consumed at the mirror. I have already shown the value and importance of time, and the obligations of Christians to spend it in the most profitable manner. I need not here advance any new arguments to show that it is wrong to consume your time needlessly in the adjustment of your apparel.

3. It is duty to pay some regard to personal appearance. A Christian lady, by dressing slovenly, brings reproach upon the cause of Christ, instead of glorifying God. The apostle enjoins upon women to adorn themselves with modest apparel. Modesty signifies purity of sentiment and manners. When this idea is applied to dress, it immediately suggests to the mind a neatness, taste, and simplicity, alike opposed both to extravagance and finery, and to negligence and vulgar coarseness. The exercise of a refined taste, in the adaptation and adjustment of apparel, may also be justified by the analogy of nature. Look abroad over the landscape, and see with what exquisite taste God has clothed the flowers of the field. There is a symmetry of proportion, a skilfulness of arrangement, and a fitness and adaptation of colors, which strike the eye with unmingled pleasure. And if God has shown a scrupulous regard to the pleasure of the eye, we may do the same. This opinion is also confirmed by the practical influence of the gospel. This is particularly observable among the poor in our own land. Just in proportion as the religion of Jesus prevails among this class of people, you will see a scrupulous attention to personal appearance. By this, I do not mean the pride of appearance—but a decency, modesty, and propriety—as opposed to negligence, coarseness, and vulgarity. But this is more strikingly manifest among those people who have been but recently raised, by the influence of the gospel, from the lowest depths of heathenism. Of this you will be convinced by examining the history of the missions among the North American Indians, and in the South Sea Islands. The same principles will also apply to household arrangements. Such regard to comfort and decency of appearance as will strike the eye with pleasure, and shed around an air of cheerfulness; doubtless contributes to moral improvement, and is not only authorized, but required, by the spirit of the gospel. But this is a dangerous point. There is so much temptation to the indulgence of pride and vanity, and such a disposition to make dress the means of attracting the attention and seeking the admiration of others, that you have need of constant watchfulness. Pray that you may not be led into temptation in this matter; and especially at those times when you are most in danger.

4. Have a regard to health. Among the means of preserving health, attention to dress is not the least important. Great care should always be taken that it be suited to the season, and a defense against the inclemency of the weather. This is a Christian duty; and any pride of appearance, or carelessness of habit, which leads you to neglect it, is sin. But, above all things, avoid the use of girdles for the purpose of improving the appearance. It is astonishing that intelligent ladies can so blindly follow the mandates of fashion as to indulge a habit so destructive of comfort and life. There is no part of the system—not even the extremity of a limb—which can suffer violent compression without interrupting the regular circulation of the blood. But, when this pressure is about the chest, the effect is most destructive. The lungs, subject as they are to alternate distention and compression, from receiving and discharging both the blood and the breath, require the most perfect freedom. But, when the chest is compressed by tight clothing, the vitals are removed from their natural position, the free play of the lungs is prevented, and the whole system of respiration and circulation is deranged. The consequences are, shortness of breath and faintness; impeded circulation, producing listlessness and languor; and inclination of the blood to the head, producing headache and distressing dizziness. And, if this course is long persisted in, destruction of health is the inevitable consequence; and often the 'poor deluded victim of a barbarous fashion' pays the forfeit of her life. I have heard of many cases of death from this cause, three of which occurred in one family, within the circle of my acquaintance. I need use no argument, then, to convince a Christian lady that it is her duty to avoid this species of conformity to the world, which can be regarded in no other light than as a palpable violation of the sixth commandment. Yet, such is the delusive influence of habit, that there is great difficulty, oftentimes, in convincing young ladies that they err in this matter, when the fact appears obvious to all their friends.

5. Do not make too much of the matter of dress. It is our duty to avoid every species of conformity to the world which requires the sacrifice of Christian principle. But, in things indifferent, we are allowed to conform to the customs of society. I do not think there is much danger of excessive plainness of apparel, but there is danger of making so much account of it as to cultivate a self-righteous spirit. As I have already remarked, in almost every system of false religion, precise forms of dress are prescribed, especially for those who are devoted to what is termed a religious life; whereas, in the Bible, it is left to be regulated by the general principles and spirit of Christianity, with an occasional caution against extravagance and immodesty; and it does not appear that Christ and the apostles, or the early Christians, adopted any peculiarity of dress. From the description given of the garments distributed among the soldiers, it would appear that our Lord wore the common dress of a religious teacher. There is such a thing as a 'pride of singularity'; and this is often manifested in the preparation and adjustment of the wardrobe. Satan is ever on the alert to observe the bent of the mind, and carry it to extremes. Be not ignorant of his devices; but watch and pray—that you may be secure against all his wiles.

01.18. Social and Relative Duties

SOCIAL AND RELATIVE DUTIES

Man is a social being. Whoever, therefore, lives to himself, violates an established law of nature. A numerous train of duties arises out of our social relations, entering more or less into the common concerns of life, according as these relations are more or less remote. The first relation is that of the FAMILY. This was established by the Creator in Paradise; and it has been preserved, in all ages of the world, and in all countries, with more or less distinctness, according to the degree of moral principle which has prevailed. It lies at the foundation of all human society; and just in proportion as the original principles upon which it was constituted are observed, will society be good or bad. The Scriptures are very particular in describing this relation, as it existed in the patriarchal ages. It has its foundation in the fitness of things; and hence the duties arising out of it are very properly classed as moral duties. Of such consequence does the Lord regard it, that he has given it a place in the decalogue; three of the ten commandments having respect to the family state. From the first institution of this relation, we learn that the father and mother are to constitute the united head of the family. "They two shall be one flesh." Authority is, therefore, vested in them both, to exercise jointly. But, since the fall, mankind having become perverse and self-willed, the nature and fitness of things seem to require that there should be a precedence of authority, in case of a division of the united head. This precedence the Scriptures distinctly indicate. One of the curses pronounced upon the woman, after the fall, was, that her husband should rule over her. This principle was carried out in the families of the patriarchs. The apostle Peter says that the holy women of old adorned themselves with a meek and quiet spirit, and were in subjection to their own husbands; and particularly notices the conduct of Sarah, the mother of the Jewish nation, who obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. The same principle is repeatedly taught in the New Testament. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." "Let the wife see that she respects her husband." "Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." The apostle Paul, moreover, intimates that this subordination of the woman to the man was originally indicated by the manner in which she was created: "He"—that is, the man—"is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." The body of the woman was not created originally of the dust, as the man was, nor was her soul, like his, formed directly after the divine image; but the former was constructed of a portion of the flesh and bone of the man, while the latter was modeled after his soul, so as to bear his image, rather than that of the Creator. This clearly indicates subordination to man as the head. Yet the same apostle, by declaring the relation between man and woman to be similar to that between Christ and the church, has shown that the exercise of arbitrary or tyrannical authority, on the part of the man, was never contemplated, and is, therefore, a usurpation. The basis of the union between the man and the woman, as between Christ and the church, is love; and where Christian principle prevails, there will rarely, if ever, be occasion to exercise authority. But the attempt of some recent

reformers to confound all distinction between the respective place, duties, and sphere of action, of man and woman--is a sin against nature, the offspring of an infidel spirit, which disregards the teachings both of nature and of inspiration. The duty of the younger members of the family to respect the elder, may be inferred—1. From the nature and fitness of things. The elder brothers and sisters are the superiors of the younger, not only in age and experience, but generally in wisdom and knowledge. They are better qualified to take the lead, and therefore entitled to respect and deference. 2. The same may also be inferred from the precedence always given in Scripture to the first-born. But the great household duty is LOVE. If this is properly discharged, it will set all other matters right. If this is lacking, there will be a lack of everything else. The Scriptures insist much upon the duty of brotherly love. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Christ, in his Sermon on the Mount, severely rebukes the indulgence of anger, and the lack of kindness and courtesy, among brethren. And the apostle John says, "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer." A kind, tender-hearted, affectionate, and peaceful temper should be maintained in all the fellowship of different members of the same family.

But, as mankind began to multiply, it became necessary that the social relations should be extended. A number of families, residing near each other, formed a neighborhood, or community. This gave rise to the new relation of neighbor, from the necessity of fellowship between families. This was again extended to the formation of nations and kingdoms. But all these various relations are subject to the same general laws as those of the family; for they have grown out of them. The same principle which requires subordination to the head of the family, requires, also, deference to the elders of a community, and subordination to the rulers of the nation. And the same principle which requires the exercise of kindness, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, humility and love, between the members of the same family, requires the exercise of similar dispositions between individuals of the same community and nation. The principle is also still farther extended, embracing the whole world as one great family, and requiring the exercise of love, and the practice of benevolence, towards all mankind. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

But, in consequence of the fall, another most interesting relation has been established. Out of this apostate world God has chosen himself a family. Of this family Christ is the head, and his people are the members. Here are the same relations as in the natural family; but they are different in their nature. They are spiritual, and, of course, of higher obligation. We are required to love Christ more than father or mother. And the Lord Jesus says, with emphasis, "This is my commandment, that you love one another." When grace is in full exercise, the love which Christians bear towards one another is stronger than the natural affection which exists between brothers and sisters of the same family.

RULES

1. Render to all the members of the FAMILY in which you reside just that degree of deference and respect which belongs to them. Conscientiously regard the rules and regulations introduced by the head of the family, unless they are contrary to the word of God. It is in the domestic circle that your character is to be formed. It is here that your disposition is to be tried, and your piety cultivated. Endeavor, then, to maintain, in your family fellowship, the same dignity and propriety of deportment which you wish to sustain in society. Never descend to anything at the fireside which

you would despise in a more extended circle. Bring the most minute actions of your daily life to the test of Christian principle. Remember that, in the sight of God, there are no little sins.

Especially avoid the indulgence of a selfish disposition. Be always ready to sacrifice your own feelings, when, by so doing, you can give pleasure to others. Study their wishes and feelings, and prefer them to your own. Strive to be helpful to others, even at the expense of personal feeling and interest. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others." "Love seeks not her own." Be kind to all; respectful towards superiors, courteous to equals, and kind to inferiors. If you cultivate the dispositions and principles which I have here recommended, habitually, in the domestic circle, they will become natural and easy in every other; and this will endear you to all your acquaintances. It will bring honor upon your profession, increase your influence, and thereby enable you to do more for the glory of God.

2. There are special duties growing out of your relation to the CHURCH. Some of these I have considered in former chapters. But I have particular reference now to social duties. You are to regard all the members of the church as brethren and sisters. You are to love them in proportion as they are like Christ. It is the appearance of his image in them which excites our love. "He that loves him that begat, loves him also that is begotten of him." Brotherly love is much insisted on in the Scriptures, being repeatedly enjoined by our Lord and his apostles. It is so essential a part of the Christian character, that it is mentioned by the beloved disciple as one of the principal evidences of the new birth. And how do we manifest our love to our brothers and sisters? We delight in their society. We love to meet them, and to converse with them of the things which concern ourselves and the family of which we are members. So, if you love your brethren and sisters in the church, you will delight in their society; you will love to meet with them; to interchange kind offices; to talk of the difficulties, trials, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows, of the way to the heavenly Canaan; and to speak of the interests of the great spiritual family to which you belong. This is the spirit alluded to by the prophet Malachi, when he says, "Then those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name." Would that this "book of remembrance" were always kept in view when Christians speak to one another! How would it chasten their hearts, exclude injurious and unprofitable conversation, and lead them upward, to hold fellowship with heavenly things, as they commune with one another! In addition to the general obligation of social fellowship among Christians, there are some particular duties which they owe to one another. They are to exercise mutual forbearance and tenderness towards each other's faults; and, at the same time, to watch over and admonish one another. Whenever you see a brother or a sister out of the way, it is your duty, with meekness, tenderly and kindly to administer reproof. "If a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." In all cases, where one is to be selected for the performance of a particular duty which may seem to confer honor, prefer others to yourself. "In honor, preferring one another." "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves." "Yes, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Yet do not carry this principle so far as to refuse to act where duty calls. A disposition to be backward in such matters is often a serious hinderance to benevolent effort. Be always ready to engage in any enterprise for doing good; but prefer the office which requires the most labor with the least honor. Christians ought also

to take delight in assisting each other, and to feel personally interested in each other's welfare. In short, the feeling that pervades the church should be preeminently a family feeling.

3. There are also some duties growing out of your relations to GENERAL SOCIETY. Be ever ready to interchange kind offices with everyone who maintains a decent moral deportment; and be kind and compassionate, even to the wicked, so far as you can, without associating with them on terms of equality. By this means, you may win the affections of the impenitent, and thereby secure their attention to direct efforts for the salvation of their souls. But you should never allow your feelings of delight and good-will towards those who are destitute of piety, to lead you to conform to the spirit of the world which influences their conduct. Your social fellowship with them should be regulated upon this principle—Never go any farther into their society than you can carry your Christianity with you. "Be not conformed to this world."

4. Although it be your duty to visit, yet, in this matter, be careful to be governed by religious principle. There is in the human mind a tendency to extremes in everything. Against this you need especially to be on your guard in social fellowship. When visiting is excessive, it dissipates the mind, and unfits it for any vigorous effort. When this state of mind becomes habitual, a person is never easy except when in company. The most gifted mind may thus be rendered comparatively inert and powerless. But, on the other hand, by shutting yourself out from society, you will dry up the social feelings, acquire a monkish love of solitude, and become soured in your temper towards your fellow-beings. You must, therefore, give to visiting its proper place in the routine of Christian duty. That place is just the one which it can occupy without encroaching upon more important duties. It should be the Christian's recreation. Seasons of relaxation from the more laborious duties of life are undoubtedly necessary; and I know of nothing which can better answer this end than the intelligent and pious conversation of Christian friends. Your friends have claims upon your time and attention; but these claims can never extend so far as to encroach upon more important duties, or to impair your ability to do good to yourself and others. As soon as you discover a secret uneasiness when out of company, or whenever you find that the demands of the social circle have led you to neglect other duties, it is time to diminish the number of your visits. But do not, on such occasions, violate Christian sincerity, by inventing excuses to satisfy your friends. Tell them frankly your reasons. If they are true and valuable friends, they will see the propriety of your conduct, and be satisfied. But, if they seek your friendship for their own selfish ends, they will be offended; in which case, you will lose nothing.

5. Never go into any company where the spirit and maxims of the world predominate. This may cut you off from a large portion of society; but it is a rule founded on the word of God. If we would not be conformed to the world, we must not follow its maxims, nor partake of its spirit. It may be said that we should go into such society for the purpose of exerting a Christian influence. But the practical result is directly the contrary. The spirit which prevails in such company is destructive of all pious feeling: it freezes up the warm affections of the Christian's heart. The consequence is, he is ashamed to acknowledge his Master, and avow his principles, where the prevailing current is against him. He therefore moves along with it, to the injury of his own soul, and the wounding of his Master's cause. His worldly companions see no difference between his conduct and their own, and conclude, either that all is right with themselves, or that he is a hypocrite.

Large parties, as a general rule, are unfriendly to the health both of body and soul. The most profitable kind of social fellowship is the informal meeting of small circles, of which a sufficient number are pious people, to give a direction and tone to conversation. Nevertheless, we should not carry this rule so far as to exclude ourselves wholly from the society of our unconverted friends; but let them see, by the chastened tone of our conversation, our kindness, courtesy, and conscientiousness, that piety has improved our character.

6. When in company, labor to give a profitable direction to conversation. If there are elder people present, who introduce general discourse, of a profitable character, let your words be few: it is generally better, in such cases, to learn in silence. But when an opportunity offers for you to say anything that will add interest to the conversation, do not fail to improve it. Yet let your ideas be well conceived, and your words well chosen. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." The interest of conversation does not depend so much upon the multitude of words, as upon the matter they contain, and their appropriateness to the subject. But, when no other person introduces profitable conversation, take it upon yourself. If you will study to be skillful in the matter, you may turn any conversation to good account. This was one of the peculiar beauties of our Savior's discourse. Whatever subject was introduced, he invariably drew from it some important lesson. If you are on the alert, you may always give a proper turn to conversation, in this way. I do not say that conversation should always be exclusively pious; but it should be of a kind calculated to improve the mind or the heart, and it should at all times partake of the savor of piety. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." No proper opportunity, however, should be lost, of making a direct religious impression. If the solemn realities of divine things were always present to our minds, as they ought to be--we would never be at a loss to speak of them in a befitting manner. When you meet with people who are living without hope, lose no proper occasion to warn them of their danger, and show them the sinfulness of their lives, and the guilt of rejecting the Savior. But this should be done as privately as possible. Speaking to them abruptly, in the presence of company, often has a tendency to provoke opposition, and harden their hearts. However, this caution is not always necessary. If there is much tenderness of conscience, admonition will be well received, even in the presence of others. Great care should be taken, on both sides, that you neither injure them by your imprudence, nor neglect your duty to their souls through excessive carefulness. Study wisdom, skillfulness, and discretion, in all things. "He who wins souls is wise."

7. Never speak detractingly of absent people. Never allow yourself to say anything to the disadvantage of any person, unless your duty to others may require it. This, however, will rarely happen; though it may sometimes be your duty to caution others against being ensnared by one whose character you know to be bad. The Scriptures condemn backbiting and evil-speaking, in the most pointed terms. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He who speaks evil of his brother, speaks evil of the law." "Speak evil of no man." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you." "Debates, envyings, wrath, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." "Whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful." Here we see how the Lord regards this sin; for he has classed it with the exercise of the most abominable passions of the human heart. It is a great sin, and productive of much evil in the church and in society. It creates heart-burnings, jealousies, and strife, and furnishes employment for tale-bearers—that most despicable set of mischief-makers. But this sin is often committed without

saying anything directly against another. A sly insinuation is often productive of more mischief than direct evil-speaking: it leaves a vague but strong impression upon the mind of the hearer, against the character of the person spoken of, and often creates a prejudice which is never removed. This is unjust and unfair, because it leaves the character of the injured person resting under suspicion, without his having an opportunity to remove it. This is probably what the apostle means by whisperers. Solomon, also, speaking of the naughty person and wicked man, says, "He winks with his eyes, he speaks with his feet." "He who winks with the eye causes shame." How often do we see this winking, and speaking by gestures and knowing looks, when the characters of others are under discussion! Open and unreserved evil-speaking is unchristian; but this winking, this speaking with the feet, is base and dishonorable.

Whenever you perceive a disposition to make invidious remarks about others, refuse to join in the conversation, and manifest your decided disapprobation. "The north wind drives away rain; so does an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." Bear in mind the words of the apostle James: "If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Thus the habitual indulgence of this sin will cut off the hope of the loudest professors.

8. Avoid speaking of yourself. Vanity and selfishness lead people to make themselves and their own affairs the principal topics of conversation. This is treating others with great disrespect—as though one's self were of more consequence than the whole company. Endeavor to keep yourself as much as possible out of view, and to direct the thoughts and conversation of the company away from personal affairs to intellectual, moral, and pious subjects. But, when any of your friends make known their difficulties to you, manifest an interest in their affairs, sympathize with them, and render them all the assistance in your power.

9. Never indulge a suspicious disposition. Many people destroy their own peace, and gain the ill-will of others, by the exercise of this unhappy temper. You have no right to think others dislike you until they have manifested their dislike. Accustom yourself to repose confidence in your associates. It is better to be sometimes deceived, than never to trust. And, if you are always suspicious of those around you, be sure you will soon alienate their affections. In your fellowship with others of your own age and gender, be willing always to advance at least half way; and with those whose habits are very retiring, you may even go farther. Many people of sterling worth have so low an opinion of themselves as to doubt whether even their own equals wish to form an acquaintance. "A man who has friends--must show himself friendly." Always put the best construction upon the conduct of others. Do not attach more meaning to their language and conduct than they properly express. If at any time you really believe yourself slighted, take no notice of it. Yet be careful never to intrude yourself into society where you have good reason to believe your company is not desired.

10. Be cautious in the formation of intimate friendships. Christians should always regard one another as friends. Yet peculiar circumstances, together with congeniality of sentiment and feeling, may give rise to a personal attachment much stronger than the common bond which unites all Christians. Of this we have a beautiful example in the case of David and Jonathan. This appears to be a perfect pattern of Christian friendship. They both, doubtless, loved other pious people; but there was existing between them a peculiar personal attachment. Their souls were "knit together."

Friendships of this kind should not be numerous, and the objects of them should be well chosen. Long acquaintance is necessary, that you may be able to repose unlimited confidence in the friend to whom you unbosom your whole heart. Form no such friendships hastily. Think what would have been the consequence if David had been deceived in this friend. He would certainly have lost his life.

11. Before going into company, visit your closet. Pray that the Lord would so direct your steps that you may do all things for his glory; that he would enable you to spend the time profitably to yourself and others; that he would keep you from evil-speaking, levity, foolish jesting, and every other impropriety; and that he would enable you to honor him, and exert a good influence upon others. Endeavor to go out in a serious, devout, and tender frame of mind; and then you may expect the Lord will go with you. But, if you go with a careless, undevout spirit--you will return with a wounded soul.

01.19. Marriage

MARRIAGE

Some young people indulge a fastidiousness of feeling in relation to the subject of marriage, as though it were indelicate to speak of it. Others make it the principal subject of their thoughts and conversation; and yet seem to think it must never be mentioned but in jest. Both these extremes should be avoided. Marriage is an ordinance of God, and therefore a proper subject of thought and discussion, with reference to personal duty. It is a matter of great importance, having a direct bearing upon the glory of God and the happiness of individuals. It should, therefore, never be approached with levity. But, as it requires no more attention than what is necessary in order to understand present duty, it would be foolish to make it a subject of constant thought, and silly to make it a common topic of conversation. It is a matter which should be weighed deliberately and seriously by every young person. In reference to the main subject, two things should be considered.

I. Marriage is desirable. It was ordained by the Lord at the creation, as suited to the state of man as a social being, and necessary to the design for which he was created. There is a sweetness and comfort in the bosom of one's own family, which can be enjoyed nowhere else. In early life, this is supplied by our youthful companions, who feel in unison with us. But, as a person who remains single advances in life, the friends of his youth form new attachments, in which he is incapable of participating. Their feelings undergo a change, of which he knows nothing. He is gradually left alone. No heart beats in unison with his own. His social feelings wither for lack of an object. As he feels not in unison with those around him, his habits also become peculiar, and perhaps repulsive, so that his company is not desired: hence arises the whimsical attachment of such people to domestic animals, or to other objects which can be enjoyed in solitude. As the dreary winter of age advances, the solitude of this condition becomes still more chilling. Nothing but that sweet resignation to the will of God, which true religion gives in all circumstances, can render such a situation tolerable. But piety does not annihilate the social affections; it only regulates them. It is evident, then, that, by a lawful and proper exercise of these affections, both our happiness and usefulness may be increased.

II. On the other hand, do not consider marriage as absolutely indispensable. Although it is an ordinance of God, yet he has not positively enjoined it upon all. The apostle Paul intimates that there may be, with those who enter into this state, a greater tendency of the heart towards earthly objects, as well as an increase of care: "The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." But much more has been made of this than the apostle intended. It has been greatly abused and perverted by the church of Rome. It must be observed that, in the same chapter, he advises that "every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband." Whatever may be our condition in life, if we seek it with earnestness and perseverance, in the way of duty, God will give us grace sufficient for our circumstances. But,

though it is no sin to marry, nevertheless, he says, "Such shall have trouble in the flesh." It is undoubtedly true that the enjoyments of marital life have their corresponding difficulties and trials; and, if these are enhanced by an unhappy connection, the situation is insufferable. For this reason, I would have you avoid the conclusion that marriage is indispensable to happiness. Single life is certainly to be preferred, to a marriage with a person who will diminish, instead of increasing, your happiness. Yet I suppose the remark of the apostle, "Such shall have trouble in the flesh," had reference chiefly to the peculiar troubles of those times, when Christians were exposed to persecution, the loss of goods, and even of life itself, for Christ's sake; the trials of which would be much greater in married than in single life.

Bearing in mind the foregoing remarks, you will be prepared calmly to consider what QUALIFICATIONS are requisite in a companion for life. These I shall divide into two classes—those which are indispensable, and those which are desirable. Of the first class, I see none which can be dispensed with, without so marring the character of a man as to render him an unfit associate for an intelligent Christian lady. But, although the latter are very important, yet, without possessing all of them, a person may be an agreeable companion and a man of real worth.

I. INDISPENSABLE qualifications

1. The first requisite in a companion for life is deep PIETY. I know not how a Christian can form so intimate a connection as this with one who is living in rebellion against God. You profess to love Jesus above every other object, and to forsake all, that you may follow him. How can you, then, unite your interests with one who continually rejects and abuses the object of your soul's delight? I am at a loss to understand how a union can be formed between the carnal and the renewed heart. They are in direct opposition to each other. The one overflows with love to God; the other is at enmity against him. How, then, can there be any congeniality of feeling? Can fire unite with water? "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" A desire to form such a union must be a dark mark against any one's Christian character. The Scriptures are very clear and decided on this point. The intermarrying of the righteous with the wicked was the principal cause of the general corruption of the inhabitants of the old world, which provoked God to destroy them with the flood. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was careful that Isaac; the son of promise, should not take a wife from among the heathen. The same precaution was taken by Isaac and Rebecca, in relation to Jacob. The children of Israel were also expressly forbidden to make marriages with the heathen, lest they should be turned away from the Lord to the worship of idols. And we see a mournful example of the influence of such unholy connections in the case of Solomon. Although he had been so zealous in the service of the Lord as to build him a temple, and had even been inspired to write portions of the Holy Scriptures, yet his strange wives turned away his heart, and persuaded him to worship idols.

Though we are now under a different dispensation, yet principles remain the same. The union of a heathen and a Jew was, as to its effect on a pious mind, substantially the same as the union of a believer and an unbeliever; and the former would be no more likely to be drawn away from God by it than the latter. Hence we find the same principle recognized in the New Testament. Paul, speaking of the woman, says, "If her husband is dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will—but only in the Lord." The phrase in the Lord denotes being a true Christian; as will appear

from other passages where the same form of expression is used. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." It is plainly implied, then, in this qualifying phrase, that it is unlawful for a Christian to marry one that is unconverted, or out of Christ. The same doctrine may also be inferred from the passage, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." Although the apostle had no particular reference here to this subject, yet he lays down a general principle, which applies to all intimate associations with unbelievers. And what connection could be more intimate than this?

I conclude, therefore, that it is contrary both to reason and Scripture for a Christian to marry an impenitent sinner. And, in this respect, look not only for an outward profession, but for evidence of deep and devoted piety. Look for a person who makes religion the chief concern of his life; who is determined to live for God, and not for himself. Make this the test. Worldly-minded professors of religion are worse associates than those who make no profession. They exert a more withering influence upon the soul. And, in considering the evidences of devoted piety, you may well take into the account the question whether he indulges in the use of intoxicating liquors. If he does not practice rigidly the principle of abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, you ought to reject him at once. No lady is safe in the hands of a man, who, at this day, will parley with such an enemy to all that is lovely and of good report. Nor will you have much reason to repose confidence in him, if he is not a hearty friend to the Temperance Reformation.

2. Another indispensable requisite is an **AMIABLE DISPOSITION**. Whatever good qualities a man may possess, if he is selfish, morose, sour, peevish, fretful, jealous, or passionate—he will make an uncomfortable companion. Grace may do much towards subduing these unholy tempers; yet, if they were fostered in the heart in childhood, and allowed to grow up to maturity before grace began to work, they will often break out in the family circle. However, you will find it exceedingly difficult to judge in this matter. The only direction I can give on this subject is, that, if you discover the exercise of a bad temper in a man, with the opportunity you will have of observation, you may consider it conclusive evidence of a disposition which would render you miserable.

3. The person of your choice must possess a **WELL-CULTIVATED MIND**. In order to produce a community of feeling, and maintain a growing interest in each other's society, both parties must possess minds well stored with useful knowledge, and capable of continued expansion. We may love a person for his piety alone, but we cannot long enjoy his society, as a constant companion, unless that piety is mingled with intelligence. To secure your esteem, as well as your affections, he must be capable of intelligent conversation on all subjects of general interest. And it is especially necessary in a husband, that he be not your inferior. You cannot entertain suitable feelings of respect and deference towards the man who is to be your head, if he is inferior to yourself in mental capacity and intelligence.

4. His sentiments and feelings, on general subjects, must be **CONGENIAL** with your own. This is a very important matter. People of great worth, whose views and feelings in relation to the common concerns of life are opposite, may render each other very unhappy. Particularly, if you possess a refined sensibility yourself, you must look for delicacy of feeling in a companion. A very worthy man may render you unhappy by an habitual disregard of your feelings. And there are many people who seem to be utterly insensible to the tender emotions of refined delicacy. A man who would subject you to continual mortification by his coarseness and vulgarity, would be incapable of sympathizing with you in all the varied trials of life. There is no need of your being deceived on this

point. If you have much delicacy of feeling yourself, you can easily discover the lack of it in others. If you have not, it will not be necessary in a companion.

5. Another requisite is a GOOD WORK ETHIC. Many people think some worldly assets are indispensably necessary. But a man of energy can, by the blessing of God, make his way through this world, and support a family, in this land of plenty, by his own industry, in some lawful calling. And you may be certain of the blessing of God, if you obey and trust him. A profession or calling, pursued with energy, is, therefore, all the estate you need require. But do not trust yourself with a man who is inefficient in his employment. This would be leaning upon a broken staff.

6. The person of your choice must be NEARLY OF YOUR OWN AGE. Should he be younger than yourself, you will be tempted to look upon him as an inferior; and old age will overtake you first. But I would suppose the idea of marrying a man advanced in years would be sufficiently revolting to the feelings of a young female to deter her from it. Yet such things often happen. But I consider it as contravening the order of nature, and therefore improper. In such case, you will be called upon rather to perform the office of a daughter and nurse, than a wife.

II. DESIRABLE qualifications

1. It is desirable that the man with whom you form a connection for life should possess a SOUND BODY. A man of vigorous constitution will be more capable of struggling with the difficulties and trials of this world, than one who is weak in body. Yet such an erroneous system has been pursued in the education of the generation just now coming upon the stage of action, that the health of very few sedentary people remains unimpaired. It would, therefore, be cruel selfishness to refuse to form a connection of this kind, on this ground alone, provided the individual has no settled disease upon him. A person of feeble constitution requires the comfort and assistance of a companion, more than one in vigorous health. But it certainly would not be your duty to throw yourself away upon one already under the influence of an incurable disease.

2. REFINEMENT OF MANNERS is a very desirable quality in a companion for life. This renders a person's society more agreeable and pleasant, and may be the means of increasing his usefulness. Yet it will not answer to make it a test of character; for it is often the case that men of the brightest talents, and of extensive education—who are in every other respect amiable and worthy—have neglected the cultivation of their manners; while there are very many, destitute alike of talent and education, who seem to be adept in the art of politeness. However, this may be cultivated, by a person of good sense, who appreciates its importance.

3. A SOUND JUDGMENT is also very necessary to enable a man to direct the common affairs of life. But this, also, may be cultivated by experience, and therefore cannot be called indispensable.

4. PRUDENCE is very desirable. The rashest youth, however, will learn prudence by experience. After a few falls, he will look forward before he steps, that he may foresee and shun the evil that is before him; but, if you choose such a one, take care that you do not fall with him, and both of you break your necks together.

5. It is a matter of great importance that the person with whom you form a connection for life, should belong to the same denomination of Christians with yourself. The separation of a family, in their attendance upon public worship, is productive of great inconvenience and perplexity; and

there is serious danger of its giving rise to unpleasant feelings, and becoming an occasion of discord. I think it should be a very serious objection against any man, that he belongs to a different communion from yourself. In addition to these, your own good sense and taste will suggest many other desirable qualities in a companion for life.

Upon receiving the addresses of a man, your first object should be to ascertain whether he possesses those prominent traits of character which you consider indispensable. If he lacks any one of these, you have no further inquiry to make. Inform him openly and sincerely of your decision; but spare his feelings, as far as you can consistently with Christian sincerity. He is entitled to your gratitude for the preference he has manifested for yourself. Therefore, treat him courteously and tenderly; yet let him understand that your decision is conclusive and final. If he possesses the feelings of a gentleman, this course will secure for you his esteem and friendship.

But, if you are satisfied with respect to these prominent traits of character, next look for those qualities which you consider desirable, though not indispensable. If you discover few or none of these, it will be a serious objection against him. But you need not expect to find them all combined in any one person. If you seek for a perfect character, you will be disappointed. In this, as well as in every other relation of life, you will need to exercise forbearance. The best of men are compassed about with imperfection and infirmity. Besides, as you are not perfect yourself, you have no right to look for perfection in a companion.

While deciding these points, keep your 'feelings' under control. Allow them to have no influence upon your judgment. A Christian should never be governed by impulse. Many people have, no doubt, destroyed their happiness for life, by allowing their feelings to get the better of their judgment. Seek wisdom from above. The Lord directs all our ways, and we cannot expect to be prospered in anything wherein we neglect to acknowledge him and seek his direction. But, when you have satisfied yourself in relation to these things, and the person whose addresses you are receiving has distinctly avowed his intentions, you may remove the restraint from your feelings; which, as well as your judgment, have a deep concern in the affair. A happy and prosperous union must have for its basis a mutual sentiment of affection, of a peculiar kind. If you are satisfied that this sentiment exists on his part, you are to inquire whether you can exercise it towards him. For, with many people of worth, whom we may esteem, there is often lacking a certain undefinable combination of qualities, not improperly termed the soul of character; which alone seems to call out the exercise of that peculiar sentiment of which we are speaking. But I seriously charge you never to form a connection which is not based upon this principle. Such depraved creatures as we are, need the aid of the warmest affection to enable us to exercise that mutual forbearance, so indispensable to the peace and happiness of the domestic circle. That the marital relation should be cemented by a principle of a peculiar kind, will moreover appear from the superiority of the soul over the body. When two human beings unite their destinies, there must be a union of soul, or else such union is but partial. And the union of soul must be the foundation of the outward union, and of course precede it. The same may likewise be inferred from the existence of such a principle in the human bosom. When Adam first saw Eve, he declared the nature of this union, and added, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife;" implying that the affection between the parties to this connection should be superior to all other human attachments. The frown of God must, then, rest upon a union founded upon any other principle; for by it the order of nature is contravened, and therefore the blessings of peace and happiness

cannot be expected to attend it. But love is not a principle which is brought into existence as it were by magic. It must always be exercised in view of an object. Do not, therefore, hastily decide that you cannot love a man who possesses the prominent traits of character necessary to render you happy. You ought, however, to be fully satisfied that such a sentiment, of a permanent character, does really exist in your own bosom, before you consent to a union. In your ordinary fellowship with gentlemen, much caution should be observed. Always maintain a dignity of character, and never condescend to trifle. But, in your conversation upon general subjects, you may exercise the same sociability and freedom which you would with ladies; not seeming to be sensible of any difference of gender. Indignantly repel any improper liberties; but never decline attentions which are considered as belonging to the rules of common politeness, unless there should be something in the character of the individual which would justify you in wishing wholly to avoid his society. Some men are so disagreeable in their attentions, and so obtrusive of their company, that they become a great annoyance to ladies. I think you would be justifiable in refusing ordinary attentions from such men, until they learn better manners.

Pay the strictest regard to propriety and delicacy, in all your conduct; yet do not maintain such a cold reserve and chilling distance, as to produce the impression, in the mind of everyone you meet, that you dislike his society. No gentleman of refined and delicate feelings will intrude his company upon ladies, when he thinks it is not desired; and you may create this impression, by carrying your reserve to an extreme. But the contrary extreme, of an excessive fondness for the society of gentlemen, is still more to be avoided. By cultivating an acute sense of propriety in all things, with a discrimination of judgment, you will be able generally to direct your conduct aright in these matters.

Never indulge feelings of partiality for any man until he has distinctly avowed his own sentiments, and you have deliberately determined the several points already mentioned. If you do, you may subject yourself to much needless disquietude, and perhaps the most unpleasant disappointments. And the wounded feeling thus produced may have an injurious effect upon your subsequent character and happiness.

CAUTIONS.

1. Do not allow this subject to occupy a very prominent place in your thoughts. To be constantly ruminating upon it, can hardly fail of exerting an injurious influence upon your mind, feelings, and deportment; and you will be almost certain to betray yourself, in the society of gentlemen, and, perhaps, become the subject of merriment, as one who is anxious for a husband.

2. Do not make this a matter of common conversation. There is, perhaps, nothing which has a stronger tendency to deteriorate the social fellowship of young people, than the disposition to give the subject of matrimonial alliances so prominent a place in their conversation, and to make it a matter of jesting and mirth. There are other subjects enough, in the wide fields of science, literature, and religion, to occupy the social hour, both profitably and pleasantly. A dignified reserve, on this subject, will protect you from rudeness, which you will be very likely to encounter, if you indulge in jesting and raillery in regard to it.

3. Do not speak of your own private affairs of this kind, so as to have them become the subject of conversation among the circle of your acquaintances. It certainly does not add to the esteem of a

young lady, among sensible people, for her to be heard talking about her beaux. Especially is this caution necessary in the case of a matrimonial engagement. Remember the old adage—"There's many a slip—Between the cup and the lip;" and consider how your feelings would be mortified, if, after making such an engagement generally known among your acquaintances, anything should occur to break it off. In such case, you will have wounded feeling enough to struggle with, without the additional pain of having the affair become a neighborhood talk.

4. Do not make an engagement a long time before you expect it to be consummated. Such engagements are surrounded with perils. A few years may make such changes in the characters and feelings of young people as to destroy the fitness and congeniality of the parties; while, if the union had been consummated, they would have assimilated to each other. In short, let me entreat you to cultivate the most delicate sense of propriety, in regard to everything having the most distant relation to this matter; and let all your feelings, conversation, and conduct, be regulated upon the most elevated principles of purity, refinement, and piety. But do not carry your delicacy and reserve to the extreme of prudery—which is an unlovely trait of character, and which adds nothing to the strength of virtue.

01.20. SUBMISSION, DEPENDENCE, CONTENTMENT

SUBMISSION. DEPENDENCE. CONTENTMENT. The secret of true happiness lies in a cordial acquiescence in the will of God. It is "sweet to lie passive in his hand—and know no will but his." The doctrine of a 'particular providence' is precious to the Christian's heart. It enables him to see the hand of God in every event. Hence the sinfulness of a repining, discontented, unsubmitive temper. It is difficult to reconcile the habitual indulgence of such a disposition with the existence of grace in the heart. The first emotion of the new-born soul is submission to the will of God. We are prone to lose sight of the hand of God in the little difficulties and perplexities which are of every-day occurrence, and to look only at second causes. And so we often do in more important matters. When we are injured or insulted by others, we are disposed to murmur and complain, and give vent to our indignation against the immediate causes of our distress; forgetting that these are only the instruments which God employs for the trial of our faith or the punishment of our sins.

Thus God permitted Satan to try the faith of Job. Thus he permitted Shimei to curse David. But the answer of this godly man is worthy of being imitated by all Christians under similar circumstances: "Let him curse, because the Lord has said unto him, Curse David." Thus, also, the Lord employed the envy of Joseph's brethren to save the lives of all his father's family. "But as for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive." The principal reason why the histories of the Bible are so much more instructive than other histories is, that the motives of men, and the secret agency of divine Providence, are brought to light. Hence, also, the reason why the events recorded in Scripture appear so marvelous. If we could see how the hand of God is concerned in all things that occur within our observation, they would appear no less amazing. In this doctrine, we have the strongest motive for a hearty and cheerful resignation to all the troubles and difficulties, trials and afflictions, which come upon us in his life, whatever may be their immediate cause. We know that they are directed by our heavenly Father, whose "tender mercies are over all his works," and who "does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." And, whether we are Christians or not, the duty of submission is the same. When we consider the relation which we sustain to God, as guilty rebels against his government, we must see that, whatever may be our afflictions, so long as we are out of hell, we are the monuments of his mercy. "Why does a living man complain—a man for the punishment of his sins?"

But, if we have evidence that we are the children of God, his promises furnish abundant consolation in every trial. We are assured "that all things work together for good, to those who love God." And of this we have many examples in the Holy Scriptures, where the darkest providences have proved, in the end, to be fraught with the richest blessings. It was so in the case of Joseph, already mentioned. We are also taught to look upon the afflictions of this life as the faithful corrections of a kind and tender Parent. "For whom the Lord loves, he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives." How consoling the reflection that all our sufferings are designed to mortify and subdue our corruptions, to wean us from the world, and lead us to a more humble and constant sense of dependence upon God!

Besides, the people of God have the most comforting assurances of his presence in affliction, if they will but trust in him. "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your steps." "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you: he shall never allow the righteous to be moved." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with his hand." How ungrateful for a child of God to repine at the dealings of such a tender and faithful Parent! O, the ingratitude of unbelief! Who can accuse the Lord of unfaithfulness to the least of his promises? Why, then, should we refuse to trust him, when the assurances of his watchful care and love are so full and so abundant?

We have not only strong ground of confidence in the Lord, under the pressure of afflictions in general, but we are particularly directed to look to him for the supply of our temporal needs. If we have evidence that we are living members of the body of Christ, growing in grace and in the knowledge of him, we have the assurance that all things needful for this life shall be supplied. Our Savior, after showing the folly of manifesting an anxious concern about the supply of our temporal needs, since the Lord is so careful in feeding the fowls of the air, and clothing the lilies and the grass of the field, says, "But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." By this, however, we are not to understand that the Lord will give us every earthly blessing which we desire. We are so shortsighted as often to wish for things which would prove injurious to us. But we are to understand that he will give us all that he sees best for us. And surely we ought to be satisfied with this; for he who sees the end from the beginning, must know much better than we what is for our good. The Scriptures abound with similar promises. "O, fear the Lord, you his saints; for there is no lack to those who fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing." "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily you shall be fed. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." "No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

It must, then, be a sinful distrust of the word of God, to indulge in anxious fears about the supply of our necessities. If we believed these promises, in their full extent, we would always rest in them, and never indulge an anxious thought about the things of this life. This God requires of us. "And seek not what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, neither be of doubtful mind." "Therefore take no anxious thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or with what shall we be clothed?" "Be anxious for nothing." And what can be more reasonable than this requirement, when he has given us such full and repeated assurances that he will supply all our needs? The silver and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, belong to our heavenly Father. When, therefore, he sees that we need any earthly blessing, he can easily order the means by which it shall be brought to us. From the precious truths and promises which we have been considering, we infer the duty of contentment in every situation of life. If God directs all our ways, and has promised to give us just what he sees we need, we surely ought to rest satisfied with what we have; for we know it is just what the Lord, in his infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness, sees fit to give us.

But the apostle Paul enforces this duty with direct precepts. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." "Having food and clothing, let us be therewith content." "Be content with such things as you have; for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Here he gives the promise of God as a reason for contentment. It is, then, evidently the duty of every Christian to maintain a contented and cheerful spirit in all circumstances.

This, however, does not forbid the use of all lawful and proper means to improve our condition. But the means must be used with entire submission to the will of God. The child of God should cast all his care upon him; and, when he has made all suitable efforts to accomplish what he considers a good object, he must commit the whole to the Lord, with a perfect acquiescence in his will—even to the utter disappointment of his own hopes.

01.21. Self-Examination

SELF-EXAMINATION In view of the positive injunctions of Scripture, no argument is necessary to show that self-examination is a duty. Paul says, "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves." But, if the word of God had been silent upon the subject, the importance of self-knowledge would have been a sufficient motive for searching into the secret springs of action which influence our conduct. A person ignorant of his own heart is like a merchant who knows nothing the state of his accounts, while every day liable to become a bankrupt; or like the crew of a leaky vessel, who are insensible to their danger. The professed follower of Christ, who knows not whether he is a true or false disciple, is in a condition no less dangerous.

Although we may be Christians without the assurance of our adoption, yet we are taught in the Holy Scriptures that such assurance is to be attained. Job, in the midst of his affliction, experienced its comforting support: "I know," says he, "that my Redeemer lives." David says, with confidence, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with your likeness." Paul expresses the like assurance: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." All Christians are taught to expect the same, and exhorted to strive after it: "And we desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope, unto the end." "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then have we confidence toward God." "He who believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself." "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption."

But, as gold dust is sometimes concealed in the sand, so grace in the heart may be so mingled with remaining corruption, that we cannot clearly distinguish its motions. It might not be for the benefit of a person of such low attainments in the divine life to receive an assurance of God's favor until these corruptions have been so far subdued as to give the principle of grace the ascendancy. Hence God has wisely directed that the sure evidence of adoption can be possessed only by those who have made such progress in holiness as to be able to discern the fruits of the Spirit in their hearts and lives. The witness of the Spirit must not be sought in any sudden impulses upon the mind—but in the real work of grace in the heart, conforming it to the image of God. Even if God should indulge us with such impulses or impressions, they would not be certain evidence of our adoption, because Satan can counterfeit experiences of this kind. Hence we may account for the strong confidence which is sometimes expressed by young converts who afterwards fall away. But when the image of God can be seen in our hearts and lives, we may be certain that we are his children. That this is the true witness of the Spirit, may be inferred from the passage last quoted. When this Epistle was written, it was the custom of princes to have their names and images stamped upon their seals. These seals, when used, would leave the impression of the name and image of their owners upon the wax. So, when God sets his seal upon the hearts of his children, it leaves an impression of his name and image. The same thing may be intended in Revelation,

where Jesus promises to give him that overcomes "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written." A figure somewhat similar is also used in the third chapter of Malachi. Speaking of the Messiah, the prophet says, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." A refiner of silver sits over the fire, with his eye steadily fixed upon the precious metal in the crucible, until he sees his own image in it, as we see our faces in the mirror. So the Lord will carry on his purifying work in the hearts of his children, until he sees his own image there. When this image is so plain and clear as to be distinctly discerned by us, then the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are his children. As love is the most prominent and abiding fruit of the Spirit, it may be the medium through which the union between God and the soul is seen, and by which the child of God is assured of his adoption. A strong and lively exercise of a childlike, humble love may give a clear evidence of the soul's relation to God as his child. "Love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not, knows not God; for God is love." As God is love, the exercise of that holy principle in the heart of the believer shows the impression of the divine image. "God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." Hence the apostle John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." But, if this love is genuine, it will regulate the emotions of the heart, and its effects will be visible in the lives of those who possess it. The same apostle says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments." So that, in order to have certain evidence of our adoption into the blessed family of which Jesus is the Elder Brother, all the fruits of the Spirit must have grown up to some degree of maturity. From the foregoing remarks, we see the great importance of self-examination. We must have an intimate acquaintance with the operations of our own minds, to enable us to distinguish between the exercise of gracious affections, and the selfish workings of our own hearts. And, unless we are in the constant habit of diligent inquiry into the character of our emotions, and the motives of our actions, this will be an exceedingly difficult matter. The Scriptures specify several objects for which this inquiry should be instituted, namely—

I. To discover our SINS, that we may come to Christ for pardon, and for grace to subdue them. David prays, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting." The prophet Jeremiah says, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord." This examination should be a constant work. We should search into the motives of our actions, and examine our pious feelings, to know, if possible, whether they come from the Spirit of God, or whether they are a fire of our own kindling. We must be cautious, however, lest, by diverting our attention from the truth, to examine the nature of the emotions produced by it, we should lose them altogether. This can better be determined afterwards, by recalling to recollection these emotions, and the causes which produced them. If they were called forth by correct views of truth, and if they correspond, in their nature, with the descriptions of gracious affections contained in the Bible, we may safely conclude them to be genuine.

But, as we are often under the necessity of acting without much deliberation; as we are so liable to neglect duty; and as every duty is marred by so much imperfection—it is not only proper, but highly necessary, that we should have stated seasons for retiring into our closets, and calmly and deliberately reviewing our conduct, our pious exercises, and the prevailing state of our hearts, and comparing them with the word of God. There are two very important reasons why this work should

be performed at the close of every day. 1. If neglected for a longer period, we may forget both our actions and our motives. It will be very difficult for us afterwards to recall them, so as to subject them to a thorough examination. 2. There is a great propriety in closing up the accounts of every day. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Every day will bring with it work enough for repentance. Again, when we lie down—we may awaken in eternity! What, then, will become of those sins which we have laid by for the consideration of another day? Let us, then, never give sleep to our eyes until we have searched out every sin of the past day, and made fresh application to the blood of Christ for pardon. This is, indeed, a very difficult work; but, by frequent practice, it will become less so. By sitting down in your closet, after finishing the duties of the day, and seriously and prayerfully engaging in this exercise, you may try your conduct and feelings by the rules laid down in the word of God. You may thus bring to remembrance the exercises of your heart, as well as your actions, and be reminded of neglected duty, and of those great practical truths which ought ever to be kept before your mind. You may bring up your sins, and set them in order before you, and discover your besetting sins. You may be led to the exercise of penitence, and be driven anew to the cross of Christ for pardon, and for strength to subdue indwelling corruption. Whenever you discover that you have exercised any correct feeling, or that your conduct has in any respect been conformed to the word of God, acknowledge with gratitude his grace in it, and give him the glory. Wherein you find you have been deficient, confess your sin before God, and apply afresh to the blood of Christ, which "CLEANSES from all sin." But be cautious that you do not put your feelings of regret, your tears and sorrows, in the place of the great sacrifice of Christ. Remember that no degree of sorrow can atone for sin; and that only is godly sorrow which leads to the blood of Jesus. Any peace of conscience obtained from any other source must be false peace. It is in believing, only, that we can have joy and peace.

You will find advantage from varying this exercise. When we frequently repeat anything in the same form, we are in danger of acquiring a careless habit, so that it will lose its effect. Sometimes take the ten commandments, and examine your actions and motives by them. And, in doing this, you will find great help from the explanation of the commandments, contained in the "Assembly's Shorter Catechism." This shows their spirituality, and brings them home to the heart. Again, you may take some portion of Scripture which contains precepts for the regulation of the conduct, and compare the actions of the day with them. Or you may take the life of Christ as a pattern, compare your conduct and motives with it, and see whether in all things you have manifested his spirit. But do not be satisfied until the exercise, however performed, has taken hold of the heart, and led to penitence for sin, and a sense of pardon through the blood of Christ, which accompanies true contrition; for "the Lord is near unto those who are of a broken heart, and saves such as are of a contrite spirit."

II. Another object of self-examination may be, to ascertain the reason why the Lord does not answer our PRAYERS. This reason may generally be found in ourselves. I know of but two exceptions. One is, when the thing we ask is not agreeable to the will of God. The other is, when the Lord delays to answer our prayers for the trial of our faith. The obstacles which exist in ourselves, to prevent his granting our requests, are generally some of the following:

1. We may be living in the practice of some sin, or the neglect of some duty. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," says the Psalmist, "the Lord will not hear me." "He who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." We may weep day and night on our knees before

God; yet, if we are living in the habitual neglect of duty, or if any sin cleaves to us for which we have not exercised repentance and faith in the atoning blood of Christ, we have no reason to expect that he will hear our prayers.

2. We may not be sufficiently humble before God. "Though the Lord is high, yet has he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knows afar off." "God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." "Whoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he who humble himself shall be exalted." Hence, if our hearts are proud, and we refuse to humble ourselves before God, he will not answer our prayers.

3. We may not desire the things we ask that God may be glorified, but that it may serve our own selfish gratification. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts." When we ask with such motives, we have no right to expect that God will hear our prayers.

4. We may not be asking in faith. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." "Without faith, it is impossible to please God."

5. We may be exercising an unforgiving temper; and if so, the Lord has declared that he will not hear our prayers. (Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25-26)

When, therefore, you have been for some time praying for any particular object, without receiving an answer, carefully examine yourself with reference to these points, and wherein you find yourself deficient, endeavor, in the strength of Christ, immediately to reform. If your circumstances will permit, set apart a day of fasting and prayer for this object. And, if the answer is still delayed, repeat the examination, until you are certain that you have complied with all the conditions of the promises.

III. Another object of self-examination is, to ascertain the cause of AFFLICTIONS, whether spiritual or temporal. If the Lord sends distress upon us, or hides from us the light of his countenance—he has some good reason for it. By reading the book of Haggai, you will discover the principles upon which God deals with his people; and there he says, "In the day of adversity consider." If, therefore, the work of your hands does not prosper, or if the Lord has withdrawn from you his special presence, be sure that something is wrong: it is time for you to "consider your ways." In the book referred to, the Lord informs the Jews of the cause of their poverty and distress. They had not built the house of God. He also tells them that the silver and the gold are his, and that he will bless them as soon as they do their duty. We are as dependent upon God's blessing now—as his people were then. If we withhold from him what he requires of us for advancing the interests of his kingdom, can we expect temporal prosperity? If we refuse to do our duty, can we expect his presence? These, then, should be the subjects of inquiry, in such circumstances. In such cases, also, it may be very proper to observe a day of fasting and prayer.

IV. Another object of self-examination is, to know whether we are true Christians. "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." This is a very important inquiry. It is intimately connected with every other, and should enter more or less into all. In order to prosecute this inquiry, you must make yourself acquainted with the evidences of Christian character. These are clearly exhibited in the Holy Scriptures. Study the Bible diligently and prayerfully, for the purpose of ascertaining the

genuine marks of saving grace. You may also find benefit from the writings of men of great personal experience, who have had much opportunity of observing the effects of true and false religion. In particular, I would recommend to you the careful study of President Edwards's "Treatise on Religious Affections." He was a man of great piety, who had attained to the full assurance of hope. He had also passed through a number of revivals of religion. The work of which I speak contains a scriptural view of the evidences of the new birth; and also points out, with great clearness and discrimination, the marks of false religion. He distinguishes between those things which may be common both to true and false religion, and those which are the certain marks of true conversion. But, in reading this work, especially the first part of it, you need, perhaps, to be cautioned against discouragement. While you allow the truth its most searching effect upon your heart, do not allow it to drive you to despair. You will, however, find the latter part of the book more encouraging. In the former part, where he is pointing out the marks of false religion, of selfishness, and of spiritual pride—it would seem as if none could escape being stripped of all their claims to true religion; but, in the latter part, where he describes the effects of true piety, the marks of humility, etc., the reading of it will be likely to discover to you the marks of a saving change, if you have any.

Self-examination, for this object, should be habitual. In reading the Bible, in meditation, in hearing the word—wherever you see an evidence of Christian character, inquire whether you possess it. But you ought, also, frequently to set apart seasons for the solemn and prayerful consideration of the important question, "Am I a Christian?" A portion of the Sabbath may be very properly spent in this way. You should enter upon this work with the solemnities of the judgment day before you. The Scriptures furnish abundant matter for self-examination. Bring the exercises of your heart, and the conduct of your life, to this unerring standard. You will also find much assistance in this exercise by the use of the following tracts, published by the American Tract Society: No. 21, entitled "A Closet Companion;" No. 146, entitled "Helps to Self-Examination;" and No. 165, entitled "True and False Conversions distinguished." You have likewise probably noticed several chapters in Doddridge's "Rise and Progress" admirably adapted to this object. I mention these because it is advantageous frequently to vary the exercise. Take time to perform the work of self-examination thoroughly, bringing to your aid all the information you can obtain from these and other sources—varying the exercise at different times, that it may not become superficial and formal.

I have prepared some questions, in my little work entitled "The Closet," both for the general purpose of inquiring as to the main question whether we are Christians, and also for particular occasions, as the close of the day, Sabbath evening, before communion, etc., to which I must refer you, instead of pursuing this part of the subject further, in this place. Should you, at any time, come to the deliberate conclusion that you are resting upon a false hope, give it up, but do not abandon yourself to despair. Go immediately to the cross of Christ! Give up your heart to him, as though you had never come before. There is no other way. This is the only refuge, and Jesus never sent a soul empty away. "The one who comes to me I will never cast out." Persevere, even though you find scarce evidence enough to give a faint glimmering of hope. Continually renew your repentance and faith in Christ. Diligence in self-examination may be a means of growth in grace; and if you are really a child of God, your evidences will increase and brighten, until you will be able to indulge "a good hope through grace." "For, in due time, we shall reap, if we faint not." And "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day."

V. Another object of self-examination is, to ascertain whether we are prepared to approach the Lord's table. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Here the duty of self-examination, before partaking of the Lord's supper, is evidently taught. And, in the next verse, we are told what is requisite to enable us to partake of this ordinance in an acceptable manner. It is, that we have faith to discern the Lord's body. A backslider in heart, even though a real Christian, is not prepared to partake of this spiritual feast, without renewing his repentance and faith. In this examination, two subjects of inquiry present themselves. 1. "Am I a Christian?" 2. "Am I growing in grace?" In regard to the first of these inquiries, enough has already been said. To answer the second, you will need consider, 1. Whether you were living in the exercise of gracious affections at the last communion; 2. Whether you have since made any progress in the divine life. For questions, I must again refer you to "The Closet."

If you have time to keep a journal, you may find some advantage from reviewing it on such occasions. It will aid your memory, and help you to give your past life a more thorough examination. You will thereby be the better able to judge whether you are making progress. It should, however, be written solely for your own private use, without the remotest idea of having it ever seen by others; or else it may become a snare to you. But, however unfit this examination may find you, do not let Satan tempt you to stay away from the Lord's table. It is your duty to commemorate his dying love. It is your duty, also, to do it with a suitable preparation of heart. Both these duties you will neglect by staying away. In doing so, you cannot expect God's blessing. But set immediately about the work of repentance. Come to the cross of Christ, and renew your application to his atoning blood. Give yourself away to God anew, and renew your covenant with him. In doing this, he will bless your soul; and the Lord's table will be a season of refreshing. But, if this preparation be heartfelt and sincere, its fruits will be seen in your subsequent life. Remember who has said, "be faithful unto death—and I will give you the crown of life!"

02.00. The Young Man's Guide to the Harmonious Development of Christian Character

The Young Man's Guide to the Harmonious Development of Christian Character by Harvey Newcomb, 1847 1. On Childhood and Youth 2. Nature and Objects of Education 3. Piety, as the Spring of Action, and Regulator of the Soul

4. Filial Piety 5. Treatment of Brothers and Sisters 6. Behavior at School 7. Behavior at Table 8. Behavior at Family Worship 9. Private Prayer

10. Habits 11. Education of the Body 12. On Useful Labor 13. Education of the Heart 14. Education of the Mind

15. Reading

16. Writing

17. Indolence 18. On Doing One Thing at a Time 19. On Finishing What Is Begun 20. Choice of Society, and Formation of Friendships 21. Bad Company. Mischievousness 22. On Amusements 23. Government of the Tongue 24. On the Art of Agreeable and Profitable Conversation 25. Inquisitiveness 26. On the Importance of Being Able to Say "No"

27. On Being Useful 28. On Being Contented 29. Union of Serious Piety with Habitual Cheerfulness

PREFACE

"Who reads a preface?" Many do not; but jump at once into the middle of a book. But it is well to know something about a book, before reading it; and who so likely to give you information respecting the contents of a book as the Author himself? I wish to see the youth of my country come forward upon the stage of life, models of excellence, with characters formed for the times in which they are to act. How much influence my book may have, in securing such a result, I cannot tell; but my design in writing it has been, to contribute something toward forming the character of some of those who are to be our future electors, legislators, governors, judges, ministers, lawyers, and physicians—after the best biblical model. And, from the kind reception of my former attempts to benefit American youth, I trust they will give a candid hearing to the few hints contained in the following pages. It is intended for young gentlemen—in early youth, from eight or ten to fifteen or sixteen years of age. It covers substantially the same ground occupied by a work for girls issued simultaneously with it; and some of the chapters are identical in the two books, while others are entirely different, and some partially so. It is the hope of the Author, that everyone who reads it, will strive to be a Christian man, in the highest sense of the term.

Harvey Newcomb From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia Harvey Newcomb (September 2, 1803-August 30, 1863) was an American clergyman and writer.

He was born in Thetford, Vermont. He removed to western New York in 1818, engaged in teaching for eight years, and from 1826 till 1831 edited several journals, of which the last was the Christian Herald. For the ten following years he was engaged in writing and preparing books for the American Sunday School Union. He was licensed to preach in 1840, took charge of a Congregational church in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, and subsequently held other pastorates.

He was an editor of the Boston Traveller in 1849, and in 1850-1 assistant editor of the New York Observer, also preaching in the Park Street mission church of Brooklyn, New York, and in 1859 he became pastor of a church in Hancock, Pennsylvania. He contributed regularly to the Boston Recorder and to the Youth's Companion, and also to religious journals. He wrote 178 volumes, of which fourteen are on church history, the others being chiefly books for children, including Young Lady's Guide (New York, 1839); How to be a Man (Boston, 1846); How to be a Lady (1846); and Cyclopaedia of Missions (1854; 4th ed., 1856). He also was the author of Manners and Customs of the North American Indians (2 vols., Pittsburgh, 1835).

He died in Brooklyn.

02.01. On Childhood and Youth

ON CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH In one sense, very young people are apt to think too much of themselves—in another, not enough. When they think they know more than their parents and teachers, or other elderly people, and so set up to be bold and smart, then they think too much of themselves. It used to be said, when I was a boy, that "Young folks think old folks are fools; but old folks know young folks are fools." Although I would be very far indeed from calling you fools, because you have already acquired much knowledge, and have the capacity for acquiring much more, yet, with reference to such knowledge as is acquired by experience, and in comparison with what there is to be known, there is "more truth than poetry," in the old adage. But, when young people suppose it is of no consequence what they do, or how they behave, because they are young, then they do not think enough of themselves. Should you see a man riding with a little stick for a whip, you would not think his stick worth your notice at all; but the biggest tree that ever I saw grew from a little willow stick that a man rode home with, and then planted in his garden. You have sat under the beautiful shade of a great elm-tree; and when you have looked upon its tall, majestic trunk, and its great and strong branches, with their ten thousand little limbs waving gracefully before the wind, you have been filled with admiration and delight. "What a mighty tree!" you say; "I wonder how long it has been growing." But the seed of that tree, when it was planted, many years ago, was no bigger than a mustard-seed; and if you had seen the little tiny sprout that your grandfather was tying up with so much care, when it was a few years old, you would have wondered that a man should think so much of such an insignificant twig. But, if he had let it grow up as it began, without any care, it never would have been the stately tree it is now. That was the most important period in its life, when it was a little twig. It began to lean over, and grow crooked and ugly. If it had not been trained up then, it would have continued to grow worse and worse; and, after it had grown to be a tree, it could not have been straightened at all. Now, you are, in some respects, like this little twig. You, too, have just begun to be; and now your character is pliable, like the young tree. But, unlike it, your being is to have no end. Instead of growing a few hundred years, like a great tree, you are to live forever. And everything that you do now must have an influence in forming your character for your whole being. In this latter sense, you cannot think too much of yourself; for you are the seed of an immortal being. Did you ever stand by the shore of a placid lake or pond, in a calm, sunny day, and throw a little stone into its smooth, silvery waters? Did you observe how, first, a little ripple was formed around the place where it struck, and this was followed by a wave, and then, beyond, another, and another, until the whole surface of the water was disturbed? It was a very little thing that you did; and yet it agitated a great body of water. So it is with childhood and youth; the most insignificant action you perform, in its influence upon your character, will reach through the whole period of your existence.

It will not do for you to say, "It is no matter how I behave now; I shall do differently, when I am a man." "But would you have a little boy act like a man?" Not exactly. I would not have him pretend to be a man, and appear as though he thought himself a full-grown gentleman. I would not have him imitate the toad, which undertook to swell to the size of an ox, and in the operation burst open.

But, I would have him manly in his childishness. I would have him courageous, to meet difficulties, noble and generous in his feelings and actions, and courteous in his manners, always, in all companies, and in all places, behaving in a manner fitting a person of his age. A well-bred boy, who knows what is fitting and proper, and carries it out in his behavior, is already a gentleman. But the mischievous, rude, unmannerly lad, who pays no regard to propriety of conduct, will never be a gentleman. And a boy who has the courage to face difficulties, and the energy and perseverance to accomplish what he undertakes, is already a man; while the indolent, cowardly, "I can't" boy, will never be a man. It is my desire, in this book, to lead you to the formation of a solid, energetic, manly character, combined with true gentility of manners; and then you will be both a man and a gentleman.

Very young people sometimes live in an ideal world. What they imagine in their plays seems real. They have a little fairy world in their minds, in which they live more, and take greater delight, than they do in what is real and true. To this I do not object, within certain bounds; but often it becomes a passion, so that they lose all relish for sober, every-day life. For such creatures of fancy real life is too dull, and what concerns realities, too grave. Perhaps they will not like my book, because it treats of things true and real. But I beg them to consider that, through the whole of their being, they are to be concerned chiefly with realities; and therefore, to do them substantial good, we must speak to them of things real, and not of those airy things that belong to the fairy land. But real things are, truly, more interesting than the creations of fancy. The things of fancy interest you more only because they appear new and less common. A person who has always lived in the country, and is used to sitting under the wide-spreading, shady tree, would be more pleased with the picture of a tree than with a tree itself. But one brought up in the city would cast away the picture, and hasten to enjoy the cool shade of the beautiful tree. A castle in the air may please the fancy; but you need a real house to live in.

02.02. Nature and Objects of Education

NATURE AND OBJECTS OF EDUCATION

Perhaps some of my readers, when they see the title of this chapter, will think only of confinement in school, of books, and of hard study, and so be inclined to pass over it, as a dry subject, which they have so much to do with, every day, that they have no wish to think of it in a moment of relaxation. But I beg them to stop a minute, and not throw me away, among the old school-books, until they have heard me through. I assure them that I use the term education in a far different sense. I think it means much more than going to school and studying books. This is only a small part of education. Mr. Walker defines education, "The formation of manners in youth." But this is a very imperfect definition; and I am afraid there may be found some who would even doubt whether education has anything to do with manners. Mr. Webster gives a better definition:—"Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations;"—all, in fact, that is necessary to make a man or a woman—a gentleman or a lady. The original root, from which the word education is derived, means to lead out, to conduct, to form, to fashion, to beat out, to forge. It was used with reference to the forging of an instrument out of a piece of metal, or the chiseling of a statue out of a block of marble. This furnishes a good illustration of my ideas of education. It is a process by which a character is formed out of crude or unwrought materials. It is not confined to mere school learning. A person may be very learned, and yet not half educated. There are many steps in the process. The ore must first be dug up by the miner; then smelted at the furnace, and the metal separated from the dross; then wrought into bars at the foundry; afterwards forged by the smith; and then, finally, polished by the finisher. The marble must first be quarried, or blasted out of the ledge; then cut into blocks; then transported; then wrought with the hammer and chisel; and finally, polished. This gives a good idea of education. It is not merely what is done to form the character in school; but it comprises all the influences which are exerted upon the young, in training them up and forming their characters. Education begins in the family. It is carried forward in the school. It is affected, for good or for evil, by the influence of public worship, lectures, books, amusements, scenery, companions, &c. In all places and circumstances, something is doing towards the formation of character.

Yet there is one important respect in which education, or the formation of character, differs essentially from the process described in this illustration. The block of marble, or the piece of metal, is passive; the whole process is performed upon it by another. But no person can be educated in this way; everyone that is educated must be active. You may be drilled through all the schools, and have every advantage at home and in society; and yet, without your own active cooperation, you can never be educated. But, if you are determined to be educated, you will turn everything to some account. Everything will be a school to you; for you will make contributions to your stock of knowledge from every object you see; and by seeking to act discreetly, wisely, and correctly, in every place, you will be constantly forming good habits. Like the little busy bee, you

will suck honey from every flower. You will commune with your own heart upon your bed, and exercise your powers of thought in useful meditation. You will converse with God in your secret place, and seek wisdom of Him who has promised to give liberally to those that ask. In company, you will be more ready to hear than to speak; and you will never meet with any so ignorant but you may learn from them some useful lessons. You will exercise your mind upon every person and object you meet. You will study philosophy in the fields, by the brooks, on the hills, in the valleys, and upon the broad canopy of heaven. It has been well observed, that the difference between a wise man and a fool is, that one goes through the world with his eyes wide open, while the other keeps them shut.

You will perceive, then, that your education is continually going on, whether you think of it or not. Your character is constantly forming. It is your business to keep out of the way of bad influences, and submit yourself to the molding of the good. Keep in mind the great truth that you are forming a character for eternity. Some years ago, there were found on the banks of the Mississippi River the tracks of a human being, deeply imprinted in the solid rock. These tracks were made in the soft clay, which in time became hardened, and formed into stone;—now, the impression is immovable. You now resemble this soft clay. Everything with which you come in contact makes an impression. But, as you grow older, your character acquires solidity, and is less and less affected by these influences, until at length it will be like the hard stone, and the impressions made upon you at this season will become confirmed habits.

All the impressions made upon your character ought to be such as will not need to be removed. Washington Allston, the great painter, had been a long time at work on a most magnificent painting. He had nearly completed it, when his keen eye discovered some defects in a portion of the piece. He hastily drew his rough brush over that portion of the picture, intending to paint it anew. But in the midst of his plans, death seized him, and his painting remains, just as he left it. No other person can carry out the conception that was in his mind. If you allow wrong impressions to be made upon your forming character, death may meet you with his stern mandate, and fix them forever, as immovable as it left the rough print of the coarse brush upon Allston's canvass.

02.03. Piety, as the Spring of Action, and Regulator of the Soul

PIETY, AS THE SPRING OF ACTION, AND REGULATOR OF THE SOUL A watch, to one who had never seen such a piece of mechanism before, would be a great wonder. It is an object of much curiosity to the natives of savage and barbarous tribes, visited by the missionaries. It seems to speak and move, as though instinct with life. I have read, somewhere, of a poor savage, who, seeing a white man's watch lying on the ground, and hearing it tick, supposed it to be some venomous reptile, and, with a stone, dashed it in pieces. A watch is an object of no less wonder to a child. Children are full of curiosity, as my readers well know. They wish to examine everything they see—to take it in pieces, and see how it is made. I dare say my readers remember the time when they sat on their father's knee, and modestly requested him to show them the little wheels of his watch.

If I could sit down with my young friends, and take my watch in pieces, I would teach them a useful lesson. I would show them how a watch resembles a human being. There is the case, which may be taken off, and put by itself, and still the watch will go as well as ever. In this respect, it is like the human body. Death separates it from the soul, and yet the soul remains, with all its active powers. It still lives. The inside of the watch, too, resembles the soul. It has a great many different parts, all working together in harmony—a great many wheels, all moving in concert. So the soul has a great many different powers or faculties, all designed to operate in concert with each other, as the understanding, the judgment, the conscience, the will, the affections, the memory, the passions, desires, etc.—and each one of these has a part to act, as important for the man as the several wheels and springs of the watch. If every part of the watch is in order, and in its proper place, it will keep exact time; but, if one wheel gets disordered, it will derange the whole. The secret power that moves the watch is unperceived. If you examine, you will see a large wheel, with a smooth surface, round which is wound a long chain, attached to another wheel, with ridges for the chain to run upon. Inside of the first-named wheel is the main-spring, which, by means of the chain, moves the whole machinery. The WILL is the main-spring of the soul. By a mysterious, invisible chain, it holds all the powers of the soul and body at its command. Not only the operations of the mind, but the motions of the body are controlled by the will.

But, if there were no check upon the mainspring of the watch, it would not give the time of day. It would set all the wheels in rapid motion, and in a few moments the watch would run down. To prevent this, there is a balance-wheel, which turns backwards and forwards, by means of a fine spring, called the hair-spring, and so keeps the whole machinery in a regular motion. To this is attached a little lever, called the regulator, which, by a gentle touch, works on this delicate spring, so as to move the balance-wheel faster or slower, as the case may be, to make the movement exact and regular.

Now, if there were no checks on the will, it would run on impetuously in its course, without regard to consequences. And this we often see in people called willful, self-willed, headstrong. Children are often so; if let alone, their stubborn will would lead them to rush on headlong to their own

destruction. Without meaning to be very accurate in these illustrations, I shall call judgment the balance-wheel. This is the faculty which perceives, compares, and decides, keeps the mind balanced, and prevents its running to extremes either way. The hair-spring and regulator of the watch I shall compare with conscience. A very slight touch of the regulator moves the hair-spring, and gives a quicker or a slower motion to the balance-wheel. But, if the watch is out of order, oftentimes the movement of the regulator has no effect upon it. So, when the soul is in order, a very slight touch of conscience will affect the judgment and regulate the will. But often, the soul is so much out of order, that conscience will have no effect upon it. But who touches the regulator of the watch? There is nothing in the watch itself to do this. The power that moves the regulator is applied to it. So, the conscience is moved. The Word of God enlightens the conscience, and the Spirit of God applies the word. And this brings me to the point which I had in my mind when I began this chapter. What a poor thing a watch is, when it is out of order. It is of no use. A watch is made to keep the time of day; but, when it is out of order, it will keep no time.

Or, if it is in order, and yet not regulated, it will not keep the right time. Now until the heart is changed by the grace of God, the soul is out of order. It does not answer the purpose for which it was made. The will is wrong; the judgment is wrong; the conscience is wrong. And, whatever cultivation may be bestowed upon the mind, it will not act aright. In the very beginning, then, you lack piety, as the main-spring of action, and the regulator of the soul. Without this, you are not prepared to begin anything aright. Indeed, without it, you have no sufficient motive to action. You seem to be toiling and laboring and wearying yourself for nothing. But piety towards God gives a new impulse to the mind. When you set out to improve your mind, if you have no piety, the object to be gained by it is very small. It can secure to you no more than, perhaps, a little additional enjoyment, for the brief space you are to continue in this world. But piety opens to you a wide field of usefulness in this life, and the prospect of going forward in the improvement of your mind as long as eternity endures. It must, therefore, give new spring and vigor to all the faculties of the soul. It does more. It regulates the powers of the mind, and the affections of the heart, and gives a right direction to them all.

I would persuade you, then, as the first and great thing, to seek God. Remember what Christ has said—"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Here is the promise that you shall have all else that is needful, if you seek God first. Yield your heart to him, and have his kingdom set up there. Let him rule in your heart, and devote yourself to his service, and he will supply all your need. This, also, will give a right direction to all your faculties, and lay a good foundation of character. But, without it, you will be like a watch without a balance-wheel or a regulator; you will be fit neither for this life nor that which is to come. And, it is of the utmost importance that you should become pious now, while you are young. If you would form a good character, you must have a good foundation laid at the beginning. Nothing but this can make a good foundation. All your habits ought to be formed and settled upon pious principles. Pious motives should enter into all your efforts to improve your mind and cultivate your affections. And, should you neglect true religion now, and afterwards, by the grace of God, be led to devote yourself to him, you will find it hard and difficult to overcome the wrong habits of mind and conduct which you will have formed.

Piety, then, is the first thing to be considered, in the formation of character. And remember, also, that you are forming character for eternity; and that your whole being, through a never ending

existence, is to be affected by the character which you form now in your childhood and youth. If you lay the foundation of your character now in the love and fear of God, it will rise higher and higher, in excellence, beauty, and loveliness, forever and ever. But if you lay the foundation in selfishness and sin, and build accordingly, it will forever be sinking lower in degradation and deeper in wretchedness.

02.04. Filial Piety

FILIAL PIETY

Next to your duty to God comes your duty to your parents; and you can never form an excellent, amiable, and lovely character, unless the foundation of it is laid in filial piety, as well as in piety towards God. Solomon says to the young, "Hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto your head, and chains around your neck." Nothing will make you appear so lovely in the eyes of others as a dutiful behavior towards your parents; and nothing will make you appear so unamiable and unlovely as a disrespectful, disobedient demeanor towards them. No ornament sits so gracefully upon youth as filial piety; no outward adorning can compare with it.

Filial piety calls into exercise feelings towards your parents, similar to those which piety towards God calls into exercise towards him; such as esteem and veneration of his character, love to his person, confidence in his word, submission to his authority, and penitence for offences against him. When the heart is habituated to the exercise of these feelings towards parents, it is prepared the more readily to exercise them towards God. The promises which God has made to those who honor their parents, and his threatenings against those who dishonor them, are similar to those which he has made respecting honor and obedience to himself. You owe it, therefore, to God, to exercise filial piety, because he has required it, and because it is one of the means he employs to cultivate piety towards himself.

Gratitude, also, should lead to filial piety, as well as to piety towards God; for what God is to man, only in a lower sense, the parent is to his child. Your parents are, under God, the authors of your being. The greater part of parents' lives is spent in rearing, supporting, and educating their children. For this they wear out their strength in anxious care and toil; they watch beside the bed of their children when they are sick, with tender solicitude and sleepless vigilance; they labor to provide for them. But good parents are, most of all, anxious that their children should grow up intelligent and virtuous, pious and happy. There is no being but God to whom children are so much indebted as to a faithful parent; and almost all the blessings that God bestows upon them come through their parents.

Filial piety has great influence on future character. One who has never been in the habit of submitting to others, will always be headstrong and self-willed; and such a character nobody loves. You cannot always do as you please; and, if such is your disposition, you will always be unhappy when your will is crossed. You will be unwilling to submit to necessary restraints, and this will irritate, and keep you in misery; for you will never see the time in your life when you will be so entirely independent of others that you can have your own way in everything. Even the king on his throne cannot do this. But, if you have always been in the habit of submitting to your parents, these necessary restraints will be no burden. If, then, you would be respected, beloved, and happy, when you grow up and take your place in society, you must honor your parents. Cultivate the habit of submission to their authority; of respectful attention to their instructions; and of

affection and respect to them. These are the habits that will make you respected, beloved, and happy. But as God has joined a curse to parental impiety, so he makes it punish itself. And thus you will find that it is generally followed with the most dreadful consequences. Of this I might give many painful examples; but the narratives would swell my book to an immoderate size. The whole duty of children to parents, is expressed by God himself in one word—HONOR. This word is chosen, with great felicity, to express all the various duties of children toward their parents. There is a great deal of meaning in this little word, honor. Do you ask, "How shall I honor my parents?" In the first place, you must honor them in your heart, by loving and reverencing them, and by cultivating a submissive, obedient disposition. It is not honoring your parents, to indulge an unsubmitive, turbulent spirit. To be angry with your parents, and to feel that their lawful commands are hard or unreasonable—is dishonoring them. The authority which God has given your parents over you is for your good, that they may restrain you from evil and hurtful practices, and require you to do what will be, in the end, for your benefit. When they restrain you, or require you to do what is not pleasing to you, they have a regard to your best interests. To be impatient of restraint, and to indulge hard feelings toward them, is doing them great dishonor. If you could read the hearts of your parents, and see what a struggle it costs them to interfere with your inclinations, you would feel differently. But these rebellious feelings of yours are not only against your parents, but against God, who gave them this authority over you.

Children also honor or dishonor their parents by their words. You honor them, by addressing them in respectful language, and in a tone of voice indicating reverence and submission, giving them those titles that belong to their superior station. An example of this we have in the answer of Samuel to what he supposed the call of Eli—"Here am I,"—a form of speech used by servants to their masters, and implying attention to what was said, and a readiness to execute what was commanded. But parents are dishonored, when their children answer them gruffly, or speak in a sharp, positive, angry, or self-important tone; or when they neglect to accompany their address with the usual titles of respect, but speak out bluntly, "Yes," or "No." This shows the state of the heart. And I think the reason why it is so difficult, in these days, to teach children to say, "Yes, sir," "No, ma'am," etc., is, that they do not feel in their hearts the respect which these terms imply. You will perceive, by this remark, that I have no respect for the notion which prevails, in some quarters, that these expressions are not genteel.

Children likewise dishonor their parents, when they answer back, and argue against their commands, or excuse themselves for not obeying. It is as much as to say, they are wiser than their parents—which is doing them a great dishonor. To speak to them in disrespectful, reproachful, or passionate language, or to speak of them or their authority in such language to others, is also a great offence against their honor. Under the law of Moses, God punished this offence in the same manner that he did blasphemy against himself—"He that curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." This shows what a great offence it is in his sight.

Another way in which you honor your parents is, by giving respectful attention to their instruction and counsels. God has committed your instruction and training to them; and when they teach or advise you according to the Scripture, their instructions are the voice of God to you. If you despise their instruction, you cast contempt upon God, who speaks through them, and who says, "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother." It is very natural for children to wish to follow their own inclinations. The impetuosity of youth would hurry them on,

heedlessly, in the high-road to ruin. And, often, they despise the wholesome instruction and advice of their parents, as only designed to interfere with their pleasures, and abridge their enjoyments; while, in truth, their parents look beyond mere pleasure—to that which is of greater importance. They look upon these things in the light which age and experience has given them.

If you were going to a strange place, in a way with which you were not acquainted, and should meet one that had been that way before, you would put confidence in what he should tell you of the way, and, follow his directions. Your parents have passed through the period of life on which you are now entering, and they know the way. You will do well to confide in them, and abide by their instructions. If you neglect to do so, you will be sure to get into difficulty. The path of life is beset, on every side, with by-paths, leading astray; and these by-paths are full of snares and pitfalls, to catch the unwary, and plunge them into ruin. Your parents have become acquainted with these ways, and know their dangers. If they are godly people, and understand their duty to you, they will warn you against them; and it will be the height of folly for you to disregard their warnings. Multitudes, by doing so, have rushed heedlessly on to ruin.

You must honor your parents, also, by a prompt and cheerful obedience to their lawful commands. I say lawful, because no one ought to obey a command to do what is positively wrong. If a wicked parent should command his child to lie, or to steal, or to break any of God's commands, it would be the child's duty to refuse, and meekly submit to the punishment which the parent might inflict. It is not often that such things happen among us; but our missionaries in Constantinople have related two instances that are in point. Two little Armenian girls had learned to read, and obtained from the missionaries some ideas of Christian morality. A person knocked at the door of their house, and their father, not wishing to see him, told one of them to go and tell the person that he was not at home. "That would be telling a lie," said the daughter. "What then?" said the father; "it is a very little thing. You have only to say that I am not at home." "But, father," she replied, "the Bible says it is wicked to tell lies, and I cannot tell a lie." He was angry, and called his other daughter, and told her to go. She replied, "Father, I cannot, for it is wicked to lie." These children did right in refusing to obey such a command. But in no other case, except when told to do what is wrong, will a child be justified in refusing to obey.

Obedience must be prompt and cheerful. Your parents are not honored, when obedience is delayed to suit your convenience; nor when you answer back, or try to reason against your parents' commands, or plead for delay, that you may first finish your own work. A parent who is honored will never have to repeat the same command. Some children are bent on having their own way, and attempt to carry their point by showing their parents that their way is best; which is the same as saying to them that they are more ignorant than their children. Neither is sullen obedience honoring your parents. Some children, who dare not disobey their parents, will go about doing what is required of them with great reluctance, with perhaps a sullen expression of the countenance, an angry step, or a slam of the door, or some other show of passion. Such conduct is a grief to parents, and an offence against God, who will not count that as obedience, which is not done cheerfully. But if you truly honor your parents from the heart, you will not wait for their commands. You will be always ready to obey the slightest intimation of their wishes. It is a great grief to a parent, when, out of respect to his child's feelings, he has expressed his wish, to be obliged to add his command, before the thing will be done. But filial piety never appears so amiable and lovely as when it anticipates the wishes of parents, and supersedes the necessity of

expressing those wishes in advice or commands.

If you honor your parents in your heart, you will pay an equal regard to their counsels and commands, whether they are present or absent. If you cast off their authority as soon as you are out of their sight, you greatly dishonor them. Such conduct shows that you do not honor them at all in your heart, but obey them only when you cannot disobey without suffering for it. But if you keep their authority always present with you, then you will do them great honor; for you show that they have succeeded in fixing in your heart a deep-seated principle of respect and affection for them. If you truly honor your parents in your heart, you will obey them as well when they are absent as present. The parents' authority and honor are always present with the good child.

Children, likewise, honor or dishonor their parents in their general behavior. If they are rude and uncivil, they reflect dishonor upon their parents; for people say, they have not been trained and instructed at home. But when their behavior is respectful, correct, pure, and amiable—it reflects honor upon the parents. People will judge of the character of your parents by your behavior. Are you willing to hear your parents reproachfully spoken of? No, your cheek would glow with indignation at the person who should speak ill of your father or your mother. But you speak evil of them, in your conduct, every time you do anything that reflects dishonor upon them in the eyes of others. The blame of your conduct will be thrown back upon your parents. But the true way to honor your parents, at all times and in all circumstances, is, to have your heart right with God. If you have true piety of heart toward God, you will show piety toward your parents; for you will regard the authority of his commandment, and delight in doing what will please him. The fear of God, dwelling in your heart, will lead you to reverence all his commands, and none more continually and conscientiously than the one which requires you to honor your parents. Everything that you do for them will be done, "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but with good will, doing service as to God, and not to man."

Boys of a certain age are frequently disposed to show their importance, by assuming to be wiser than their parents. They call in question the wisdom of their parents' directions, and seek, in every possible way, to set up their own will. This is particularly the case with respect to the authority of the mother; they feel too big to be governed by a woman; and if obliged to obey, they will be sullen about it. Instead of requiting her care, by studying to be helpful—anticipating her wishes—they seem to lose all sense of obligation, and regard what she requires of them as an unreasonable interference with their pleasures; and so, they will meet her requests in a snarling, snappish manner, like an impertinent young mastiff, slighting, in every possible way, the thing to be done. And if, in the Providence of God, such boys are left without a father, they take advantage of the widowhood of their mother, to resist her authority. I can scarcely think of anything more unmanly than this. It is base and despicable. The mother, by all the ties of gratitude, in these desolate circumstances, is entitled to the kindness, assistance, and protection, of her sons; and to rebel against her authority, because she may not have strength to enforce it, manifests a very black heart. A young man, who, in any circumstances, will treat his mother ill, is to be despised; but one who will take advantage of the helplessness of her widowhood, to cast off her just authority, is to be detested and abhorred.

Nothing has, perhaps, a greater influence upon the future character of the man than the trait of which we are speaking. The boy that is obedient and submissive to parental authority will make a

good citizen. He has learned to obey, from his childhood; and he will be obedient to the laws of his country; he will be respected in society, and may rise to posts of honor. But the disobedient boy, who is turbulent and ungovernable at home, will make a bad member of society. Never having learned how to obey, he will be disobedient to the laws, and incur their penalty; he will be found in evil company; engaged in mobs and riots; make disturbance, etc., until, perhaps, he will land at last in prison, or be launched into eternity from the gallows. I might easily fill the rest of this volume with the detail of cases, in which a career of crime, ending in prison or on the gallows, has been commenced in disobedience to parents, and in very many cases, disobedience to widowed mothers.

02.05. Treatment of Brothers and Sisters

TREATMENT OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS The family is a little kingdom in miniature. The father and mother are king and queen; and children, and others residing in the family, are the subjects. I have treated at large, in the last chapter, on your duties to your parents; but I must not pass over your behavior towards the other members of the family. And here, I wish you to keep in mind all I have said about the formation of character. Remember, that the character you form in the family will, in all probability, follow you through life. As you are regarded by your own brothers and sisters at home, so, in a great measure, will you be regarded by others, when you leave your father's house. If you are manly, amiable, kind, and courteous, at home—so you will continue to be; and these traits of character will always make you beloved. But if you are peevish, ill-natured, harsh, uncourteous, or overbearing, at home, among your own brothers and sisters—so will you be abroad; and, instead of being beloved, you will be disliked and shunned. The best general direction that I can give is, that you carry out the golden rule in your behavior toward your brothers and sisters, and all other people who reside in the family. If you do to them as you would wish them to do to you, all will be well. But I must be a little more particular. Boys are often disposed to assume a dictatorial, domineering air toward their sisters, as though they thought themselves born to rule, and were determined to exercise their dominion over their sisters, because they have not strength to resist their tyranny. But I can hardly think of anything more unmanly. It shows a very base spirit, destitute of noble and generous feelings, to take advantage of the weakness of others to tyrannize over them. But to do this to those who, by the relation they bear to you, are entitled to your love and protection, is base beyond description. The same is true, though perhaps in a less degree, in regard to the conduct of an older brother toward a younger brother. A brother should be kind, tender, courteous, and delicate, in his behavior toward his sisters, never treating them with rudeness or neglect, and standing ready always to protect them from the rudeness of other boys. He should never speak gruffly to them, nor in a lordly, domineering, or contemptuous manner. Such conduct toward other misses or young ladies would be esteemed very unkind and ungentlemanly; and why should it not be so esteemed at home? Are your own sisters entitled to less respect than strangers?

Accustom yourself to make confidants of your sisters. Let them understand your feelings, and know your designs; and pay a suitable regard to their advice. By this means you may be saved from many a snare, and you will secure their affection and sympathy. Never form any design, or engage in any enterprise, which you are ashamed to divulge to them. If you do, you may be sure it will not end well.

One rule, well observed at home, among brothers and sisters, would go far towards making them accomplished gentlemen and ladies, in their manners—**BE COURTEOUS TO EACH OTHER.** Never allow yourself to treat your brothers or sisters in a manner that would be considered rude or ungentlemanly, if done to other young people visiting in the family. Especially, never allow yourself to play tricks upon them, to tease them, or, in a coarse, rough manner, to criticize or ridicule their conduct, especially in the presence of others. But if you see anything that you think needs

reforming, kindly remind them of it in private. This will have a much better effect than if you mortify them, by exposing their faults before company. Be careful of their feelings, and never needlessly injure them.

Boys sometimes take delight in crossing the feelings of their brothers and sisters, interfering with their plans, and vexing them, out of sheer mischief. Such conduct is especially unamiable, and it will tend to promote ill-will and contention in the family. Be not fond of 'tattling' against them. If they do anything very much amiss, it will be your duty to acquaint your parents with it. But in little things, of small consequence, it is better for you kindly to remonstrate with them, but not to appeal to your parents. In some families, when the children are at home, your ears are continually ringing with the unwelcome sounds, "Mother, John"—"Father, Susan"—"Mother, George," etc.—a perpetual string of complaints, which makes the place more like a bedlam than a quiet, sweet home. There is no sight more unlovely than a quarrelsome family—no place on earth more undesirable than a family of brothers and sisters who are perpetually contending with each other. But I know of no place, this side heaven, so sweet and attractive as the home of a family of brothers and sisters, always smiling and happy, full of kindness and love, delighting in each other's happiness, and striving how much each can oblige the other. If you would have your home such a place, you must not be selfish; you must not be too particular about maintaining your own rights; but be ready always to yield rather than to contend. This will generally have the effect to produce the same disposition in your brothers and sisters. And then the strife will be—which can be most generous.

Young men and boys should cultivate a love of home as a defense against the temptations to frequent bad company and places of resort dangerous to their morals. A boy or a young man, who is deeply and warmly attached to his mother and sisters, will prefer their company—to that of the depraved and worthless; and he will not be tempted to go abroad in search of pleasure, when he finds so much at home. It is a delusive idea, that any greater pleasure can be found abroad than is to be enjoyed at home; and that boy or young man is in a dangerous way, to whom the society of his mother and sisters has become insipid and uninteresting. When you feel any inclination to go abroad in search of forbidden pleasure, I advise you to sit down with your sisters, and sing, "Home, sweet home." And here I may say that the cultivation of music will add much to the attractions of home. It is a delightful recreation. It soothes the feelings, sweetens the temper, and refines the taste. In addition to the cultivation of the voice, and the practice of vocal music, you will find great satisfaction in learning to play on some instrument of music, to be able to carry your part on the flute or violin. This will greatly diminish the temptation to go abroad for amusement; and in proportion as you find your pleasure at home, will you be safe from those evil influences which have proved the destruction of so many boys. But perhaps you are an only child. Then you will enjoy the exclusive affections and attention of your parents, without a rival. But you will lose the advantage of the society of brothers and sisters. The former will be no benefit; for parents do not abate their love to their firstborn, when others are added to their number. But the exclusive love to an only child often degenerates into excessive indulgence. The society of brothers and sisters, though it often tries the temper, yet contributes greatly to the happiness of a child. It provides a wholesome discipline, and affords the means of learning how to behave among equals; which an only child cannot learn at home. You will be likely to think too much of yourself, because you will receive the exclusive attentions of your parents, and will not have before you the daily example of your equals. These things you must guard against; and endeavor to make up the deficiency, by

carrying out the hints I have given, in the society of other children, wherever you meet them. In conclusion, I will give you one little family rule. You may think it a very little one; but it is able to do wonders. If you will try it one week, and never deviate from it, I will promise you the happiest week you ever enjoyed. And, more than this, you will diffuse such a sunshine about you as to make others happy also. My little rule is this—never be moody or grouchy.

02.06. Behavior at School

BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL

Most of what I have said in the last two chapters will apply to your behavior at school. When you go to school, your teachers take the place of your parents. To them, for the time being, your parents have delegated their authority. You are bound, therefore, to give to them the same respect and obedience which are due to your parents. To disobey, or to dishonor them in any other way, is a breach of the fifth commandment, which, in its spirit, requires subordination to lawful authority; or, as the Catechism says, "The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor of, and performing the duties belonging to, everyone, in their several places and relations—as superiors, inferiors, or equals."

You ought, therefore, in the first place, to pay strict regard to every rule of the school, as a religious duty; and obey your teacher, in all things, with the same promptness and cheerfulness that you would obey your parents. You should be too careful of your own reputation to permit yourself to be reprimanded by your teacher. If you take up the resolution that you will be so diligent, faithful, and well-behaved, as never to be reproved—you will find it a very wholesome restraint, to keep you within the bounds of propriety. Be careful of the honor of your teachers, remembering that, if you dishonor them, you break God's holy commandment. Never call in question their arrangements; and never indulge feelings of dissatisfaction. Especially, never speak slightingly or disrespectfully of them, nor of their ways. It does not become you to call in question their arrangements, or their mode of teaching. If you are wiser than they, you had better not seek instruction from them; but if not, then you should be satisfied with the dictates of their superior wisdom. Never attempt to question their proceedings, nor to argue with them, when they require you to do anything. Be very careful, also, not to carry home tales from school; because such a practice tends to cultivate a disposition to tattle, and often leads to great mischief. Yet, when your parents make inquiries, it is your duty to answer them. Be diligent in your studies, from principle, not from a spirit of emulation. Remember that you are placed at school for your own benefit. It is not for your parents' advantage, nor for the benefit of your teachers, that you are required to study; but for your own good. Remember how much pains your parents take, to give you this opportunity. They give up your time, which they have a right to employ for their own benefit, and they expend money for the support of schools, that you may have the opportunity of obtaining useful learning. You are bound, therefore, to improve this opportunity with great diligence. You will not think it a task, that you are compelled to study; but you will regard it as a price put into your hands to get wisdom. It is all for your own benefit. In school hours, therefore, you should put away all thoughts of play, and all communication with other children, and give yourself strictly and closely to your studies.

But, I suppose, you will find the most difficulty in regulating your conduct during the intervals of school hours, and on your way to and from school. When a great many young people of your own age are together, there is a disposition to throw off restraint. I would not have you under such restraint as to avoid all relaxation and innocent hilarity; for these are necessary to keep your mind

and body in a healthful condition. But, here, you will be more exposed to temptation. As punctuality is of great importance in school, and a necessary habit to be cultivated, you need to make it a matter of principle to be always in your seat a few minutes before the opening of school. A failure to do this, will rob you of many advantages, and greatly embarrass your teacher. It will, also, give you the habit of tardiness, which will be a great injury to you, as long as you live, whatever may be your occupation. But, in order to be punctual, you must not linger to engage in sport by the way. So, likewise, in returning from school, you ought to be equally punctual in reporting yourself at home; for you know not what your parents may have for you to do. This, also, forbids your lingering for amusement on the way home. But, besides these, there are other reasons why you should not idle away your time on the way. Idle boys are always in the way of temptation; for "Satan finds some mischief still—For idle hands to do."

If you linger along on the way, you will be very likely to meet with some bad boys, who will lead you astray, and involve you in some mischief that will get you into serious difficulty. A boy was walking along in the streets of Boston, and another boy, who knew him by name, called to him from the other side of the street, saying, "Come, John, come over here, and we'll have some fun." "No, I can't," John replied; "I must go home." "But just come over here a minute." "No, I can't," said John; "my mother expects me home." But the boy still urged him, and at length prevailed on him to cross the street. They then went into a hardware store; and the boy who called John over stole some knives and disappeared; and John was taken for the theft, because he was with the other boy at the time, and put in jail. Thus, by just stopping on the way, and going across the street, he got into jail. If he had made it his invariable rule to go directly on his way, and not linger, and idle his time away, he would have been saved from this suffering, shame, and disgrace. But, if you indulge in the same habit of lingering by the way, you will be exposed to similar temptation and trouble. In all your interaction with your school-fellows, be kind and obliging. Treat them courteously, and avoid everything that is rough, coarse, and rude. Endeavor to behave like a young gentleman. Avoid the company of boys who are rough and coarse in their manners, or profane or obscene in their conversation. You will insensibly imbibe their vulgarity, if you associate with them. In your sports or plays, be conscientiously fair and honorable. The boy, who is unfair or dishonest in his play, when he becomes a man, will drive a hard bargain or be dishonest in his business.

If you go where boys and girls are associated in the same school, have a strict regard to propriety, in your fellowship with the other gender. Be gentlemanly in your behavior towards them. Avoid all rudeness or roughness of manners and conversation in their presence. Especially, refrain from rude jests and low buffoonery. You may engage with them in sensible conversation; but a well-bred girl will be offended if you attempt to please her by trying how nonsensically and silly you can talk. Venture no improper liberties; but maintain your own self-respect by respecting them.

Finally, see that you do nothing in school or out of it, which you would be unwilling your parents should see! And remember, that there is One Eye that is always upon you!

02.07. Behavior at Table

BEHAVIOR AT TABLE Did it ever occur to you to inquire why all civilized people have their food prepared at particular hours, and all the family sit at table together? Why not have the food prepared, and placed where everyone can go and eat, whenever he pleases, by himself? One great advantage of having a whole family sit together, and partake of their meals at the same time, is, that it brings them together in a social way, every day. But for this, and the assembling of the family at prayers, they might not all meet at once for a long time. But eating together is a mark of friendship; and it tends to promote social feeling. In a well-regulated family, also, it is a means of great improvement, both of mind and manners. It is, in fact, a school of good manners. You will perceive, then, how very important it is, that your behavior at table should always be regulated by the rules of propriety. If you acquire vulgar habits here, or practice rudeness, you will find it difficult to overcome them; and they will make you appear to great disadvantage.

I shall mention a few things to be observed, at the table, by one who would maintain a character for good breeding. And, first of all, be not tardy in taking your place at the table. In a well-regulated family, the master of the family waits until all are seated before he asks a blessing. Suppose there are five people at the table, and you hinder them all by your tardiness three minutes, you waste fifteen minutes of precious time. To those who set a proper value upon time, this is a great evil. There is no need of it; you may as easily be at your seat in time as too late. When called to a meal, never wait to finish what you are doing, but promptly leave it, and proceed to your place. Above all, do not delay until after the blessing, and so sit down to your food like a heathen. The table is a place for easy, cheerful, social fellowship; but some children make it a place of noisy clamor. The younger members of the family should leave it for the parents (and guests, if there are any,) to take the lead in conversation. It does not appear well for a very young person to be forward and talkative at table. You should generally wait until you are spoken to; or, if you wish to make an inquiry or a remark, do it in a modest, unassuming way, not raising your voice, nor spinning out a story. And be especially careful not to interrupt any other person. Sensible people will get a very unfavorable impression concerning you, if they see you bold and talkative at table. Yet you should never appear inattentive to what others are saying. Be not so intent on discussing the contents of your plate, as not to observe the movements of others, or to hear their conversation. Show your interest in what is said by occasional glances at the speaker, and by the expression of your countenance; but be not too anxious to put a word in yourself. Some children make themselves ridiculous, by always joining in, and making their remarks, when older people are speaking, often giving a grave opinion of some matter about which they know nothing. Be helpful to others, without staring at them, or neglecting your own plate. You may keep your eye on the movements around you, to pass a cup and saucer, to notice if any one near you needs helping, and to help any dish that is within your reach. By so doing, you may greatly relieve your father and mother, who must be very busy, if they help all the family. By cultivating a close observation, and studying to know and anticipate the needs of others, you will be able to do these things in a genteel and graceful manner, without appearing obtrusive or forward.

Study propriety. If asked what you will be helped to, do not answer in an indefinite manner, saying, you "have no choice;" for this will put the master of the house to the inconvenience of choosing for you. Do not wait, after you are asked, to determine what you will have, but answer promptly; and do not be particular in your choice. To be very particular in the choice of food is not agreeable to good breeding. Never ask for what is not on the table. Do not make remarks respecting the food; and avoid expressing your likes and dislikes of particular articles. One of your age should not appear to be an epicure. Show your praise of the food set before you, by the good nature and relish with which you partake of it; but do not eat so fast as to appear voracious. Never put on sour looks, nor turn up your nose at your food. This is unmannerly, and a serious affront to the mistress of the table. Be careful to use your knife and fork as other people do, and to know when to lay them down, and when to hold them in your hands. Be careful not to drop your food, nor to spill liquids on the cloth. Do not leave the table before the family withdraw from it, unless it is necessary; and then, ask to be excused. Neither linger to finish your meal, after you perceive the rest have finished.

Besides what I have mentioned, there are a great many nameless little things, that go to make up good manners at table, which you must learn by studying the rules of propriety, and observing the behavior of others.

02.08. Behavior at Family Worship

BEHAVIOR AT FAMILY WORSHIP

All well-regulated Christian families are assembled, morning and evening, to worship God. Seeing we are dependent on him for all things, it is suitable and proper that we should daily acknowledge our dependence—by asking him for what we need, and thanking him for what we receive. That we should do this as a family is highly proper. But if it is our duty to worship God as a family, it is the duty of everyone in particular. It is as much your duty as it is your father's. You must, therefore, not only make it a principle to be in your place punctually at the time, but to enter heartily into all the exercises. Some children and youth appear as if they had no interest in what is going on, at this most interesting household service. But this is not only showing great disrespect to your parents, but great irreverence toward God. It will help you to right feelings, on these occasions, if you imagine Christ Jesus present in person. God is present spiritually, and in a peculiar manner, at such times, to bless the families which call on his name. When, therefore, the family is assembled for prayers, you should put away all vain or wandering thoughts. When the time arrives, and the family are assembled for devotion, seat yourself, in a serious, reverent manner; and if there should be a few moments' delay, do not engage in conversation, nor in reading newspapers, or anything calculated to divert your mind; but direct your thoughts upward to God, and seek a preparation for his worship. Do not allow your mind to be occupied with anything but the service before you. Let not your eyes wander about, to catch vagrant thoughts. Let not your hands be occupied with anything, to divert your attention or to disturb others. Have your Bible, and take your turn in reading. Be attentive and devout, during the reading of God's holy word, endeavoring to apply it to your heart.

If the family sings, enter into this sweet service, not only with your lips, but with your heart. When prayer is offered, place yourself in the posture which is taken by your father and mother. If they kneel, you kneel also—in a reverent posture. Shut your eyes, and keep your heart. Let your heart embrace the words of the prayer, and make them your own. Remember that the devotional habits you form at the family altar, are the habits that will follow you to God's house, and probably adhere to you through life. And what can be more shocking than to see people pretending to gentility, who do not know how to behave with propriety before the great God who made them! If you were in company, and should treat the person that invited you with as much indifference as you treat God by such conduct, you would be considered a very ill-bred person. He has invited you to come to his mercy-seat to converse with him, and to receive favors at his hand; and yet, by such conduct as I have named, you show no interest at all in the matter.

Family devotion, when rightly improved, is a very important means of grace. If you attend upon it seriously and reverently, you may hope that God will bless it to your soul. It tends, also, to tranquillize the feelings, and prepare you to engage in the duties of the day with serenity and cheerfulness.

02.09. Private Prayer

PRIVATE PRAYER

I suppose, if my readers are the children of pious parents, they have been taught from their earliest recollection, to retire, morning and evening, to some secret place, to read their Bible alone, and engage in private prayer. This, in very early childhood, is often an interesting and affecting service. But when young people come to a certain age, if their hearts are not renewed, they are disposed to regard this as an irksome duty, and gradually to leave it off. They find the old adage true—"Praying will make you leave sinning, and sinning will make you leave praying."

It is a sad period, in the history of a young person, when the early habit of prayer is given up. Then the heart becomes like the garden of the slothful, described by Solomon—"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down."

There are no good plants thriving in the prayerless soul; but weeds, and briars, and thorns, grow thick, occupying every vacant spot. The stone wall is broken down: there is no defense against the beasts of the field. Every vagrant thought, every wicked passion, find free admittance. The heart grows hard, and the spirit careless. Sin is not dreaded as it once was. The fear of God and the desire of his favor are gone. "God is not in all his thoughts." That youth stands on the very edge of a frightful precipice.

I would not have you think, however, that there is any merit in prayer; or that the prayers of one whose "heart is not right with God" are acceptable to him. But, what I say is, that everyone ought to pray to God with a right heart. If your heart is not right with God, then it is wrong; and you are to blame for having it wrong. I will suppose a case, to illustrate what I mean. You see a child rise up in the morning, and go about the house; and though its mother is with it all the time, yet the child neither speaks to her nor seems to notice her at all. After a while, the mother asks what is the matter, and why her dear child does not speak to her? The child says, "I have no heart to speak to you, mother. I do not love you; and so I think it would be wrong for me to speak to you." What would you think of such conduct? You would say, "The child ought to love its mother; and it is only an aggravation of its offence, to carry out the feelings of its heart in its conduct." "Would you then have it act the hypocrite, and speak with its lips what it does not feel in its heart?" No; but I would have it love its mother, as every dutiful child ought to do, and then act out, in its speech and behavior, what it feels in its heart. But I would never have it excuse itself from right actions because its heart is wrong. Now, apply this to the subject of prayer, and you will see the character of all impenitent excuses for neglecting this duty. And those who go on and continue to neglect it, certainly have no reason to expect that their hearts will grow any better by it, but only worse. But in attempting to perform a sacred duty, the Lord may give you grace to perform it aright, and then you will have a new heart.

If possible, have a particular place of prayer, where you can be secure from all interruption, and particular times for it. At the appointed hours, retire alone, and put away all thoughts about your studies, your work, your amusements, or anything of a worldly nature; and try to realize that God is as truly present as if you saw him with your bodily eyes. Then read his word, as though you heard him speaking to you in the sacred page; and when your mind has become serious and collected, kneel down and acknowledge God as your Creator and Preserver, your God and Redeemer. Thank him for the mercies you have received, mentioning particularly every good thing you can think of, that you have received from him; confess your sins; plead for pardon, through the blood of Jesus Christ; and ask him to give you such blessings as you see and feel that you need. Pray also for your friends, (and for your enemies, if you have any,) and conclude with a prayer for the coming of Christ's kingdom everywhere throughout the world.

Some young people neglect to pray, because they think they are not able to form their words into prayer. But you need not be afraid to speak to God. If you can find language to ask your parents for what you desire, you can find words to express your desires to God; and he will not upbraid you for the imperfection of your language. He looks at the heart. If that is right, your prayer will be accepted.

Let me earnestly entreat you to have your set times for prayer, at least as often as morning and evening; and never allow yourself to neglect them. And, especially, do not adopt the bad practice of saying your prayers in bed—but give to God the brightest and best hours of the day, and not offer to him the blind and the lame for sacrifice. You will find the regular and stated habit of prayer, thus formed in early life, of great value to you, as long as you live. But let me once more caution you not to trust in your prayers, for they cannot save you; and do not think, because you are regular and habitual in attending to the outward forms of duty, that you must be a Christian.

Prayer, if sincere and true, will prepare you for engaging in the duties of the day, or for enjoying calm repose at night. If, for any cause, you neglect prayer in the morning, you may expect things will go ill with you all the day. You can do nothing well without God's blessing; and you cannot expect his blessing without asking for it. You need, also, that calm, tranquil, humble spirit which prayer promotes, to prepare you to encounter those things which are constantly occurring to try the feelings, and to enable you to do anything well. Therefore, never engage in anything of importance without first seeking direction of God; and never do anything on which you would be unwilling to ask His blessing.

02.10. Habits

HABITS

Besides what I have noticed in several of the foregoing chapters, there are many things of a general nature, which I shall group together under the title of habits. A habit is what has become easy and natural by frequent repetition. People frequently become much attached to practices, which at first were very unpleasant. You will sometimes see men chewing, smoking, or snuffing tobacco—a most filthy and poisonous plant, a little bit of which you could not be persuaded to take into your mouth, it is so nauseous; yet, by long use, people learn to love it. That is a habit. So, likewise, you see people very fond of drinking intoxicating liquors, which to you would be a nauseous medicine; and which are poisonous and destructive to all. It is practice which has made these drinks so pleasant. This is a habit.

Habits are both bad and good; and a habit is a very good or a very bad thing, as it is good or bad. Habits are mostly formed in early life; and a habit, once formed, is difficult to be broken—once fixed, it may follow you as long as you live.

I shall specify a few of the bad habits which boys of your age are liable to contract, with their opposite good habits. It is very likely I shall fail to notice many others, equally important; but these may put you upon thinking, and lead you to discover and correct other bad practices.

I. TARDINESS. The tardy boy is dilatory about rising in the morning. Although the birds are filling the air with their merry song, and the morning rays of the sun are peeping stealthily through the half-closed shutter, still he thinks, "There's time enough yet;" and instead of starting up with the lark, he lingers and delays, saying with the sluggard, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." At length he rises, in a yawning mood, and proceeds slowly to pull on his clothes, lingering with every article, looking here and there, and stopping every now and then to play, or to amuse himself in gazing about his chamber. And sometimes he stops, half-dressed, to read a story from a piece of an old newspaper. In this and other ways, he amuses himself until the breakfast bell rings—and he is not ready. Perhaps he has been called half a dozen times to "do his chores," and as often answered, "Well, I'm coming;" until, wearied with his delay, his mother or sister have done the work that belonged to him, or his father has been called from his room, or from his work, to do it for him. At length, he makes his appearance at the table after the blessing, when the rest of the family have begun their meal. But, having just emerged from the foul air of his bedroom, he has no appetite for his breakfast, and feels peevish and fretful. A scowl appears upon his brow, and he turns up his nose at the food spread before him, forgetful alike of his obligations to his Heavenly Father for providing, and to his mother for preparing it. Or, if he sometimes gets dressed before breakfast, he is not in time to do his chores, or to complete the lesson which he left unfinished the night before. He hears the breakfast bell, but he is just now engaged, and thinks, "There's time enough yet—I'll just finish what I've begun;" and so he is not in time for the table. He has either detained the table until all are impatient of waiting, or else he takes his seat after the rest have commenced eating. In consequence of this loss of time, he is left

at the table to finish his breakfast, and his seat is for some time vacant at prayers, when he comes in and disturbs the whole family. Or, if at any time, he gets his seat with the rest, he is dilatory in finding his place, and is never ready to read when his turn comes. This dilatoriness goes on, until the school hour arrives, and he is not ready; or he delays on the way to school, and arrives, perhaps, just after his class have started. Sabbath morning, when the bell tolls, and the family are starting for meeting, he is roused from a reverie, and has yet to get ready. And so in everything else this dilatory habit follows him. When his father or mother call him, instead of promptly making his appearance, to serve them, as a dutiful son should do, he answers, "Yes, in a minute," or, "Yes, I'm going to." He must dispose of something else first; and before he comes, the service for which he was called has been despatched by someone else. He does not seem to know how to start quick. He is always in a hurry when the time comes to do anything, because he was dilatory in making preparation when he had time. He is always late—always out of time—vexing those who are about him, and injuring himself.

He seems to have started too late. You would think that he began too late in the beginning—that he was born too late, and has never been able to gain the lost time. Everything comes too soon, before he is prepared for it. If he ever becomes a man, and this habit continues—it will always be a source of vexation and disaster to him. If he is a mechanic, he will fail to meet his engagements, and disappoint, vex, and lose his customers. If he is a man of business, he will fail to meet his appointments, and thus lose many a bargain. His dilatory habits will be the ruin of his business. And if he carries the same habit into religion, he will ruin his soul—for death will overtake him before he is ready.

Although this seems natural to him, it is only 'tardiness indulged'—until it has grown into a habit. But by timely resolution, diligence, and perseverance, the habit may be broken. The opposites of this are the good habits of promptness and punctuality. When the gray dawn steals in at his window, the prompt lad springs from his bed; and in a few minutes he is washed and dressed, and on his knees at his morning devotions. Soon he appears at his work; and before breakfast, all his chores are done. Thus he has redeemed the time between breakfast and school, which he has at his own disposal, for his lessons or his sports. He is always in time. He never keeps the table waiting for him, and never comes after the blessing. He is never late at prayers—never late at school—never late at meeting; and yet he is never in a hurry. He redeems so much time by his promptness, that he has as much as he needs to do everything well and in season. He saves all the time that the dilatory spends in sauntering, in considering what to do next, in reading frivolous matters, and in gazing idly at vacancy. Do you desire to possess these good habits? Only carry out for one day the idea I have given of promptness, and then repeat it every day, and, in a little while—you will have the habit established.

II. SLOVENLINESS. A slovenly boy makes himself a deal of needless trouble, and greatly tries the patience of his mother. If you go into his room, you find it always in confusion. His things are scattered about, here and there, some on the bed, some on the chairs, and some on the floor—but none in their places. He either has no particular place for anything, or else he takes no pains to put things in their places. He leaves a thing where he uses it. Hence, if he wants anything, he never knows where to look for it, unless he happens to remember where he used it last. He must waste his time in hunting for it. Hence you will often hear him impatiently inquiring if any one has seen his things; when he ought himself to know where they are. If he goes into another person's room,

whatever article he lays his hand upon is misplaced. And so it is, if he uses any of his father's tools. He never thinks of putting anything where he found it. He throws it down carelessly wherever he happens to be, or else puts it in the wrong place; so that, when wanted, it cannot be found. Thus, he not only wastes his own time, but hinders and vexes others. If he goes into the library, and takes down a book, he either puts it in a different place, and so disarranges the shelves, or lays it down on the shelf in front of other books, for his father or mother to arrange. His school books are torn and dirty—disfigured with pencil marks, blots of ink, grease spots, finger prints, and dog's-ears; and if he borrows a book from the Sabbath school library, or of a friend, it is returned with some of these his marks upon it.

Whatever he undertakes to do is done in the same slovenly style. If he brings in water, he spills it on the floor. His wood he throws down in a sprawling manner, instead of laying it in a neat, and tidy pile. Nothing that he does looks neat and finished. Nor does he appear to any better advantage in his person. His clothes are put on in a slouching, uncouth manner; and he always contrives to have them dirty. He cannot have on clean clothes half an hour without soiling them. He rubs against whatever dirty thing he passes. If he carries milk, he spills it on his clothes. He drops food on them at the table. He plays in the dirt. He rips his clothes—for his mother to mend. If left to himself, his face would never come in contact with water, nor his teeth with a brush.

He comes into the house with his shoes covered with mud, and never thinks of wiping his feet, but leaves the prints of them on his mother's clean floor or nice carpet. He seems to forget what scrapers and mats are made for, for he passes by without using them. He lays his hat on a chair, or throws it upon the floor, instead of hanging it in its place. Thus he tries the patience of his mother and sisters, and makes himself unwelcome at his own home. And with this habit is generally associated carelessness. He never seems to be thinking what he is doing. He does not see things that are in his way, but stumbles over them, breaking, bruising, or otherwise injuring them, and often hurting himself. You dread to see him approach, lest some mischief should happen. He does not look to see what he steps on, nor whether his hands have firm hold of the article he takes up. If he passes through a door, he does not mind whether it was open or shut; and most likely, if he finds it open, in a warm summer's day, he will close it; but, if he finds it carefully shut, on a freezing day in mid-winter, he will leave it wide open. A careless person will be constantly meeting with accidents and misfortunes, and continually subject to the most vexatious mortifications, which a little thoughtfulness and care would prevent. This habit is a very great fault, and, when confirmed, very difficult to correct. It is therefore the more important, that it should be mended in season, and nipped in the bud.

I need not tell you what are the opposites of slovenly and careless habits. The neat, orderly, and careful boy has an invariable rule—"a place for everything—and everything in its place." Go into his room at any hour, and you will find everything in order. He can go in the dark, and lay his hand on anything he wants, so that he never runs the risk of setting the house on fire, by carrying a light into his bedroom. He is so much in the habit of putting things in their proper places, that he never thinks of doing otherwise. He never leaves a thing at random, where he happens to be using it; but always puts it where it belongs. When he undresses, every article of his clothing is folded, and laid together in the order that it will be used in the morning; so that he loses no time in hunting for it. His clothes are put on and adjusted so as to show a neat fit, and every button does its office. His shoes are regularly brushed every morning, and the strings neatly tied, so that your eye is never

offended with the appearance, nor your ear distressed with the sound, of dirty, slip-shod, flapping shoes. To whatever part of the house he goes, he leaves it in the order in which he found it; for it is his invariable rule, when he uses anything belonging to another, to replace it exactly as he found it. When he takes hold of a cup, or a lamp, or any such article, he is careful to get good hold, and then to move moderately, and not with a jerk; and by this means, he seldom meets with any of those accidents which are so annoying to tidy parents. If he goes to the library, he is careful to replace every book or paper he takes in his hand, exactly as he found it. If he takes a book to read, he carries it with care, firmly grasped in his hand, and avoids letting it fall, or hitting it against anything to bruise the cover. He holds it in such a manner as not to strain the back or crumple the leaves; and if called away from his reading, he puts in a mark, shuts the book, and lays it in a safe place. He never thinks of using a book for any other purpose than that for which it was made. When he has finished reading it, he carefully replaces it in the library, just where he found it. He does not place it wrong end upwards, nor the title towards the back of the shelf; but puts it in the place where it belongs, makes it stand straight, and puts it back even with its fellows. All his school books are kept neat and clean. No blots of ink, nor pencil marks, nor thumb-prints, nor dog's-ears, any where appear. If he passes through a door into or out of a room where others are sitting, he leaves it open or shut as he found it; judging that the people occupying the room, have adjusted its temperature to their own liking.

He is equally careful of his person. He never considers himself dressed, until he has washed his hands and face, cleaned his teeth, and combed his hair; and he never thinks of sitting down at the table with dirty hands. He learns to keep his clothes neat and clean. At table, he avoids dropping his food upon them. At school, he is careful of his ink, not to bespatter his clothes with it. And at play, he keeps himself out of the dirt. He will wear his clothes a week, and have them appear cleaner, at the end of it, than the sloven's when he has worn them a single day.

He has a care, also, of the appearance of the house. He never forgets to use the scraper at the door, to remove the mud from his feet; and then he makes it an invariable rule never to pass a mat without wiping his shoes. He never says, like the sloven, "I didn't think," to excuse himself. He would consider it unpardonable in him not to think; for what is the ability of thinking worth, if it never comes when it is wanted. The neat, orderly boy, makes himself agreeable to his mother and sisters, who are always glad to see him coming; and home is a delightful place to him, because he meets with smiles and pleasant words. But the sloven exposes himself to sour looks and chiding, by his dirty habits; and he finds home a disagreeable place, because he makes it so.

III. RUDENESS. This term does not describe any one habit in particular, but a great many little ones. Webster gives the following definition: "RUDE: rough; of coarse manners; unpolished; clownish; rustic." It is not, therefore, a single habit, but a series of habits. These are so numerous, it can hardly be expected that I should think of them all. The rude boy is rough, clownish, and boisterous—in his manners. He is rude in speech and rude in behavior. He will stalk into the house with his hat on; and if there is company, he does not notice them. He talks in a loud and boisterous manner, often breaking in abruptly upon the conversation of others. If he hears part of a conversation, and desires to know what it is about, he abruptly breaks in, "Who is it? Who is it? What is it?" And, often, he keeps his tongue running continually, like the incessant clatter of a mill.

It is rude and vulgar to interlard conversation with by-words, or unmeaning phrases, thrown in at random between the sentences. It is much more so, to throw in little oaths, or low, vulgar expressions. All this shows a disposition to be profane. It is saying, in effect, "I would swear, if I dared." If indulged, this habit will be very likely to lead on to profaneness.

Another rude habit, which boys often indulge, is, what is familiarly called "CRACKING JOKES". The object seems to be, to see who can say the wittiest thing, at another's expense. But, in such attempts, generally, wit fails; and the strife is, which can say the silliest thing, in the silliest manner. All such low witticisms may be set down as decidedly rude and vulgar.

Rudeness of behavior manifests itself in so many forms, that it is scarcely definable. I can only glance at a few things which indicate a lack of good breeding. It is rude to be so forward as to treat your superiors as equals, or to take the lead in all companies. On the other hand, it is rude to be bashful—to hang down the head, with a leer of the eye, in the presence of company, and refuse to speak when spoken to, or to speak in a confused and mumbling tone, as though you had never seen anybody before. It is rude for a boy to take the best seat in the room, or to take the only seat, while others are standing. Tilting one's chair; sitting awkwardly on one side of the chair, or with the feet stretched out at full length; putting the feet on another's chair; sitting on two chairs; rocking; drumming with the fingers or feet; scratching books, furniture, window-frames, or walls—these, and a hundred other things that might be named, are rude habits, which indicate not only the lack of good breeding, but the absence of good taste and a sense of propriety.

There are other rude habits, which boys often contract, while abroad, that are wholly out of character for one that would be a gentleman; such as 'hellooing' in the streets; jumping on the backside of carriages; calling out to strangers that are passing; collecting in groups about public places, and staring at people. All such behavior is intolerable; and those who are guilty of it will be set down by all sensible people as low, ill-bred, rude boys.

IV. EVIL HABITS. I am sorry to say that some boys indulge habits, that are worse than any I have mentioned. Boys may be seen strutting through the streets, puffing cigars; and even sometimes filling their mouths with that loathsome Indian weed, tobacco, as though they thought such vile habits necessary to make them men. And often you will hear the profane oath issuing from their mouth, along with the foul breath created by this nauseous potion. A disposition to smoke or to chew this filthy, poisonous substance, indicates the existence of an intemperate appetite, and the love of base company. You will, perhaps, see the same boys at the shops, drinking beer. But this is only the prelude to something stronger. Tobacco is one of the most active poisons. It disorders the system and creates an appetite for stimulants. It is dangerous to use it in any form. But when a boy goes so far as to contract a relish for intoxicating drinks, his ruin is well near accomplished. After once giving indulgence to any of these practices, the downhill road is easy and rapid. About the time when temperance societies began to be formed, I was conversing with a mechanic, who informed me that almost every one of his fellow-apprentices, who were in the habit of occasionally drinking intoxicating liquors, had become drunkards. Many years ago, there were, in one of our large cities, fifty young men, clerks in stores, who used to frequent a particular place, to spend their evenings in a social way, with the wine bottle as a companion of their social cheer. One evening, one of them, after retiring, began to reflect upon the consequences of the course he was pursuing. He came to the conclusion, that, if he went on, it would be his ruin. He resolved that he

would never go again. The next evening, he found himself on the way to the same place. But as he came to the corner of the street which turned towards the place, he thought of his resolution. He hesitated a moment, and then said to himself, "Right about face!" He returned, and was never seen there again. That man is now one of the most wealthy, respected, and useful men in the country; while forty of those who continued their resort to the public house, became intemperate, and I believe have all gone down to the drunkard's grave.

Gambling is another evil habit, which leads to all manner of evil company and evil practices. It has proved the destruction of thousands of promising youth.

Never allow yourself to become the slave of any habit! Abstain entirely from intoxicating drinks, tobacco, gambling, and profane language. For when you once begin, with any of these, it is like "the letting out of waters." At first they run very slowly; but soon they wear away a channel, and rush on with an impetuosity, which defies all attempts to stop them. On the coast of Norway, there is a great whirlpool, called the Maelstrom, which sometimes swallows up great ships. When a vessel comes near this terrible abyss, it is first drawn very gently, with a circular motion. But after it has made one or two rounds, it goes more and more rapidly, and draws nearer and nearer the center, until finally it reaches the vortex, is swallowed up, and is seen no more. So it is with these bad habits. When one gets fairly within the circle of their influence, his fate is well near sealed. The only safety, with young men and boys, is to keep far away from the very outer edges of the whirlpool.

02.11. Education of the Body

EDUCATION OF THE BODY The reader will perhaps laugh at the idea of educating the body. But a moment's reflection will show that no part of man more needs education than the body. The design of education, as I have already said is, to form the character, and prepare us, in early life, for what we are to do in future. For this purpose, the body needs discipline as well as the mind. An ill body makes an ill mind and a sad heart. The health of the body is necessary to the healthy operation of the mind; and a healthy body is secured by activity. But the body not only needs health, but discipline. The fingers must be taught all manner of handiwork, and exercised upon it, in order to accustom them to the use that is to be made of them; the feet must be taught to perform their appropriate duties, in a graceful and proper manner; and all the muscles of the body must be exercised, in due proportion, to give them strength and solidity. The proper discipline of the several members of the body is necessary, not only to prepare them for useful occupation, but to give them a graceful, natural, and easy motion, and so promote good manners and a genteel carriage.

I shall not be very particular in what I have to say on this subject, but only give a few gentle hints.

1. **DISCIPLINE THE BODY TO OBEY THE WILL.** You would not think, to see some young folks, that the will had anything to do with the movements of the body; for it moves in all imaginable ways, with all sorts of contortions. First flies out a foot, then a hand, then there's a twirl or a swing, then a drumming of the fingers, a trotting of the foot, or some such odd figure. This arises from leaving the body to control itself, by its own natural activity, the mind taking no supervision of its motions. Now, if you early accustom yourself to exercise a strict mental supervision over the body, so as never to make any movement whatever, except what you mean to make, you will find this habit of great consequence to you; for, besides saving you the mortification of a thousand ungraceful movements which habit has rendered natural, it will enable you to control your nerves, the necessity for which you will understand better hereafter than you do now. Make the will the ruling power of your body, so as never to do anything but what you mean to do, and you will never get the reputation of being nervous.

2. **AVOID LATE HOURS.** It would seem hardly necessary to give such a direction to young people still under the control of their parents. But facts too plainly show that parents do not always sufficiently consider the injurious effects of late hours upon the fair and healthy development of the human body. And the disposition of young people to seek amusement overcomes, with them, the dictates of prudence. But the practice of sitting up late, and especially of being abroad late at night, is a war upon nature. It interrupts the regular course of things. It turns night into day and day into night. If you would be pale-faced, sickly, nervous, and good for nothing—sit up late at night.

3. **RISE EARLY.** To rise early, before the atmosphere has become heated with the summer's sun, and walk abroad, snuffing the cool breeze, listening to the music of the feathered tribe, and joining in the sweet harmony of nature, hymning forth praise to the Creator—certainly tends to promote health of body and cheerfulness and serenity of mind. And these will make a blooming countenance, and clothe the very plain features with an aspect of beauty.

4. **USE PLENTY OF WATER.** The body cannot be kept in a healthy state, without frequent bathing. It should be washed all over, with cold water, at least once every day, to promote health and cleanliness. One who has never tried it can have no idea of its invigorating effects; and it seems hardly possible that the human system can keep long in order, while this is neglected. The machinery of a watch, after a while, gets dirty, so that it will not run until it is taken to pieces and cleaned. But the machinery of the human body is vastly more intricate than that of a watch. It is made up of an endless number of parts, of various patterns, some of them of the most delicate texture and exquisite workmanship, but all parts of a great machine that is constantly in motion. And there is provision made for carrying off all the dirt that accumulates on its wheels and bands, in little tubes, which discharge it upon the surface of the skin. But unless frequently washed off, it accumulates, and stops up the ends of these little tubes, and prevents their discharging, so that the offensive and poisonous matter which they would carry off is kept in the system. Let this go on a little while, and it cannot fail to produce disease. Therefore, I say, use plenty of water.

5. **TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEETH.** The teeth have a very important office to perform in the bodily economy—that of preparing the food for the stomach. What is not done by the teeth must be done by the digestive organs. Therefore, your health is deeply concerned in the preservation of a good set of teeth. The voice and the countenance, also, plead with you to take care of your teeth. In almost all cases, teeth may be saved from decay, if attended to in time. The best directions I can give for preserving the teeth are, to clean them every day with a brush, and pick them after every meal with a pointed quill, so as to remove all the particles of food from between them, and the tartar that adheres to the surface;—cleanliness, as well as the safety of the teeth, requires this. You ought to have your teeth examined and attended to, by a dentist, once or twice a year. Keeping them clean preserves them from decay; and if decay commences, a dentist can stop it, if he can attend to them in season.

6. **BE ACTIVE.** The body was made for use. Every part of it is formed for activity. But anything made for use will suffer injury—if it lies still. The human body, especially, if allowed to remain inactive, becomes useless. Activity strengthens the parts. If you would have more strength, you must use what you have, and it will increase. The right use of your members, also, must be learned by practice. Much practice is necessary, for instance, to train the fingers to the various uses in which they are to be employed, so as, (to use a homely phrase,) to make them handy. The body, likewise, needs exercise, to keep it in a healthy state. The various parts of its machinery have a great work to do, every day, in turning your food into nutrition, and sending it a great many thousand times, in a vast number of little streams, to every part of the body. But this machinery will not work, if the body is all the time inactive. It requires motion, to give it power. There is nothing, therefore, so bad for it as laziness. It is like a dead calm to a windmill, which stops all its machinery.

7. **LEARN, AT PROPER TIMES, TO BE STILL.** All nature needs repose. If the human system were always kept in the utmost activity, it would soon wear out. For this reason, God has given us periodical seasons of rest—a part of every day, and one whole day in seven. There are times, also, when it is not proper to be active; as, when you are at your devotions, or at family worship, or in the house of God. So, likewise, at school, or in company, or when you sit down with the family at home, as well as in many other cases, activity is out of place. Your body, therefore, will never be educated, until you have obtained such control over it, as to be able, at proper times, to be still.

And I may say, it is a great accomplishment in a young person, to know just when to be still, and to have self-control enough to be still just at the proper time.

8. BE CAREFUL TO KEEP THE BODY IN ITS NATURAL POSITION. This is necessary, not only to preserve its beauty, but to prevent deformity. Sitting at school, or at any sedentary employment, is liable to produce some unnatural twist or bend of the body. The human form, in its natural position, is a model of beauty. But, when bad habits turn it out of shape, it offends the eye. Avoid a stooping posture, or an inclination to either side. But sit and stand erect, with the small of the back curved in, the chest thrown forward, the shoulders back, and the head upright. A little attention to these things every day, while the body is growing, and the bones and muscles are in a flexible state, will give your form a beauty and symmetry, which you can never acquire afterwards, if you neglect it at this time of life. And it will do more, a thousand times, to keep you in health, than all the doctor's pill-boxes.

9. AVOID TIGHT-DRESSING, AS YOU WOULD A BLACK SNAKE. You will, perhaps, smile at this. But if you know anything of the black snake, you will recollect that it assaults not with deadly venom, but winds itself around its victim, stops the circulation of the blood, and, if it reaches high enough, makes a rope of itself, to strangle him. I need not tell you that the effects of tight-dressing are similar. Whatever part of the body—whether neck, chest, arms, limbs or feet—is pinched with tight covering, is subject to the same strangling process produced by the black snake. It obstructs the free circulation of the blood, and produces a tendency to disease in the part so compressed. If you feel an unpleasant tightness in any part of your dress, remember the black snake.

10. DISCIPLINE THE MUSCLES OF THE FACE. You may think this a queer direction; but I assure you it is given with all gravity. If you allow every temper of the heart to find a corresponding expression in the muscles of the face, you will be sure to spoil the fairest countenance. How would you feel, if you were to see an accomplished young person, with fine features, and a beautiful countenance; but on coming near, should discover little holes in the face, from which, every now and then, vipers and venomous serpents were thrusting out their heads and hissing at you? Well, the evil tempers of the heart, such as pride, vanity, envy, jealousy, etc., are a nest of vipers; and, when indulged, they will spit out their venom through the countenance. How often do we see a proud, scornful, sour, morose, or jealous expression, that has fairly been worn into the features of the countenance! And what is this but the hissing of vipers that dwell within? Strive to acquire such self-control, as to keep a calm; serene expression upon your countenance; and you cannot tell how much it will add to your appearance.

11. BE TEMPERATE. To be strictly temperate is, to avoid all excess. Not only abstain from eating and drinking what is hurtful, but use moderation in all things—in eating and drinking, in running and walking, in play, in amusement.

02.12. On Useful Labor

ON USEFUL LABOR

I have seen boys who would make incredible exertion to accomplish anything which they undertook for their own amusement; but who, when called upon to do anything useful, would demur and complain, put on sour looks, and conjure up a multitude of objections, making the thing to be done like lifting a mountain. Whenever any work is to be done, "there is a lion in the way;" and the objections they make, and the difficulties they interpose, make you feel as if you would rather do it a dozen times yourself, than to ask them to lift a little finger. The real difficulty is in the boy's own mind. He has no idea of being useful; no thought of doing anything but to seek his own pleasure; and he is base enough to look on and see his father and mother toil and wear themselves out to bring him up in idleness. Play, play, play—from morning until night—is all his ambition. Now, I do not object to his playing; but what I would find fault with is, that he should wish to play all the time. I would not have him work all the time, for "All work and no play—makes Jack a dull boy." Neither would I have him play all the time, for "All play and no work—makes Jack a mere toy." There is not a spark of manliness in such a boy; and he never will be a man, until he alters his notions.

There is another boy, who has more heart—a better disposition. When called to do anything, he is always ready and willing. His heart enlarges at the thought of helping his father or his mother—of being useful. He takes hold with alacrity. The first boy is chicken-hearted. Instead of conquering his work, he allows his work to conquer him. He works briskly for a few minutes, and then he begins to flag. Instead of working away, with steady perseverance, he stops every minute or two, and looks at his work, and wishes it were done. But wishing is not working; and his work does not get done in this way. The more he gazes at it, the more like a mountain it appears. At length, he sits down to rest; and finally, after having suffered more from the dread of exertion than it would have cost him to do his work a dozen times, he gives it up, and goes to his father or mother, and in a desponding tone and with a sheepish look, he says, "I can't do it!" He is a coward. He has allowed himself to be conquered by a wood-pile which he was told to saw, or by a few weeds in the garden that he was required to dig up. He will never make a man, until he gets courage enough to face his work with resolution, and to finish it with a manly perseverance. "I can't," never made a man.

Here is another boy, who has got the notion into his head that he is going to live without work. His father is rich; or he intends to be a professional man, or a merchant; and he thinks it of no use for him to learn to work. He feels above labor. He means to be a gentleman. But he is very much mistaken as to what constitutes a gentleman. He has altogether erroneous and false views of things. Whatever may be his situation in life, labor is necessary to exercise and develop the muscular powers of his body. If he grows up in indolence, he will be weak and effeminate, never possessing the vigor of a man. And whatever sphere of life he may occupy hereafter, he will never possess independence and energy of character enough to accomplish anything. A man who does

not know how to work, is not more than half a man. He is so dependent upon others, that he can accomplish nothing without help. Nor can wealth, or education, or professional knowledge, supply the deficiency. Wealth is very uncertain. "Riches take to themselves wings;" and they are especially liable to fly away from men who have been bred up in idle, do-nothing habits. And what will they do when their wealth is gone? They have never made any exertion, or depended on themselves. They have no energy of character. They have no knowledge of any useful employment. They cannot dig, and are ashamed beg. They either sink down, in utter discouragement, to the lowest depths of poverty, or else they resort to dishonest means of obtaining money. I have before me a letter, written to a gentleman in Boston, from a boy in the House of Correction, who got there by trying to live without work. After telling how bad he felt to be shut up in prison, and how bitter his reflections upon his past life were, he says, "I thought that as long as I could live without work, and get my living dishonestly, I would go ahead; but my high life was soon stopped." Here you perceive that his temptation to be dishonest arose from his dislike of work. But now, he says, he is convinced that the best way to get a living is by honest labor. And so you will find it. There is no one more exposed to temptation than the idle boy.

"Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do."

One who undertakes to get a living without work, will be very likely to fall into dishonest practices, and get shut up in prison.

Equally necessary is it for a man of learning, or a professional man—to know how to do with his own hands the most common things. If dependent on his own earnings for a support, he will not be able to hire everything to be done for him; or, if able, he will not always find anyone to do it. And as to the merchant, his life, from the very first, is a life of incessant toil and labor. The lazy boy, who goes into a store as a clerk, with such notions in his head about work, will be served as the working bees serve their drones—he will be dragged out of the hive. The boy that despises work, sets himself against nature; and if he succeeds in making anything of himself, he will contradict the voice of all history. When man fell from his innocency, it was determined that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. It is in vain for his posterity to attempt to evade this curse. If they refuse to toil, they will suffer a worse disaster, as the penalty of their disobedience. Disease, or poverty, or both—will follow the lazy track of the sluggard. This result, Solomon has described, in the most glowing terms: "I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and need like an armed man." (Proverbs 24:30-34)

Many of the ancient nations used to have a law requiring every young man to have a knowledge of some branch of labor. There appears to have been such a custom among the Jews. Paul, though belonging to a wealthy family, and bred a lawyer, in the highest school in the nation, was yet brought up to a trade. And when he came to devote himself to his Master's service, he found his tent-maker's trade of great use to him. And whatever occupation you design to follow, you will find use for all the practical knowledge of work, of handicraft, or of mechanical skill, you can acquire in early life. In the empire of China, labor is held in such esteem, that the emperor, on the day of his coronation, is required to plough a furrow with his own hand. And if you look over the page of

history, both ancient and modern, you will find that many of the greatest men that ever lived, were accustomed to follow some laborious occupation. David, the poet king, the sweet singer of Israel, whose name has been embalmed in the hearts of the pious in all ages, when a boy, was occupied in keeping his father's sheep. Dr. Franklin was the son of a mechanic in Boston, and was bred a printer. Washington, the father of his country, was a farmer. And the blessed Savior himself has set an example of industry and love of labor, which should put to shame every pseudo-gentleman who despises the labor of the hands. His apostles, also, were called from laborious occupations to preach the gospel; and many of the most eminent of his ministers and missionaries of the present day have been called from the plough or the workshop; and some of them have worked their way through a long course of study, bearing the expenses of their education with the labor of their hands.

We may safely conclude, then, that, whoever despises labor is a fool; for he despises the only thing that can make him A MAN. But industry is not only necessary to make you a man; it is necessary to make you happy. Some boys have such an aversion to labor, that they would think themselves perfectly happy if they had nothing to do. But they are greatly mistaken. They might like such a life a day or two; but they would soon get tired of it. The children at the Sandwich Islands have nothing to do. Their parents have no employment for them. They grow up in idleness. A missionary, writing to the children of this country, says, "Now, does anyone say, Happy, happy children, inhabiting these sunny islands! Absolutely nothing to do, but to seek their own gratification, without fear or restraint! Happy? No. The goats which graze the sides of their mountains may be happy; or the kitten which gambols on your kitchen hearth may be happy; but these children are not happy." They often go hungry. Their parents were brought up in idleness, also; and now they will not work if they can help it. They receive no assistance from their children, and often have no food to give them. The children frequently live upon roots, which they dig in the mountains, or upon sugar-cane, which they find in the fields. After spending the day in idleness, they often have to go supperless to bed. In many parts of the islands, also, the children, who have no disposition to labor and obtain clothing, suffer much from cold. They go almost naked; and when night comes, they lie down on a bare mat, with the dogs and fleas. Would the children of America exchange their warm beds and sweet sleep, for the leisure and hard fare of these young Sandwich Islanders? But in sickness, their sufferings are much greater. They are destitute of nearly every comfort; they have no physician; and they receive very little attention from their parents and friends. No kind mother watches over their couch at night. If they suffer, they suffer alone; if they die, they die unattended.

Idleness, also, makes these children wicked. Having nothing useful to do, they are always ready for every evil work. They tempt each other to sin. They rush together the downward road; and if spared to become men, they are poor and degraded, diseased and miserable. But perhaps you will say, "These Sandwich Islanders are uncivilized heathen; and this is what makes them so wretched." But you need not go to heathen lands, to see the bad effects of the lack of useful employment, upon boys and young men. In the Southern States, all the labor is done by slaves. It is esteemed disgraceful for a white man to work. The consequence is, that the boys grow up in idleness and vice. They learn everything that is bad. They grow up with strong and fiery passions, and wicked inclinations unsubdued. Among the young men, gambling, horse-racing, and other social vices, generally prevail. But many of them become poor; and then they are as wretched as

the poor Sandwich Islanders. There is, perhaps, no class of people, in this country, more degraded than the poor whites in the slave states. And their poverty and wretchedness may be traced to the fact, that it is disgraceful, among them, for white men to labor.

There is no country on earth where there is less of squalid poverty, and where the people generally enjoy more comfort and happiness, than in New England. And what is the reason? There is, probably, no other country in the world where the people are so industrious—where all the people are engaged in some useful employment. In New England, boys are set to work as soon as they are old enough to handle a hoe, an axe, or a spade. Every child has something to do, which adds something to the family's comfort. And where, in the wide world, will you find so many smiling, happy faces as among the children of New England? This is the true reason why they are so much happier than the children of the Sandwich Islands. The Yankee boy may sometimes get tired of his work; but if he had nothing to do, he would be absolutely miserable. It is not in the nature of a son of New England to be happy without employment. And, where you find one of them educated, and rising to eminence in professional life, if you trace back his history, in most cases, you will learn that, when a boy, he worked on his father's farm, or in his father's shop. And if you could now see him seeking relaxation and amusement, you would often find him engaged in the same kind of labor that he used to perform when a boy. When one of the convicts in the state prison has committed an offence, they punish him by shutting him up in his cell alone, and giving him nothing to do. For a little while he is glad to be relieved from his work; but very soon, he begs for it again. Nothing is so hard for him to bear as doing nothing.

If, then, you would be virtuous and happy—if you would be qualified to brave the storms of life's troubled ocean—cultivate the love of useful labor. This will give you independence of character. It will give you the ability to take care of yourself. It will make you despise the fawning sluggard, who would sell his birthright for a piece of bread. It will save you from the temptation to surrender your independence, or commit any act of baseness or dishonesty for the sake of a living.

02.13. Education of the Heart

EDUCATION OF THE HEART By the heart, I mean the moral faculties—in distinction from the intellectual. Any action is moral, which can be praised or blamed. The moral faculties are those which determine moral action. These faculties are, the Conscience, Will, and Affections. In this division, I do not attempt metaphysical exactness, but only what I can make my readers understand. When I speak of educating these faculties, I do not mean to separate the process from that of pious education in general; for nothing can be well done, in the formation of character, without pious principle and motives at the foundation. But my object is, to speak of the specific means by which these faculties may be cultivated.

It may be necessary for me to explain what I mean by the Conscience, Will, and Affections. Yet it does not fall in with my design, neither would it suit the age and capacities of those for whom I write, to enter into a philosophical description, or analysis, of the faculties of the mind, or affections of the heart. I shall only give such simple explanations as are sufficient for my purpose, and as I suppose will be understood by my readers.

I. THE CONSCIENCE. This is the faculty which determines whether any action proposed to the mind, or any feeling of the heart, is right or wrong. If you will watch the motions of your own mind, you will perceive, whenever anything is proposed to be done or not to be done, something within tells you that it is either right or wrong. If wrong, you find the same something within, urging you not to do it; or, if right, the same impulse moves you to do it. If you do as you are thus urged, you find the same voice within approving what you have done, or, if you do not obey, condemning you. This something within is **CONSCIENCE**.

You have, doubtless, lived long enough to experience many a conflict, or dispute, between your conscience and your inclinations. You are inclined to do something which your conscience tells you is wrong; but conscience not only tells you it is wrong, but urges you not to do it. Your inclinations, or desires, urge you in the contrary direction; and this creates a conflict. If conscience prevails, then it approves your decision, and you feel happy. But, if inclination prevails, conscience upbraids, and you feel miserable. As I have defined education, you will see the great importance of educating the conscience. It is the leading moral faculty, and must have a great influence upon the moral character. For the conscience itself may be wrong. It is not itself the rule by which you are to determine what is right and wrong. The Word of God is the rule. The office of conscience is, to determine whether anything you propose to do is agreeable to the rule, and to urge you, accordingly, to do it or not to do it.

Suppose you wish to determine whether anything is straight; you lay a ruler upon it that you suppose to be straight, and if they agree, that settles the matter. Your eye, comparing the object with the ruler, determines whether it is straight or not. But, if the rule applied is crooked, your eye is deceived, and you misjudge. Conscience is the eye of the soul, that compares an action with the ruler. The conscience, then, must be well instructed. You must learn the rule of right from the Word of God, and then conscience will always decide right. But, if you adopt false notions of right and

wrong, your very conscience will lead you astray. The first thing, then, in the education of the heart is, to have it filled with right principles; and these you are to obtain from the study of the Bible, and from listening to the instructions of your parents, teachers, and ministers. The next thing is, always to obey the voice of conscience. If you go contrary to it, and do what conscience tells you is wrong, or neglect what it urges upon you as duty—you weaken that faculty, and harden the heart. When you refuse to hearken to the voice of conscience, the next time it will not speak so loud; and every time this is repeated, the weaker it grows, until at length it is scarcely heard at all, and you may go on and sin almost without restraint.

If you will look back a little while in your own experience, you will see the force of what I say. If you have ever fallen into the habit of secretly disobeying your parents, you will find an illustration of it. The first time you were tempted to disobey, your conscience was very loud against it; but the temptation, falling in with your inclinations, prevailed. Then conscience upbraided you with a voice of terror. But you were not discovered, and no immediate evil followed. The next time the temptation presented itself, the remonstrance of conscience was feeble, and its condemnation light. The next time it was feebler still; until at length you could do with careless indifference what at first made you shudder. But when the power of conscience is gone, there is but one step more to ruin. If, then, you would keep your conscience tender, you must always obey its voice.

Another means of educating the conscience is, the habit of thinking with approbation of what is right, and putting out of the mind with horror all thoughts of what is wrong. The most hateful things, by becoming familiar to the sight, lose much of the horror which they excite at first. A person who had never seen an animal killed would be deeply affected at the sight; but a butcher thinks nothing of it. So, by thinking much of what is wrong, the conscience becomes defiled, and ceases to act with promptness and decision; while, if kept familiar only with the good, it would revolt instantly from the bad.

II. THE WILL. This is the faculty that chooses or refuses. It is the decisive faculty. It is the power that determines action, whether good or bad. It is the ruling faculty of the soul. I said conscience was the leading faculty, because it goes before the action of the will, and moves it to choose what is right. The will is the ruling faculty, because it determines all action. The way to educate the will is, to accustom it to submit to the dictates of conscience. The will, in our fallen and depraved state, is turbulent and unsubmitive. It is not disposed to submit to the law of God, nor to those whom God has set over us. Yet there is nothing of more importance to our happiness and usefulness than the early subjection of the will. If you determine that you will always have your own will, you will certainly be unhappy; for it is impossible that you should always have your own way. But if you early accustom yourself to give up your own will; to submit to the will of God, as made known to you in his word and Providence—to submit to your parents, as those whom God has set over you, and to your own conscience, as the faithful monitor which God has placed in your own bosom—then you will be as happy as you can be in this imperfect state. This you will not accomplish all at once. It must be the result of experience, trial, and discipline, with the grace of God in your heart. But if you begin to cultivate the habit of submission, in early life, it will save you many a severe struggle and much unhappiness. You have doubtless learned, before this time, that you always get into difficulty at home—when you set out to have your own will. And perhaps you have sometimes, in your impatience at contradiction, secretly wished that you were of age, beyond the control of your parents, that you might do as you pleased. But I assure you, both from my own

experience and from what I have seen of the world, that you will not find it any easier to have your own will, after you come to act for yourself. You will not succeed in anything you undertake to do for others, unless you give up your own will; neither will you succeed in making society agreeable to yourself.

Suppose you go to a shoemaker, to get a pair of shoes made, and as soon as you begin to tell him how you wish them done, he answers, "I understand my business; if you want a pair of shoes, I'll make them for you, but nobody can teach me how to do my work?" You would say, "He is a surly creature; I'll have nothing to do with him." Or, suppose you go into company, and you find a young lady who will consent to nothing except what she herself proposes. You would say, "She is a selfish creature; let her enjoy herself alone." But all this comes from mere wilfulness. You never will be comfortable, much less happy, until you are willing to yield to others—when no principle is concerned—but only the mere gratification of your own will. And when one is employed by another, it is perfectly reasonable that he should be directed by his employer, even if what he is directed to do may appear to him unwise. The only way that you can succeed, and be happy, in anything you may undertake to do for others, is, to submit your will to theirs, and do cheerfully, and without objection, what they require—provided, only, that they do not require you to do wrong. If you will look back, you will find that this wilfulness has been the cause of all the trouble you have got into with your parents, and of nearly all the altercations you have had with your brothers, sisters, and companions. And, if you retain this disposition, it will make you miserable, whatever station in society you may occupy. A little boy, named Truman, lost his own mother; and when he was four or five years of age, his father married again. His new mother was an excellent lady, very affectionate and kind-hearted toward the children. But one day, when she was teaching Truman how to read, she could not make him say his lesson correctly. She therefore used the rod until he submitted, and read as he ought. He was afterwards overheard talking with himself, about his conduct—"True, what made you treat your dear mother so? Hasn't she always been kind to you?" "Yes, I know she has. She loves me, and tries to do me all the good she can." "Then how could you be so naughty, to treat her so?" "I know I have been a very naughty boy, and treated her very bad indeed when she has been very kind to me; and she was trying then to teach me for my own good." "What can you say for yourself, then? How did you come to behave so?" "I can't say anything for myself; I know it was very mean. I feel ashamed to think I could treat her so; and I'll never do it again as long as I live. But I thought I would just try for once, and see who was master." The object of this little boy was to have his own will. He was not willing to submit to his mother, until he had tried his strength, to see whose will should prevail. He got a severe chastisement, and had to submit after all. And so it will always be with you, if you set out with the determination, if possible, always to have your own will. You will be always getting into difficulty, and gain nothing by it in the end.

III. THE AFFECTIONS. I shall not undertake, in this place, to give a full and complete definition of the affections. It will answer my present purpose, to say that the affections are the feelings or emotions of the heart. This may not be philosophically accurate; but when my readers come, at a more advanced age, to study mental and moral philosophy, they can enlarge their views. For all practical purposes, this will answer. And what I mean by educating the affections is, to acquire the habit of controlling the feelings, so as to suppress the bad and cultivate the good. You hear people talk of good and bad dispositions. But a good disposition is only the preponderance of good

feelings; or in other words, where good feelings and good tempers prevail, we say that person has a good disposition; but if bad feelings and evil tempers predominate, we say he has a bad disposition. There is no doubt a difference in natural dispositions. But with suitable efforts, and especially with the aid of God's grace, much may be done to cultivate and improve them. With these preliminary remarks, I proceed to give some rules for the cultivation of the affections.

1. CHECK THE FIRST RISINGS OF ILL-TEMPER. The smith, who makes an edged tool—an axe, a knife, or any such instrument—first works the iron and steel into the form which he wishes, and then tempers it. While he is working it, he wants to keep it soft, so that he can work it easy; and this he does by keeping it hot. But after he gets it finished, he heats it in the fire, and dips it in water, so as to cool it suddenly, and that makes it hard. But, if he left it so, it would be so hard that it would break all to pieces as soon as it was used. So he holds it again over the fire, and heats it a little, to take out a part of the temper, and make it just of the hardness that he wishes. An instrument that is very hard is called high-tempered; one that is very soft is low-tempered. This is a good illustration of temper as it appears in us. A high temper is one that is easily excited, and that runs so high as to be in danger of doing great mischief. A low temper is a disposition easy and indifferent, like a knife tempered so little that the edge will turn the first time it is used. Now you need temper enough not to be indifferent, but not so much as to fly all in pieces. And I know nothing on which your usefulness and happiness more depend, than in the proper regulation of your temper; and not your own happiness alone, but the happiness of all around you.

One of the first and greatest moral lessons is, to learn to control your temper. "He that is slow to anger," says Solomon, "is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city." But, "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." By indulging an ungoverned temper, you expose yourself to many evils. You show the weak points of your character, and lose the good opinion of others, and your own self-respect. You cannot help being ashamed of yourself after having broken out in a sudden gust of anger, or given indulgence to a peevish, fretful spirit. To be ill-humored, peevish, or cross, is to be unhappy, and to make others unhappy. But a sweet temper will not only make you happy, but, like the balmy breezes of a summer evening, it will shed a sweet fragrance all around you. Nothing will render your character more unlovely than ill-temper. Nor, if habitually indulged at home, can it be concealed even from the most careless observer. You will carry the mark of it wherever you go. There will be the ill-natured scowl, the knit brow, the distorted features, which no sweet-scented soap can wash out, and no cosmetic hide. It will spoil the most elegant features, and mar the most beautiful countenance. But a sweet temper will hide a thousand defects, and render the most ordinary features beautiful and lovely. I do not know anything that adds a greater charm to the youthful countenance. But, if you would have a sweet temper, you must suppress every ill-natured feeling; never allow yourself to be angry at trifles, nor get into a storm of passion on any account: neither indulge a peevish, fretful disposition; but, on the contrary, cultivate and cherish good-nature, in every possible way.

Strive to be pleased with everything around you, unless it is positively bad or sinful; and never allow the ill-humors of others to disturb your own tranquility. The noisy cataract comes splashing its muddy waters over the side of the mountain, leaping from rock to rock, now shouting, now murmuring, now scolding, now rushing on in the wildest fury, until it plunges into the great river. But the river rolls quietly on its majestic way, undisturbed by the babbling waterfall, which only

makes a momentary ripple upon the surface of its placid waters. But, suppose the river should stop its course, to quarrel with the noisy waterfall, what would be the consequence? The whole country would be inundated with the fury of its pent-up waters. You cannot afford to get angry with everyone that is disposed to treat you ill. It costs too much. Did you ever see a dog barking at the moon? And what did the moon do? It went right straight on, and minded nothing about it. The moon can't afford to stop and quarrel with the dog that barks at it.

"I know it is very foolish to be angry," perhaps you will say; "but how can I help it? I am suddenly provoked, and fall into a passion before I have time to think of it." The best remedy I can recommend is, that you make it a rule never to be angry until you have had time to consider whether you have anything to be angry about. And, in making inquiry, do not ask whether the conduct that provoked you was bad; but, in the first place, try if you cannot find some apology for it, or some palliation. And, second, whether, admitting it to be as bad as it seems, it is really worth so great a sacrifice of feeling, on your part, as you will have to make, if you indulge your passions. And, among other considerations, ask yourself how this thing will appear a hundred years hence, when both yourself and the person who has provoked you, will be in eternity—"If I indulge my passions in this thing, shall I then be able to look back upon it with pleasure?" Some such reflections as these will tend greatly to cool your anger; and most likely, before you have thought upon the matter many minutes, you will conclude that it is not worth while to be angry. So likewise, if you are given to fretfulness and ill-humor, consider whether there is any sufficient cause why you should thus make yourself miserable? And you will probably find that all your trouble is imaginary. Remember that everything that concerns you is ordered by the providence of God; and think how much cause of thankfulness you have, every day, for his goodness. And what has he done that you should fret against him? He has perhaps allowed your will to be crossed; but he has done it for your good. Think, also, how this will appear a hundred years hence? "How will my fretfulness appear, when I look back upon it, from another world?" And if there were no sin in it, is there not much folly?—for "why should I make myself miserable?"

2. NEVER GIVE THE LEAST INDULGENCE TO A JEALOUS OR ENVIOUS SPIRIT. To be jealous, is to suspect others of being unfriendly to us, or of a design to injure us. To be envious, is to be displeased with the prosperity of others, especially if they are likely to excel us. The effect of these two passions upon the disposition is very similar.

If you are JEALOUS of any person, you will be always looking for some evil design in his conduct; and your imagination will conjure up a thousand things that never had any existence, except in your own mind. This passion, habitually indulged, very often settles down into a kind of partial insanity. I have known people, whose imaginings, through the influence of jealousy, became realities to their minds, and they would roundly assert as facts, the things that they had imagined respecting others. Such people are perpetually in trouble, because they fancy some one is plotting against them. Your own comfort, therefore, depends on your suppressing the first motions of this evil affection. While you should be on your guard against imposition, and never confide implicitly in strangers, nor put yourself in the power of anyone whose character has not been proved; yet you should presume others to be friendly until they show themselves otherwise, and always give their conduct the best construction it will bear.

Let me give you an example. There is Laura Williams—she is always in trouble, for fear some one does not like her. If any of her companions seem to take more notice of some other one than of herself, she begins to be jealous that their professions of friendship are not real. And if anyone happens not to notice her at once, she considers it a slight; and so her feelings are perpetually disturbed. She is never happy. Sometimes she will weep, as if her heart would break, for some imagined slight; when, in reality, she has no occasion for trouble, and might just as well laugh as cry. She will be unhappy as long as she lives, and perhaps crazy before she dies, if she does not overcome this passion.

ENVY is a more depraved passion than jealousy; but the effect upon the character is nearly similar. You will find a melancholy illustration of the nature and effects of envy, in the story of Haman, in the Book of Esther. Though exalted to the second place in the kingdom, he could not enjoy his elevation, so long as Mordecai the Jew sat in the king's gate. He could endure no rival. But you will find examples enough of this passion among your own companions. There are those that cannot bear a rival; and if any of their companions excel themselves, they hate them. But consider how base and ignoble such a feeling is. A truly generous spirit will rejoice in whatever is excellent—will love excellence wherever it appears; but an envious and selfish spirit would monopolize everything to itself, and be offended, if excelled by others. Every noble sentiment revolts at the spirit of envy; so that this base passion always defeats itself. The envious person would be exalted above all—but envy debases him below all, and renders him despicable and miserable!

3. ACQUIRE THE HABIT OF REGARDING EVERYONE WITH FEELINGS OF GOOD-WILL. There are some people, who accustom themselves to look upon others with a critical eye, and seem to take pleasure in detecting and exposing their failings. This leads to misanthropy; it makes people ill-natured. It leads them to look upon almost everyone as an object of aversion. If this disposition begins in early life, and continues to be cultivated, it will grow and increase, until it settles at last into a sour, morose, malignant temper, that can never look with pleasure or satisfaction upon any human being.

Instead of indulging such a temper, you should look with feelings of good-will upon everyone. Do not regard others with a fault-finding critical eye. If they are not incorrigibly bad, so as to render them dangerous associates, overlook their faults, and study to find out some redeeming qualities. Consider that they belong to the same great family—that they are as good by nature as yourself—that they have immortal souls, to be saved or lost. Try what excuses or apologies you can find for their faults in the circumstances in which they have been bred. And though you may not see fit to make choice of them as your friends, yet feel kindly towards them. But especially, do not forget that you are not faultless yourself. This will exert a softening influence upon your own character; and you will find yourself much more happy in studying the good qualities of others, and exercising feelings of charity and good-will toward them, than you will in criticizing and finding fault. The one course will make you amiable and happy—the other, unlovely and miserable.

4. GIVE FREE INDULGENCE TO EVERY NOBLE AND GENEROUS SENTIMENT. Rejoice when you see others prosperous. Why should you be unhappy, that another is more prosperous than yourself, if you are not injured by it? If you love your neighbor as yourself, his prosperity will be as grateful to you as your own. Rejoice, also, in the excellence of others. A truly noble heart loves

excellence for excellence's sake. A generous heart is forgetful of self; and when it sees excellence, it is drawn toward it in love. It would scorn to put 'little self' between it and a worthy object. This disposition should also be carried out in action. A generous and noble spirit will not always be contending for its own rights. It will yield rather than contend. Contention, among companions and associates, for each other's rights, is a source of great unhappiness; and when it becomes habitual, as it sometimes does among brothers and sisters at home, it spoils the disposition. "That is mine," says one. "No," says the other, "it is not yours, it is mine." And without waiting quietly to look into the matter, and investigate the question of right, they fall into a sharp contention. The matter in question was a mere trifle. It was not worth the sacrifice of good-nature which it cost. How much better both would feel, to keep good-natured, and give each other the reasons for their claims; and if they cannot agree, for one or the other to yield! Or, rather, how much more noble, if the contention would be—which shall be allowed the privilege of yielding! There is more pleasure in one act of generosity, than in all that can be enjoyed by selfish possession; and nothing will render you more lovely in the eyes of others than a noble and generous disposition.

5. BE GENTLE. Gentleness is opposed to all severity and roughness of manners. It diffuses a mild, soft, amiable spirit through all the behavior. It has much to do with the cultivation of the affections. Where this is lacking, none of the amiable affections will flourish. A gentle spirit will show itself in a gentle behavior, and a gentle behavior will react upon the spirit, and promote the growth of all the mild and amiable affections. You can distinguish the gentle by the motion of the head, or the sound of their footsteps. Their movements are quiet and noiseless. There is a charm in their behavior which operates to secure for them the good opinion of all.

6. BE KIND. Every kind act that is performed increases the kind feelings of the heart. If you treat your brothers and sisters kindly, you will feel more kindly toward them; while, if you treat them with harshness and severity, or ill-treat them in any manner, it will seal up your affections toward them, and you will be more inclined to treat them with coolness and indifference. If you are habitually kind to everyone, embracing every opportunity in your power to perform some office of kindness to others, you will find your good-will toward all increasing. You will be universally beloved, and everyone will be kind to you. See that little girl! She has run back to assist her little brother, who has lost his shoe in the mud. How kindly she speaks to him, to soothe his feelings and wipe his tears! Some sisters that I have seen would have been impatient of the delay, and scolded him in a cross and angry manner for the trouble he made. But with a heart full of sympathy, she forgets herself, and is intent only on helping him out of trouble, and quieting his grief. But she has hardly got under way again, before she meets a little girl, who has just fallen down and spilled her berries, crying over her loss. Without once thinking of the trouble it would give her, she speaks kindly to the little girl, helps her pick up the lost fruit, and then assists her to pick enough more to make up her loss. Everywhere she is just so, always glad of an opportunity to show kindness to everyone she meets. And she gets her pay as she goes along. The happiness she feels, in thus being able to contribute to the comfort of others, is far beyond anything she could receive from mere selfish enjoyment. And, in addition to this, she gets the good-will of others, which makes them kind to her in return.

7. KEEP SELF OUT OF VIEW, AND SHOW AN INTEREST IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS. This will not only interest others in you, but it will tend to stifle selfishness in your own heart, and to

cultivate unselfish feeling. Sympathize with others; enter into their feelings; and endeavor, in heart and feeling, to make their interest your own; so that there may be a soil for unselfish feeling to grow in. If you see others enjoying themselves, rejoice with them. Make the case your own, and be glad that they have occasion to rejoice. "Rejoice with those who rejoice." If you have truly benevolent feelings, it will certainly be an occasion of joy to you to see them prosperous and happy, whoever they are. On the other hand, sympathize with misery and distress. "Weep with those who weep." Wherever you see misery, let it affect your heart. And never fail, if it is in your power, to offer relief. And, often, you can afford the best relief to those of your own age—your companions, but especially your inferiors—by showing that you are affected with their troubles, that you sympathize with them. Cultivate the habit of feeling for others. When you see or read of the sufferings of the poor, when you read of the condition of the heathen, who know not the way of salvation, let your sympathies flow forth toward them. Learn to feel for others' woe, and it will improve your own heart. But, besides this, you will find yourself rewarded with the affections of others.

Thus I have given you a few brief hints, to show how the affections may be cultivated. I must leave you to apply them in practice to every-day life, and to carry out the principle, in its application to all the circumstances in which you may be placed; which principle is, as much as possible, to repress and refrain from exercising every bad feeling or affection, and to cherish and cultivate the good, bringing them into exercise on every fit occasion, that they may grow into habits.

You will see, by what I have said under the various heads of this chapter, that the idea of educating the heart is no mere figure of speech, but a reality, of great importance to your character and well-being through life. Your parents and teachers will, of course, pay attention to this matter; but they cannot succeed in it without your cooperation. And with you it must be an every-day work. You must carry it out in all your conduct and feelings, and seek the grace of God to aid you in so difficult a work. Without an educated heart, you will never make a gentleman. The fine feelings and good tempers which I have described are indispensable to good breeding. You cannot have polished manners with a rough heart. You may put on the gentleman; but it will appear out of place. You cannot change the nature of a pig. You may wash him over and over again, and make him ever so clean; you may even dress him up in white linen garments—but he will immediately return to his wallowing in the mire.

02.14. Education of the Mind

EDUCATION OF THE MIND The term Mind is often employed to signify all the faculties of the soul. But I shall use it in application to the intellectual faculties, in distinction from the moral; as I have employed heart to denote the moral, in distinction from the intellectual. I shall not undertake to give a strictly philosophical distinction of the mental faculties, but shall comprehend them in the following division, which is sufficient for my purpose, to wit: Perception, Reason or Understanding, Judgment, Memory, and Imagination. **PERCEPTION** is the faculty that receives ideas into the mind; as, when you look at a tree, immediately the idea of a tree is impressed on the mind through the sense of sight; or, when you touch an object, the idea of that object is impressed on your mind through the sense of touch; or, you may receive the idea of a spirit, from the explanations which you hear or read. The **REASON** or **UNDERSTANDING**, is the faculty that considers, analyzes, and compares ideas received into the mind, and forms conclusions concerning them. For example, suppose you had never seen a watch: one is presented to you, and, as soon as your eye rests upon it, you form an idea respecting it. Perhaps this idea is no more than that it is a very curious object. But, immediately, your understanding is employed in considering what it is, the perceptive faculty still being occupied in further discoveries. From the fact that there is motion, you conclude there must be some power within it; for motion is not produced without power. Here is consideration and conclusion, which is a regular operation of reason. But, to make further discoveries, you open the watch, to examine its parts. This is analyzing. You examine all the parts that you can see, on removing the case. You still see motion—all the wheels moving in regular order; but the cause of the motion, the power that moves, is yet unseen. You perceive a chain wound around a wheel, and attached to another wheel, around which it is slowly winding itself; and this chain appears to regulate the whole movement. You conclude that the power must be in this last-named wheel. Here is a conclusion from analyzing, or examining the parts separately. The **JUDGMENT** is the same as what is popularly styled common sense. It is that faculty which pronounces a decision, in view of all the information before the mind, in any given case. For example, if you wish to determine what school you will attend, you first obtain all the information you can respecting the different schools that claim your attention. You consider and compare the advantages of each; and you decide according to your impression of their comparative merits. The faculty which forms this decision is called the judgment. You will readily perceive how very important this faculty is; for a person may be very learned, and yet a very great dunce in everything of a practical nature, if he fails in judgment or common sense. His learning will be of very little use to him, because he has not sense to use it to advantage. The **MEMORY** is the faculty which retains the knowledge that is received into the mind. It is a wonderful faculty. It may be compared to an immense closet, with a countless number and variety of shelves, drawers, and cells, in which articles are stored away for future use, only one of which can be examined by the proprietor at the same time, and yet so arranged that he knows just where to look for the article he wants. It is supposed that no impression, once made upon the memory, can be obliterated; and yet the impression may not be called up for years. It lies there, until some association of ideas brings it up again; the faculty not being able to present more than one object distinctly before the

mind at the same instant. The IMAGINATION is that faculty which forms pictures in the mind of real or unreal scenes. It is the faculty that you exercise in your fanciful plays, and when your mind runs forward to the time that you expect to be engaged in the busy scenes of life, and you picture to yourself pleasures and enjoyments in prospect. It is the faculty chiefly exercised by the poet and the writer of fiction.

You will, perhaps, be tired of this explanation; but it was necessary, in order to prepare the way for what I have to say on the education of the mind. From the definition of education already given, you will perceive that my ideas differ very much from those entertained by most young people. Ask a young person what he is going to school for, and he will answer, "To learn." And his idea of learning is, simply, to acquire knowledge. This, however, is but a small part of the object of education. And this idea often leads youth to judge that much of what they are required to study is of no value to them; because they think they shall have no use for the particular science they are studying, in practical life. The chief objects of mental education are, to cultivate and discipline the mind, and to store it with those great facts and principles which compose the elements of all knowledge. The studies to be pursued, then, are to be chosen with reference to these objects, and not merely for the purpose of making the mind a vast storehouse of knowledge. This may be done, and yet leave it a mere lumber-room. For without the capacity to analyze, and turn it to account, all the knowledge in the world is but useless lumber. It is of great importance that young people should understand and appreciate this principle, because it is intimately connected with their success in acquiring a good education. To this end, it is necessary that they should cooperate with their parents and teachers. This they will never be ready to do, if they suppose the only object of study is, to acquire a knowledge of the particular branches they are set to learn; for they cannot see the use of them. But, understanding the design of education to be, to discipline the mind, and furnish it with the elements of knowledge; there is no science, no branch of learning, but what is useful for these objects; and the only question, where education cannot be liberal, is, What branches will best secure these ends? This understanding of the objects of education is also necessary, to stimulate the young to prosecute their studies in the most profitable manner. If their object were merely to acquire knowledge, the more aid they could get from their teachers the better, because they would thus obtain information the more rapidly. But the object being to discipline the mind, call forth its energies, and obtain a thorough knowledge of elementary principles, what is studied out, by the unaided efforts of the pupil, is worth a hundred times more than that which is communicated by an instructor. The very effort of the mind which is requisite to study out a sum in arithmetic, or a difficult sentence in language—is worth more than it costs, for the increased power which it imparts to the faculties so exercised. The principles involved in the case will, also, by this effort, be more deeply impressed upon the mind. Such efforts are also exceedingly valuable, for the confidence which they inspire in one's power of accomplishment. I do not mean to commend self-confidence in a bad sense. For anyone to be so confident of his own power as to think he can do things which he cannot, or to fancy himself qualified for stations which he is not able to fill, is foolish and vain. But, to know one's own ability to do, and have confidence in it, is indispensable to success in any undertaking. And this confidence is inspired by unaided efforts to overcome difficulties in the process of education. As an instance of this, I recollect, when a boy, of encountering a very difficult sum in arithmetic. After spending a considerable time on it, without success, I sought the aid of the school teacher, who failed to render me any assistance. I then applied to several other people, none of whom could give me the desired information. Thus I

was thrown back upon my own resources. I studied upon it several days without success. After worrying my head with it one evening, I retired to rest, and dreamed out the whole process. I do not suppose there was anything supernatural in my dream; but the sum was the absorbing subject of my thoughts, and when sleep had closed the senses, they still ran on the same subject. Rising in the morning with a clear head, and examining the question anew, it all opened up to my mind with perfect clearness; all difficulty vanished, and in a few moments the problem was solved. I can scarcely point to any single event, which has had more influence upon the whole course of my life than this. It gave me confidence in my ability to succeed in any reasonable undertaking. But for this confidence, I should never have thought of entering upon the most useful undertakings of my life. But for this, you would never have seen this book, nor any other of the numerous works which I have been enabled to furnish for the benefit of the young. I mention this circumstance here, for the purpose of encouraging you to independent mental effort. In prosecuting your studies, endeavor always, if possible, to overcome every difficulty without the aid of others. This practice, besides giving you the confidence of which I have spoken, will give you a much better knowledge of the branches you are pursuing, and enable you, as you advance, to proceed much more rapidly. Every difficulty you overcome, by your own unaided efforts, will make the next difficulty less. And though at first you will proceed more slowly, your habit of independent investigation will soon enable you to outstrip all those who are still held in the leading-strings of their teachers. A child will learn to walk much sooner by being let alone, than to be provided with a go-cart. Your studies, pursued in this manner, will be much more interesting; for you are interested in any study just in proportion to the effort of mind it costs you. The perceptive faculty is developed first of all. It begins to be exercised by the child before it can speak, or even understand language. Reason and judgment are more slow in their development, though they begin to be exercised at a very early period. Memory is exercised as soon as ideas are received into the mind. The imagination, in the natural course of things, is developed last of all; but it is often forced out too early, like flowers in a hot-bed, in which case it works great injury to the mind.

You will perceive the great importance of bringing out the several faculties of the mind in their due proportion. If the memory is chiefly cultivated, you will have a great amount of knowledge floating loosely in your mind, but it will be of very little use. But the proper cultivation of the memory is indispensable, in order to render your knowledge available. Nor will it do for you to adopt the notion that nothing is to be committed to the keeping of the memory which is not fully understood. The memory is a servant, which must consent to do some things without knowing the reason why. The imagination is the beautiful flower that crowns the top of the plant. But if forced out too early, or out of due proportion, it will cover the stalk with false blossoms, which, in a little time, will wither, and leave it dry and useless. The perception, reason, and judgment, require a long course of vigorous exercise and severe training, in order to lay a solid foundation of character.

I shall leave this subject here, without suggesting any particular means of cultivating the mind, leaving you to apply the principles here laid down to your ordinary studies. But in several subsequent chapters, I shall have some reference to what I have said here.

02.15. Reading

READING

Reading occupies a very important place in education. It is one of the principal means of treasuring up knowledge. It is, therefore, highly necessary that a taste for reading should be early cultivated. But a mere taste for reading, uncontrolled by intelligent principle, is a dangerous appetite. It may lead to ruinous consequences. The habit of reading merely for amusement, is a dangerous habit. Reading for amusement furnishes a constant temptation for reading what is injurious. It promotes, also, an unprofitable manner of reading. Reading in a hasty and cursory manner, without exercising your own thoughts upon what you read, induces a bad habit of mind. To profit by reading depends, not so much on the quantity which is read, as upon the manner in which it is read. You may read a great deal, in a gormandizing way, as the glutton consumes food, and yet be none the better, but the worse for what you read.

If you would profit by reading, you must, in the first place, be careful what you read. There are a multitude of books, pamphlets, periodicals, and newspapers, in circulation at the present day, which cannot be read, especially by the young, without great injury, both to the mind and heart. If any one should propose to you to associate with men and women of the lowest and most abandoned character, you would shrink from the thought—you would be indignant at the proposition. But it is not the mere bodily presence of such characters that makes their society dangerous. It is the communion which you have with their minds and hearts, in their conduct and conversation. But a great portion of the popular literature of the day is written by such characters. By reading their writings, you come into communion with their minds and hearts, as much as if you were personally in their company. In their writings, the imaginations which fill their corrupt minds, and the false and dangerous principles which dwell in their depraved hearts, are transferred to paper, to corrupt the unwary reader. Here are, likewise, glowing descriptions of evil conduct, more fascinating to the youthful heart than the example itself would be, because the mischief is artfully concealed behind the drapery of fine literary taste, and beautiful language. There are, like-wise, many such writings, the productions of people of moral lives, but of corrupt principles, which are equally dangerous. You would not associate with a person whom you knew to be an unprincipled character, even though he might be outwardly moral. He would be the more dangerous, because you would be less on your guard. If it is dangerous to keep company with people of bad character or bad principles, it is much more so to keep company with bad books.

I have treated at large on the subject of novel-reading, and other objectionable writings, in my "Young Lady's Guide;" and to that I must refer you, for my reasons, more at length, for condemning such reading. I shall here only suggest, for the regulation of your reading, a few simple rules.

1. ALWAYS HAVE SOME DEFINITE OBJECT IN VIEW, IN YOUR READING. While pursuing your education, you will be so severely taxed with hard study, that reading merely for diversion or amusement does not furnish the relaxation which you need. It keeps the body idle and the mind

still in exercise; whereas, the diversion which you need, is something that will exercise the body and relax the mind. If your object is diversion, then it is better to seek it in useful labor, sprightly amusements, or healthful walks. I can think of nothing more injurious to the young than spending the hours in which they are released from study, bending over novels, or the light literature of our trashy periodicals. Not only is the health seriously injured by such means, but the mind loses its vigor. The high stimulus applied to the imagination creates a kind of mental intoxication, which renders study insipid and irksome. But reading is an important part of education, and some time should be devoted to it. Instead of mere amusement, however, there are higher objects to be aimed at. These are:

1st, to store the mind with useful knowledge;

2d, to cultivate a correct taste;

3d, to make salutary impressions upon the heart. For the first, you may read approved works on all the various branches of knowledge; as history, biography, travels, science, and Christian truth. For the second, you may read such works of imagination and literary taste as are perfectly free from objection, on the score of piety and morality—and these but sparingly at your age; for the third, such practical works of piety as you will find in the Sabbath school library. But, for all these purposes, the Bible is the great Book of books. It contains history, biography, poetry, travels, and doctrinal and practical essays. Any plan of reading will be essentially defective, which does not contemplate the daily reading of the Bible. You ought to calculate on reading it through, in course, every year of your life.

2. BE EXCEEDINGLY CAREFUL WHAT YOU READ. Do not take up a book, paper, or periodical, that happens to fall in your way, because you have nothing else to read. By so doing, you will expose yourself to great evils. But, though a book be not decidedly objectionable, it may not be worth reading. There are so many good books, at the present day, that it is not worth while to spend time over what is of little value; and it is better to read the Bible alone, than to spend time over a poor book. Avoid, especially, the fictitious stories that you will find in newspapers and popular magazines. They are generally the worst species of fiction, and tend strongly to induce a vitiated taste, and an appetite for novel-reading. If you once become accustomed to such reading, you will find it produce a kind of moral intoxication, so that you will feel as uneasy without it, as the drunkard without his cups, or the smoker without his pipe. It is much the safer way for young people to be wholly directed by their parents, (or their teachers, if away from home,) in the choice of their reading. Make it a rule never to read any book, pamphlet, or periodical, until you have first ascertained from your parents, teachers, or minister, that it is safe, and worth reading.

3. THINK AS YOU READ. Do not drink in the thoughts of others as you drink water; but examine them, and see whether they carry conviction to your own mind; and if they do, think them over, until they become incorporated with your own thoughts, part and parcel of your own mind. Lay up facts and principles in your memory. Let the beautiful thoughts and striking ideas that you discover be treasured up as so many gems and precious stones, to enrich and beautify your own mind. And let your heart be impressed and benefitted by the practical thoughts you find addressed to it.

4. REDEEM TIME FOR READING. Although it would be improper for you to take the time appropriated for study, or to rob yourself of needful diversion, yet you may, by careful economy,

save some time every day for reading. A great deal of time is thrown away by the indulgence of dilatory habits, or consumed in a careless, sauntering vacancy. If you follow system, and have a time for everything, and endeavor to do everything with speedily, in its proper season, you will have time enough for everything that is necessary to be done.

02.16. Writing

WRITING

Writing, or composing, is one of the best exercises of the mind. It is, however, I am sorry to say, an exercise to which young people generally show a great aversion. One reason, perhaps, is, that, to write well, requires hard thinking. But I am inclined to think the chief reason is, that the difficulties of writing are magnified. There is, also, a want of wisdom in the choice of subjects. Themes are frequently selected for first efforts, which require deep, abstract thinking; and the mind not being able to grasp them, there is a lack of thought, which discourages new beginners. The first attempts should be made upon subjects that are easy and well understood; such as a well-studied portion of history, a well-known story, or a description of some familiar scene; the object being to clothe it in suitable language, and to make such reflections upon it as occur to the mind. Writing is but thinking on paper; and if you have any thoughts at all, you may commit them to writing.

Another fault in young beginners is, viewing composition as a task imposed on them by their teachers, and making it their chief object to cover a certain quantity of paper with writing; and so the sooner this task is discharged the better. But you must have a higher aim than this, or you will never be a good writer. Such efforts are positively injurious. They promote a careless, negligent habit of writing. One well-written composition, which costs days of hard study, is worth more, as a discipline of mind, than a hundred off-hand, careless productions. Indeed, one good, successful effort will greatly diminish every succeeding effort, and make writing easy. You will do well, then, first to select your subject some time before you write, and think it over and study it, and have your ideas arranged in your mind before you begin. Then write with care, selecting the best expressions, and clothing your thoughts in the best dress. Then carefully and repeatedly read it over, and correct it, studying every sentence, weighing every expression, and making every possible improvement. Then lay it aside awhile, and afterwards copy it, with such improvements as occur at the time. Then lay it aside, and after some days revise it again, and see what further improvements and corrections you can make, and copy it a second time. If you repeat this process half a dozen times, it will be all the better. Nor will the time you spend upon it be lost. One such composition will conquer all the difficulties in the way of writing; and every time you repeat such an effort, you will find your mind expanding, and your thoughts multiplying, so that, very soon, writing will become an easy and delightful exercise; and you will, at length, be able to make the first draught so nearly perfect that it will not need copying. But you never will make a good writer by off-hand, careless efforts.

Letter-writing, however, is a very different affair. Its beauty consists in its simplicity, ease, and freedom from formality. The best rule that can be given for letter-writing is, to imagine the person present whom you are addressing, and write just what you would say in conversation. All attempts at effort, in letter-writing, are out of place. The detail of particulars, such as your correspondent would be interested to know, and the expression of your own feelings, are the great excellences of this kind of writing. Nothing disappoints a person more than to receive a letter full of fine

sentiments, or didactic matter, such as he might find in books, while the very information which he desired is left out, and perhaps an apology at the close for not giving the news, because the sheet is full. In a letter, we want information of the welfare of our friends, together with the warm gush of feeling which fills their hearts. These are the true excellences of epistolary writing.

02.17. Indolence

INDOLENCE "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!" Proverbs 6:6

There is no greater enemy to improvement than an indolent spirit. An aversion to effort paralyzes every noble desire, and defeats every attempt at advancement. If you are naturally indolent, you must put on resolution to overcome it, and strive against it with untiring vigilance. There is not a single point, in the process of education, at which this hydra-headed monster will not meet you. "The slothful man says there is a lion outside—I shall be slain in the street!" There is always a lion in the way, when slothful spirits are called upon to make any exertion. "I can't," is the sovereign arbiter of their destiny. It prevents their attempting anything difficult or laborious. If required to write a composition, they can't think of anything to write about. The Latin lesson is difficult; this word they can't find; that sentence they can't read. The sums in arithmetic are so hard, they can't do them. And so this lion in the way defeats everything. But those who expect ever to be anything, must not allow such a word as can't in their vocabulary.

It is the same with labor. The indolent dread all exertion. When requested to do anything, they have something else to do first, which their indolence has left unfinished; or they have some other reason to give why they should not attempt it. But if nothing else will do, the sluggard's excuse, "I can't," is always at hand. Were it not for the injury to them, it would be far more agreeable to do, one's self, what is desired of them, than to encounter the painful scowls that clothe the brow, when they think of making an effort. Solomon has described this disposition to the life—"The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!" But indolence is a source of great misery. There are none so happy as those who are always active. I do not mean that they should give themselves no relaxation from severe effort. But relaxation does not suppose idleness. To sit and fold one's hands, and do nothing, serves no purpose. Change of employment is the best recreation. And from the idea of employment, I would not exclude active and healthful sports, provided they are kept within due bounds. But to sit idly staring at vacancy is intolerable. There is no enjoyment in it. It is a stagnation of body and mind. An indolent person is, to the active and industrious, what a stagnant pool is to the clear and beautiful lake. Employment contributes greatly to enjoyment. It invigorates the body, sharpens the intellect, and promotes cheerfulness of spirit; while indolence makes a torpid body, a vacant mind, and a peevish, discontented spirit.

Indolence is a great waste of existence. Suppose you live to the age of seventy years, and squander in idleness one hour a day, you will absolutely throw away about three years of your existence. And if we consider that this is taken from the waking hours of the day, it should be reckoned six years. Are you willing, by idleness, to shorten your life six years? Then take care of the moments. Never fritter away time in doing nothing. Whatever you do, whether study, work, or play, enter into it with spirit and energy; and never waste your time in sauntering and doing nothing. "Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom." Ecclesiastes 9:10. "We must do the works of Him who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work." John 9:4

02.18. On Doing One Thing at a Time

ON DOING ONE THING AT A TIME

What is worth doing at all, is worth the undivided attention; but John can never be satisfied to do but one thing at a time. By attempting to read or play while dressing, he consumes double the time that is necessary. He reads at the table, and, in consequence, keeps the table waiting for him to finish his meal. He turns his work into play, and thus his work is slighted, and frequently left half done. When he goes to his lesson, his attention is arrested by something else before he has fairly commenced, and he stops to look or listen. Or perhaps he insensibly falls into a reverie, and is engaged in building "castles in the air," until something happens to call back his spirit from the fairy land. The consequence is, the lesson is acquired but imperfectly, while twice the needful time has been spent upon it. At the same time, nothing else is accomplished. This, is what I call busy idleness. The true way to accomplish the most, and to do it in the best manner, is to confine the attention strictly to the thing in hand, and to bend all the energies of the mind to that one object, aiming to do it in the best possible manner, in the least possible time. By adopting this principle, and acting upon it, you will be surprised to find how much more expeditiously you will accomplish what you undertake, and how much better it will be done. It is indispensable to success in any undertaking.

Closely connected with this subject, is the systematic division of time. Where there is no system, one duty will jostle another, and much time will be wasted in considering what to do next; all of which would be avoided, by having a regular routine of duties, one coming after the other in regular order, and so having a set time for each. This cannot be carried out perfectly, because there will every day be something to do that was not anticipated. But it may be so far pursued as to avoid confusion and waste of time.

02.19. On Finishing What Is Begun

ON FINISHING WHAT IS BEGUN

Beginning things and leaving them unfinished, exerts a bad influence in the formation of character. If it becomes a habit, it will make you so fickle that no one will put confidence in you. There is James Scott. If you go into his room, you will find his table strewed, and his drawer filled, with compositions begun and not completed; scraps of verses, but no poem finished; letters commenced, but not completed. Or, if you go to his play-house, you will find a ball half wound; a kite half made; a boat begun; one runner of a sled; one wheel of a wagon; and other things to match. He lacks energy and perseverance to finish what he begins; and thus he wastes his time in frivolous pursuits. He is very ready to begin; but before he has completed what is begun, he thinks of something else that he wishes to do; or he grows weary of what he is upon. He lives to no purpose, for he completes nothing; and he might as well do nothing, as to complete nothing.

If you indulge this practice, it will grow upon you, until you will become weak, irresolute, fickle, and good for nothing. To avoid this, begin nothing that is not worth finishing, or that you have not good reason to think you will be able to finish. But when you have begun, resolutely persevere until you have finished. There is a strong temptation, with the young, to abandon an undertaking, because of the difficulties in the way; but, if you persevere, and conquer the difficulties you meet with, you will gain confidence in yourself, and the next time, perseverance in your undertakings will be more easy. You may, however, make a mistake, and begin what you cannot or ought not to perform; in which case, perseverance would only increase the evil.

02.20. Choice of Society, and Formation of Friendships

CHOICE OF SOCIETY, AND FORMATION OF FRIENDSHIPS

Character is formed under a great variety of influences. Sometimes a very trifling circumstance gives direction to the whole course of one's life. And every incident that occurs, from day to day, is exerting a silent, gradual influence, in the formation of your character. Among these influences, none are more direct and powerful than that exerted upon us by the companions with whom we associate; for we insensibly fall into their habits. This is especially true in childhood and youth, when the character is plastic, like soft wax—easily impressed. But we cannot avoid associating, to some extent, with those whose influence is injurious. It is necessary, then, for us to distinguish society into general and particular. General society is that with which we are compelled to associate. Particular society is that which we choose for ourselves. In school, and in all public places, you are under the necessity of associating somewhat with all. But those whom you meet, in such circumstances, you are not compelled to make intimate friends. You may be courteous and polite to all, wherever and whenever you meet them, and yet maintain such a prudent reserve, and cautious deportment, as not to be much exposed to contamination, if they should not prove suitable companions. But everyone needs intimate friends; and it is necessary that these should be well chosen. A bad friend may prove your ruin. You should therefore be slow and cautious in the formation of intimacies and friendships. Do not be suddenly taken with anyone, and so enter into a hasty friendship; for you may be mistaken, and soon repent of it. There is much force in the old adage, "All is not gold which glitters." A pleasing exterior often conceals a corrupt heart. Before you enter into close intimacies or friendships, study the characters of the people whom you propose to choose for companions. Watch their behavior and conversation; and if you discover any bad habits indulged, or anything that indicates a lack of principle, let them not become your companions. If you discover that they disregard any of the commandments of God, set them down as unsafe associates. They will not only be sure to lead you astray, but you can place no dependence upon their fidelity. If they will break one of God's commands, they will another; and you can put no confidence in them. But even where you discover no such thing, ask the opinion of your parents respecting them before you choose them as your friends. Yet, while you are in suspense about the matter, treat them courteously and kindly. But when you have determined to seek their friendship, do not impose your friendship on them against their will. Remember that they have the same right as yourself to the choice of their friends; and they may see some objection to the formation of a friendship with yourself. Be delicate, therefore, in your advances, and give them an opportunity to come half way. A friendship cautiously and slowly formed will be much more likely to last than one that is formed in haste. But let the number of your intimate and confidential friends be small. It is better to have a few select, choice, and warm friends, than to have a great number, less carefully chosen, whose attachment is less warm and ardent. But you must not refuse to associate at all with the mass of the society where you belong; especially, if you live in the country. You must meet them kindly and courteously, on all occasions where the society in general in which you move is called together. You must not affect exclusiveness, nor confine

yourself to the company of your particular friends, at such times. But be careful that you do not expose yourself to evil influences.

You ought not, at present, to form any intimate friendships with the other gender. Such friendships, at your age, are dangerous; and if not productive of any serious present evils, they will probably be subjects of regret when you come to years of maturity; for attachments may be formed that your judgment will then disapprove.

02.21. Bad Company, Mischievousness

CHOICE OF SOCIETY, AND FORMATION OF FRIENDSHIPS

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02.22. On Amusements

ON AMUSEMENTS The human system is formed for alternate labor and rest, and not for incessant activity; and to provide for this, the night follows the day and the Sabbath the six days of labor. But not only is rest necessary after labor, but activity in a different direction. When you are carrying a burden of any kind, you find relief in a change of position. A poor boy was employed in turning a wheel, by which he was enabled to do something for his mother. A lady, observing him steadily employed at what appeared to be a very laborious occupation, inquired whether he did not get tired. He replied that he was often very tired. "And what do you do when you are tired?" she further inquired. "O," said he, "I take the other hand." He had learned that a change of position gave him rest. Neither the mind nor the body is capable of being incessantly exerted, in one direction, without injury. Like the bent bow, they will lose their elasticity. The body, after labor, and the mind, after study, need unbending, especially in youth, while the muscles of the body have not acquired maturity or solidity, and the powers of the mind are yet developing. At this period of life relaxation and amusement are especially necessary; and those young people who shun all play, and confine themselves to books and labor, must, in the natural course of things, suffer both in health and spirits. Healthful play is natural to the young, throughout the whole animal creation. The lamb, that emblem of innocence, is seen sporting in the fields, blithely bounding over the hills, as if desirous of expressing a grateful sense of its Creator's goodness. There is no more harm in the play of children than in the skipping of the lambs. It is necessary to restore the bent bow to its natural elasticity. It is the voice of nature, which cannot be hushed. But having said so much, it is necessary to guard against improprieties and excesses in amusements. And yet, to determine what amusements are to be allowed, and what condemned, is no easy matter; for, while some kinds of amusement are evil in their own nature, and necessarily injurious, others are evil and injurious only on account of their excess, or of the manner in which they are pursued, or of the evils that are associated with them. My object is, not so much to point out what amusements are wrong, as to give you some rules by which you can judge for yourself.

I. Never engage in recreation at an unsuitable time. To neglect duty for the sake of amusement is not only wrong, but it will exert a bad influence upon your character. It tends to produce an immoderate love of amusement, and to break up all orderly and regular habits. Let your invariable rule be, "BUSINESS FIRST, AND THEN PLEASURE." Never suffer any kind of amusement to break in upon the time appropriated to labor or study.

II. Never do anything that is disapproved by your parents or guardians. They desire your happiness, and will not deprive you of any enjoyment, unless they see good reason for it. They may see evil where you would not perceive it. They regard your highest welfare. They look beyond the present, to see what influence these things will have on your character and happiness hereafter. They are also set over you of the Lord; and it is your duty not only to submit to their authority, but to reverence their counsel.

III. Engage in no amusement which is disapproved by the most devoted and consistent Christians of your acquaintance. I do not mean the few cross and austere people, who always wear an aspect of gloom, and cannot bear to see the countenances of youth lighted up with the smile of innocent hilarity. But I mean those Christians who wear an aspect of devout cheerfulness, and maintain a holy and consistent life. Their judgment is formed under the influence of devotional feeling, and will not be likely to be far from what is just and right.

IV. Do nothing which you would be afraid God should see. There is no darkness nor secret place, where you can hide yourself from his all-searching eye. Contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ as walking by your side, as he truly is in spirit; and do nothing which you would be unwilling that he should witness, if he were with you in his bodily presence.

V. Do nothing which unfits you for religious duty. If an amusement in which you are preparing to engage so takes up your mind as to interfere with your devotional exercises; if your thoughts run away from the Bible that you are reading to anticipated pleasures; or if those pleasures occupy your thoughts in prayer; you may be sure you are going too far.

VI. Engage in nothing on which you cannot first ask God's blessing. Do you desire to engage in anything in which you would not wish to be blessed and prospered? But God only can bless and prosper us in any undertaking. If, therefore, your feelings would be shocked to think of asking God's blessing on anything in which you would engage, it must be because your conscience tells you it is wrong.

VII. Engage in no amusement which unfits you for devotional exercises. If, on returning from a scene of amusement, you feel no disposition to pray, you may be sure something is wrong. You had better not repeat the same again.

VIII. Engage in nothing which tends to dissipate serious impressions. Seriousness, and a sense of eternal things, are perfectly consistent with serenity and cheerfulness. But thoughtless mirth, or habitual levity, will drive away such impressions. Whatever you find has this effect, is dangerous to your soul.

IX. Reject such amusements as are generally associated with evil. If the influences which surround any practice are bad, you may justly conclude that it is unsafe, without stopping to inquire into the nature of the practice itself. Games of chance are associated with gambling and drinking; therefore, I conclude that they cannot be safely pursued, even for amusement. Dancing, also, is associated with balls, with late hours, high and unnatural excitement, and dissipation; it is therefore unsafe. You may know the character of any amusement by the company in which it is found.

X. Engage in nothing which necessarily leads you into temptation. You pray every day, (or ought to,) "lead us not into temptation." But you cannot offer up this prayer sincerely, and then run needlessly in the way of temptation. And if you throw yourself in the way of it, you have no reason to expect that God will deliver you from it.

XI. If you engage in any recreation, and return from it with a wounded conscience, set it down as evil. A clear conscience is too valuable to be bartered for a few moments of pleasure; and if you find your conscience accusing you for having engaged in any amusement, never repeat the

experiment.

XII. Practice no amusement which offends your sense of propriety. A delicate sense of propriety, in regard to outward deportment, is in manners what conscience is in morals, and taste in language. It is not anything that we arrive at by a process of reasoning, but what the mind as it were instinctively perceives. It resembles the sense of taste; and by it one will notice any deviation from what is proper, before he has time to consider wherein the impropriety consists. There is a beauty and harmony in what is proper and right, which instantly strikes the mind with pleasure. There is a fitness of things, and an adaptation of one thing to another, in one's deportment, that strikes the beholder with sensations of pleasure, like those experienced on beholding the harmonious and beautiful blending of the seven colors of the rainbow. But when propriety is disregarded, the impression is similar to what we might suppose would be produced, if the colors of the rainbow crossed each other at irregular angles, now blending together in one, and now separating entirely, producing irregularity and confusion. The sensation produced upon the eye would be unpleasant, if not insufferable. Among the amusements which come under this rule are the vulgar plays that abound in low company. In such cases, you know not to what mortification you may be subjected. Frolics, in general, come under this head, where rude and boisterous plays are practiced, and often to a late hour of the night, when all sense of propriety and even of courtesy is often forgotten.

XIII. Engage in nothing of doubtful propriety. The apostle Paul teaches that it is wrong to do anything the propriety of which we doubt; because, by doing that which we are not fully persuaded is right, we violate our conscience. It is always best to keep on the safe side. If you were walking near the crater of a volcano, you would not venture on ground where there was any danger of breaking through, and falling into the burning lake. You would keep on the ground where it was safe and sure. And so we should do, in regard to all questions of right and wrong. Never venture where the ground trembles under your feet.

XIV. Do nothing which you will remember with regret on your dying bed. It is well always to keep death in view; it has a good effect upon our minds. The death-bed always brings with it pains and sorrows enough. It is a sad thing to make work for repentance at such an hour. That is an honest hour. Then we shall view things in their true light. Ask yourself, then, before entering into any scene of amusement, how it will appear to you when you come to look back upon it from your dying bed.

XV. Do nothing in the midst of which you would be afraid to meet death. When preparing for a scene of pleasure, how do you know but you may be cut down in the midst of it? Sudden death is so common that it is folly to be in any place or condition in which we are not prepared to meet it. Many people have been cut down in the midst of scenes of gaiety, and the same may occur again. A man in Germany was sitting at the gaming table. His card won a thousand ducats. The dealer handed over the money, and inquired how he would continue the game. The man made no reply. He was examined, and found to be a corpse! Similar scenes have occurred in the ball-room. In the midst of the merry dance, people have been called suddenly out of time into eternity. A gentleman and lady started in a sleigh, to ride some distance to a ball, on a cold winter's night. Some time before reaching the place, the lady was observed to be silent. On driving up, the gentleman called to her, but no answer was returned. A light was procured, and he discovered, to his amazement, that he had been riding with a corpse! At no moment of life are we exempt from sudden death. He

who holds us in his hand has a thousand ways of extinguishing our life in a moment. He can withhold the breath which he gave; he can stop the vital pulsation instantly; or he can break one of the thousand parts of the intricate machinery of which our mortal bodies are composed. No skill can provide against it. We ought not, therefore, to trust ourselves, for a single moment, in any place or condition where we are unwilling to meet death.

XVI. Do nothing for which you will be afraid to answer at the judgement of God. There every secret thing will be revealed. What was done in the darkness will be judged in open day. "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes: but know you that for all these things God will bring you into judgment." A young man, on leaving home to enter the army, was supplied with a small Bible, which, though a thoughtless youth, he always carried in his pocket. On one occasion, after a battle, he took out his Bible, and observed that there was a bullet hole in the cover. His first impulse was, to turn over the leaves, and read the verse on which the ball rested. It was the passage just quoted. It brought before his mind all the scenes of mirth and sinful pleasure in which he had been engaged, and pressed upon him the fearful truth, that for all of them he was to be brought into judgment. It was the means of awakening him to a sense of his condition, and led to a change of heart and life. And why should not the same solemn impression rest upon your mind, with respect to all scenes of pleasure, and lead you carefully to avoid whatever you would not willingly meet at that dreadful tribunal?

If you apply these tests to the various amusements that are in vogue among young people, you may readily discern what you can safely pursue, and what you must sternly reject. It will lead you, especially, to detect the evils of all theatrical performances, balls, cards, and dancing parties, country frolics, and all things of a like nature. But it will not deprive you of one innocent enjoyment. A girl, ten or twelve years old, made a visit to a companion about her own age. Both of them were hopefully pious. On returning home, she told her mother she was sure Jane was a Christian. "Why do you think so, my daughter?" inquired the mother. "O," said the daughter, "she plays like a Christian." In her diversions she carried out Christian principles, and manifested a Christian temper. This is the true secret of innocent recreation; and it cuts off all kinds of amusement that cannot be pursued in a Christian-like manner.

02.23. Government of the Tongue

GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE The apostle James says, the tongue is an unruly member, and that it is easier to control a horse or a ship, or even to tame wild beasts and serpents, than to govern the tongue. And, though a very little member, it is capable of doing immense mischief. He even likens it to a fire. A very small spark, thrown into a heap of dry shavings, in a wooden house, in a great city, will make a terrible fire. It may burn up the whole city. So a very few words, carelessly spoken by an ungoverned tongue, may set a whole neighborhood on fire. You cannot, therefore, be too careful how you employ your tongue. It is of the highest importance to your character and usefulness, that you early acquire the habit of controlling this unruly member. For the purpose of aiding you in this, I shall give a few simple rules.

RULES FOR GOVERNING THE TONGUE.

I. Think before you speak. Many people open their mouths, and set their tongues a-going like the clapper of a wind-mill, as though the object was, to see how many words could be uttered in a given time, without any regard to their quality—whether sense or nonsense, whether good, bad, or indifferent. A tongue, trained up in this way, will never be governed, and must become a source of great mischief. But accustom yourself, before you speak, to consider whether what you are going to say is worth speaking, or whether it can do any mischief. If you cultivate this habit, your mind will speedily acquire an activity, that will enable you to make this consideration without waiting so long before answering your companions as to be observed; and it will impose a salutary restraint upon your loquacity; for you will find others often taking the lead of conversation instead of yourself, by seizing upon the pause that is made by your consideration. This will be an advantage to you, in two ways. It will give you something better to say, and will diminish the quantity. You will soon perceive that, though you say less than some of your companions, your words have more weight.

II. Never allow yourself to talk nonsense. The habit of careless, nonsensical talking, is greatly averse to the government of the tongue. It accustoms it to speak at random, without regard to consequences. It often leads to the utterance of what is not strictly true, and thus insensibly diminishes the regard for truth. It hardens the heart, and nourishes a trifling, careless spirit. Moreover, if you indulge this habit, your conversation will soon become silly and insipid.

III. Do not allow yourself in the habit of **JOKING** with your companions. This tends to cultivate severe sarcasm, which is a bad habit of the tongue. And, if you indulge it, your strokes will be too keen for your companions to bear; and you will lose their friendship.

IV. Always speak the truth. There is no evil habit, which the tongue can acquire, more wicked and mischievous than that of speaking falsehood. It is in itself very wicked; but it is not more wicked than mischievous. If all were liars, there could be no happiness; because all confidence would be destroyed, and no one would trust another. It is very offensive to God, who is a God of truth, and who has declared that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. It is a great affront and injury to the person that is deceived by it. Many young people think nothing of

deceiving their companions, in sport; but they will find that the habit of speaking what is not true, even in sport, besides being intrinsically wrong, will so accustom them to the utterance of falsehood, that they will soon lose that dread of a lie which used to fortify them against it. The habit of exaggeration, too, is a great enemy to truth. Where this is indulged, the practice of uttering falsehood, without thought or consideration, will steal on insensibly. It is necessary, therefore, in detailing circumstances, to state them accurately, precisely as they occurred, in order to cultivate the habit of truth-telling. Be very particular on this head. Do not allow yourself so little an inaccuracy, even, as to say you laid a book on the table, when you put it on the mantel, or on the window-seat. In relating a story, it is not necessary that you should state every minute particular, but that what you do state should be exactly and circumstantially true. If you acquire this habit of accuracy, it will not only guard you against the indulgence of falsehood, but it will raise your character for truth. When people come to learn that they can depend upon the critical accuracy of whatever you say, it will greatly increase their confidence in you. But if you grow up with the habit of speaking falsehood, there will be very little hope of your reformation, as long as you live. The character that has acquired a habitual disregard of truth is most thoroughly vitiated. This one habit, if indulged and nourished, and carried with you from childhood to youth, and from youth upwards, will prove your ruin.

V. Remember that all truth is not to be spoken at all times. The habit of uttering all that you know, at random, without regard to times and circumstances, is productive of great mischief. If you accustom your tongue to this habit, it will lead you into great difficulties. There are many of our own thoughts, and many facts that come to our knowledge, that prudence would require us to keep in our own bosom, because the utterance of them would do mischief.

VI. Never, if you can possibly avoid it, speak anything to the disadvantage of another. The claims of justice or friendship may sometimes require you to speak what you know against others. You may be called to testify against their evil conduct in school, or before a court of justice; or you may be called to warn a friend against an evil or designing person. But, where no such motive exists, it is far better to leave them to the judgment of others and of God, and say nothing against them yourself.

VII. Keep your tongue from tale-bearing and gossiping. There is much said in the Scriptures against tattling. "You shall not go up and down as a tale-bearer, among the children of your people." "A tale-bearer reveals secrets." "Where no wood is, the fire goes out; and where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceases." Young people are apt to imbibe a taste for neighborhood gossip, and to delight in possessing family secrets, and in repeating personal matters, neighborhood scandal, etc. But the habit is a bad one. It depraves the taste and vitiates the character, and often is the means of forming for life the wicked habit of tale-bearing. And tale-bearers, besides the great mischief they do, are always despised, as base, mischievous, and contemptible characters.

If you will attentively observe and follow the foregoing rules, you will acquire such a habit of governing the tongue, that it will be an easy matter; and it will give dignity and value to your character, and make you beloved and esteemed, as worthy of the confidence of all.

02.24. On the Art of Agreeable and Profitable Conversation

ON THE ART OF AGREEABLE AND PROFITABLE CONVERSATION

There is, perhaps, no accomplishment which will add so much to your character and influence, as the art of conversing agreeably and well. To do this, however, requires a cultivated mind, richly stored with a variety of useful information; a good taste; a delicate sense of propriety; a good use of language; and an easy and fluent expression. The most of these requisites can be acquired; and the rest, if naturally deficient, can be greatly improved. An easy, fluent expression is sometimes a natural talent; but, when not joined with a good understanding and a cultivated mind, it degenerates into mere talkativeness. But, in order to be prepared to converse well, you must not only have your mind well stored, but its contents, if I may so speak, well arranged; so that you can at any time call forth its resources, upon any subject, when they are needed.

One of the principal difficulties, in the way of conversing well, is a hesitancy of speech—a difficulty of expressing one's ideas with ease and grace. This may arise from various causes. It may proceed from affectation—a desire to speak in fine, showy style. This will invariably defeat its object. You can never appear, in the eyes of intelligent and well-bred people, to be what you are not. The more simple and unaffected your style is, provided it be pure and chaste, the better you will appear. Affectation will only make you ridiculous. But the same difficulty may arise from self-distrust, which leads to embarrassment; and embarrassment clouds the memory, and produces confusion of mind and hesitancy of speech. This must be overcome by degrees, by cultivating self-possession, and frequenting good society. The same difficulty may, likewise, arise from the lack of a sufficient command of language to express one's ideas with ease and fluency. This is to be obtained by writing; by reading the most pure and classic authors; and by observing the conversation of well-educated people. In order to have a good supply of well-chosen words at ready command, Mr. Whelpley recommends selecting from a dictionary several hundred words, such as are in most common use, and required especially in ordinary conversation, writing them down, and committing them to memory, so as to have them as familiar as the letters of the alphabet. A professional gentleman informs me, that he has overcome this difficulty by reading a well-written story until it becomes trite and uninteresting, and then frequently reading it aloud, without any regard to the story, but only to the language, in order to accustom the organs of speech to an easy flow of words. I have no doubt that such experiments as these would be successful in giving a freedom and ease of expression, which is often greatly impeded for lack of just the word that is needed at a given time.

There is no species of information but may be available to improve and enrich the conversation, and make it interesting to the various classes of people. As an example of this, a clergyman recently informed me that a rich man, who is engaged extensively in the iron business, but who is very impious, put up with him for the night. The minister, knowing the character of his guest, directed his conversation to those subjects in which he supposed him to be chiefly interested. He exhibited specimens of iron ore, of which he possessed a variety; explained their different

qualities; spoke of the various modes of manufacturing it; explained the process of manufacturing steel, etc.; interspersing his conversation with occasional serious reflections on the wisdom and goodness of God, in providing so abundantly the metals most necessary for the common purposes of life, and thus leading the man's mind "from Nature up to Nature's God." The man entered readily into the conversation, appeared deeply interested, and afterwards expressed his great admiration of the minister. The man was prejudiced against ministers. This conversation may so far remove his prejudices as to open his ear to the truth. But all this the minister was enabled to do, by acquainting himself with a branch of knowledge which many would suppose to be of no use to a minister. By conversing freely with all sorts of people upon that which chiefly interests them, you may not only secure their good-will, but greatly increase your own stock of knowledge. There is no one so ignorant but he may, in this way, add something to your general information; and you may improve the opportunity it gives to impart useful information, without seeming to do it.

RULES FOR CONVERSATION.

I. Avoid affectation. Instead of making you appear to better advantage, it will only expose you to ridicule.

II. Avoid base expressions. There is a dialect peculiar to vulgar people, which you cannot imitate without appearing as if you were yourself low-bred.

III. Avoid provincialisms. There are certain expressions peculiar to particular sections of the country. For example, in New England, many people are in the habit of interlarding their conversation with the phrase, "You see." In Pennsylvania and New York, the same use is made of "You know." And in the West and South, phrases peculiar to those sections of the country are still more common and ludicrous. Avoid all these expressions, and strive after a pure, chaste, and simple style.

IV. Avoid all ungrammatical expressions.

V. Avoid unmeaning exclamations, as, "O my!" "O mercy!" etc.

VI. Never speak unless you have something to say. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

VII. Avoid wordiness. Make your language concise and perspicuous, and strive not to prolong your speech beyond what is necessary, remembering that others wish to speak as well as yourself. Be sparing of anecdote; and only resort to it when you have a good illustration of some subject before the company, or when you have a piece of information of general interest. To tell a story well, is a great art. To be tedious and verbose in story-telling, is insufferable. To avoid this, do not attempt to relate every minute particular; but seize upon the grand points. Take the following specimen of the relation of the same incident by two different people—"You see, I got up this morning, and dressed myself, and came down stairs, and opened the front door; and O, if it didn't look beautiful! For, you see, the sun shone on the dew—the dew, you know, that hangs in great drops on the grass in the morning. Well, as the sun shone on the dewdrops, it was all sparkling, like so many diamonds; and it looked so inviting, you see, I thought I must have a walk. So, you see, I went out into the street, and got over the fence—the fence, you know, the back side of the barn. Well, I got over it, and walked into the grove, and there I heard the blue jay, and robin, and ever so many pretty birds,

singing so sweetly. I went along the foot-path to a place where there is a stump—the great stump, you know, James, by the side of the path. Well, there—O, my!—what should I see, but a gray squirrel running up a tree!"

How much better the following—"Early this morning, just as the sun was peeping over the hill, and the green grass was all over sparkling with diamonds, as the sun shone upon the dewdrops, I had a delightful walk in the grove, listening to the sweet music of the birds, and watching the motions of a beautiful gray squirrel, running up a tree, and hopping nimbly from branch to branch." Here is the story, better told, in less than half the words.

Never specify any superfluous particulars. In the relation of this incident, all the circumstances detailed in the first specimen, previous to entering the grove, are superfluous; for if you were in the grove early in the morning, you could not get there without getting out of your bed, dressing yourself, opening the door, going into the street, and getting over the fence. The moment you speak of being in the grove early in the morning, the mind of the hearer supplies all these preliminaries; and your specifying them only excites his impatience to get at the point of your story. Be careful, also, that you never relate the same anecdote the second time to the same company; neither set up a laugh at your own story.

VIII. Never interrupt others while they are speaking. Quietly wait until they have finished what they have to say, before you reply. To interrupt others in conversation is very unmannerly.

IX. You will sometimes meet with very talkative people, who are not disposed to give you a fair chance. Let them talk on. They will be better pleased, and you will save your words and your feelings.

X. Avoid, as much as possible, speaking of yourself. When we meet a person who is always saying "I", telling what he has done, and how he does things—the impression it gives us of him is unpleasant. We say, "He thinks he knows everything, and can teach everybody. He is great in his own eyes. He thinks more of himself than of everybody else." True politeness leads us to keep ourselves out of view, and show an interest in other people's affairs.

XI. Endeavor to make your conversation useful. Introduce some subject which will be profitable to the company you are in. You feel dissatisfied when you retire from company where nothing useful has been said. But there is no amusement more interesting, to a sensible person, than intelligent conversation upon elevated subjects. It leaves a happy impression upon the mind. You can retire from it, and lay your head upon your pillow with a quiet conscience.

02.25. Inquisitiveness

INQUISITIVENESS The inhabitants of New England have the reputation of being inquisitive to a fault; and perhaps with some justice. This disposition grows out of a good trait of character, carried to an extreme. It comes from a desire after knowledge. But this desire becomes excessive, when exercised with reference to matters which it does not concern us to know. When it leads us to pry into the concerns of others, from a mere vain curiosity, it becomes a vice. There are some people who can never be satisfied, until they see the inside of everything. They must know the 'why and the wherefore' of everything they meet with. I have heard an amusing anecdote of this sort. There was a man who had lost his nose. A Yankee, seeing him, desired to know how so strange a thing had happened. After enduring his importunity for some time, the man declared he would tell him, if he would promise to ask him no more questions; to which the other agreed. "Well," said the man, "it was bit off." "Ah," replied the Yankee, "I wish I knew who bit it off!" This is a fair specimen of the morbid appetite created by excessive inquisitiveness. When inquisitiveness goes no farther than a strong desire to obtain useful information, and to inquire into the reason of things, or when it desires information concerning the affairs of others from benevolent sympathy, then it is a valuable trait of character. But when the object is to gratify an idle curiosity, it is annoying to others, and often leads the person who indulges it into serious difficulty. And the more it is indulged, the more it craves. If you gratify this disposition until it grows into a habit, you will find it very difficult to control. You will never be able to let anything alone. You will want to look into every drawer in the house; to open every bundle that you see; and never be satisfied until you have seen the inside of everything. This will lead you into temptation. It can hardly be supposed that one who is so anxious to see everything should have no desire to possess the things that are seen. Thus, what began in curiosity may end in coveting and thieving. But if it does not lead you so far astray as this, it will bring you into serious difficulty with your parents, or your friends whose guest you are; for they will not be satisfied to have their drawers tumbled, packages opened, and every nice article fingered. This disposition, too, will lead you to inquire into the secrets of your friends; and this will furnish a temptation to tattling. What you have been at such pains to obtain, you will find it difficult to keep to yourself. You will want to share the rare enjoyment with others. And when the story comes round to your friend or companion, whose confidence you have betrayed, you will, to your great chagrin and mortification, be discarded. A delicate sense of propriety will lead you to avoid prying too closely into the affairs of others. You will never do it from mere curiosity. But if any of your friends so far make you a confidant as to lead you to suppose that they need your sympathy or aid, you may, in a delicate manner, inquire farther, in order to ascertain what aid you can render. You may, also, make some general inquiries of strangers, in order to show an interest in their affairs. But beyond this, you cannot safely indulge this disposition.

02.26. On the Importance of Being Able to Say "No"

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ABLE TO SAY "NO"

It often requires great courage to say NO. But by being able promptly, on occasion, to utter this little monosyllable, you may save yourself a deal of trouble. If mother Eve had known how to say no, she might have saved herself and her posterity from ruin. And many of her children, who have lost their character and their all, might have been saved, if they had only had courage promptly to say NO. Your safety and happiness depend upon it.

You are importuned by some of your companions to engage in some amusement, or to go on some excursion, which you know to be wrong. You resolutely and promptly say NO, at the outset, and there is the end of it. But if you hesitate, you will be urged and importuned, until you will probably yield; and having thus given up your own judgment, and violated your conscience, you will lose your power of resistance, and yield to every enticement.

'Joseph' has cultivated decision of character. He never hesitates a moment when anything wrong is proposed. He rejects it instantly. The consequence is, his companions never think of going to him, when they have any mischievous scheme on foot. His prompt and decisive NO they do not wish to encounter. His parents can trust him any where, because they have no fears of his being led astray. And this relieves them of a load of anxiety.

'Reuben' is the opposite of this. He wishes to please everybody, and therefore has not courage to say no to any. He seems wholly unable to resist temptation. He is, therefore, always getting into difficulty—always doing something that he ought not, or going to some improper place, or engaging in some improper diversions, through the enticement of his companions. His parents scarcely dare trust him out of their sight, they are so fearful that he will be led astray. He is thus a source of great anxiety to them, and all because he cannot say NO.

Now, let me beg of you to learn to say NO. If you find any difficulty in uttering it—if your tongue won't do its office, or if you find a "frog in your throat," which obstructs your utterance—go by yourself, and practice saying no, NO, NO! until you can articulate clearly, distinctly, and without hesitation; and have it always ready on your tongue's end, to utter with emphasis to every girl or boy, man or woman, or evil spirit—who presumes to propose to you to do anything that is wrong. Only be careful to say it respectfully and courteously, with the usual prefixes and suffixes, which properly belong to the people to whom you are speaking.

02.27. On Being Usefule

ON BEING USEFUL Can you find anything, in all the works of Nature, which is not made for some use? The cow gives milk, the ox labors in the field, the sheep furnishes wool for clothing, and all of them provide us with meat. The horse and the dog are the servants of man. Every animal—every little insect—has its place, and its work to perform, carrying out the great design of its Creator. And so it is with the inanimate creation. The earth yields its products for the use of man and beast; and the sun, and the air, and the clouds, (each in turn,) help forward the work. And to how many thousand uses do we put the noble, stately tree! It furnishes houses for us to live in, furniture for our convenience, fuel to make us warm, ships to sail in, and to bring us the products of other lands. It yields us fruit for food, and to gratify our taste. And so you may go through all the variety of animal and vegetable life, and you will find everything designed for some use. And, though there may be some things of the use of which you are ignorant, yet you will find everything made with such evidence of design, that you cannot help thinking it must have been intended for some use.

Now, if everything in creation is designed for some use, surely you ought not to think of being useless, or of living for nothing. God made you to be useful; and, to answer the end of your being, you must begin early to learn to be useful. "But how can I be useful?" you may ask. "I wish to be useful. I am anxious to be qualified to fill some useful station in life—to be a missionary or a teacher, or in some other way to do good. But I do not see what good I can do now."

Though you may not say this in so many words, yet I have no doubt that such thoughts may often have passed through your mind. Many people long to be useful, as they suppose, but think they must be in some other situation, to afford them the opportunity. This is a great mistake. God, who made all creatures, has put every one in the right place. In the place where God has put you, there you may find some useful thing to do. Do you ask me what useful thing you can do? You may find a hundred opportunities for doing good, and being useful, every day—if you watch for them. You can be useful in assisting your mother; you can be useful in helping your brothers and sisters; you can be useful in school, by supporting the authority of your teacher, and by being kind and helpful to your playmates. If you make it the great aim of your life to be useful, you will never lack opportunities.

I have seen young people, who would take great delight in mere play or amusement; but the moment they were directed to do anything useful, they would be displeased. Now, I do not object to amusement, in its proper place; for a suitable degree of amusement is useful to the health. But 'pleasure' alone is a small object to live for; and if you attempt to live only to be amused, you will soon run the whole round of pleasure, and become tired of it all. But if you make it your great object to be useful, and seek your chief pleasure therein, you will engage in occasional amusement with a double relish. No one can be happy who is not useful. Pleasure soon satiates. One amusement soon grows stale, and another is sought; until, at length, they all become tasteless and insipid.

Let it be your object, then, every day of your life, to be useful to yourself and others. In the morning, ask yourself, "What useful things can I do today? What can I do that will be a lasting benefit to myself? How can I make myself useful in the family? What can I do for my father or mother? What for my brothers or sisters? And what unselfish act can I perform for the benefit of those who have no claim upon me?" Thus you will cultivate useful habits and benevolent feelings. And you will find a rich return into your own bosom. By making yourself useful to everybody, you will find everyone making a return of your kindness. You will secure their friendship and good will, as well as their bounty. You will find it, then, both for your interest and happiness to BE USEFUL.

02.28. On Being Contented

ON BEING CONTENTED "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." Php 4:12 The true secret of happiness is to be contented. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6 These two are great gain, because, without them, all the good things in the world will not make us happy. Young people are apt to think, if they had this thing or that, or if they were in such and such circumstances, different from their own—they would be happy. Sometimes they think, if their parents were only rich, they would enjoy themselves. But rich people are often more anxious to increase their riches than poor people are to be rich; and the more their artificial desires are gratified, the more they are increased. "Everything is so weary and tiresome! No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content." Ecclesiastes 1:8

Solomon was a great king, so rich that he was able to get whatever his heart desired. He built great palaces for himself; he filled them with servants; he treasured up gold and silver; he bought gardens, and vineyards, and fields; he bought herds of cattle, with horses and carriages; he kept male and female singers, and players on all sorts of instruments; whatever his eyes desired he kept not from them; he withheld not his heart from any joy; but with it all he was not satisfied. He called it all "vanity and vexation of spirit." So you may set your heart at rest—that riches will not make you happy. Nor would you be any more happy, if you could exchange places with some other people, who seem to you to have many more means of enjoyment than yourself. With these things that dazzle your eyes, they have also their trials; and if you take their place, you must take the bitter with the sweet. But young people sometimes think, if they were only adults, and could manage for themselves, and have none to control them, then they would certainly be happy, for they could do as they please. But in this they are greatly mistaken. There will then be a great increase of care and labor; and they will find it more difficult to do as they please than they do now. If they have none to control them, they will have none to provide for them. True, they may then manage for themselves; but they will also have to support themselves. Those who have lived the longest, generally consider youth the happiest period of life, because it is comparatively free from trouble and care, and there is more time for pleasure and amusement. But there is one lesson, which, if you will learn it in youth, will make you happy all your days. It is the lesson which Paul had learned. You know that he suffered great hardships in traveling on foot, in various countries, to preach the gospel. He was often persecuted, reviled, defamed, beaten, and imprisoned. Yet he says, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." There are several things which should teach us this lesson. In the first place, God, in his holy providence, has placed us in the condition where we are. He knows what is best for us, and what will best serve the end for which he made us; and of all other situations, he has chosen for us the one that we now occupy. Who could choose so well as he? And then, what can we gain by fretting about it, and worrying ourselves for what we cannot help? We only make ourselves unhappy.

Moreover, it is very ungrateful and wicked to complain of our lot, since God has given us more and better than we deserve. It is better to look around us, and see how many things we have to be

thankful for; to look upon what we have, rather than what we have not. This does not, indeed, forbid our seeking to improve our condition, provided we do it with submission to the will of God. We ought to use all fair and lawful means to this end; but not in such a spirit of discontent and repining, as will make us miserable if we are disappointed. If you desire to be happy, then, BE CONTENTED.

02.29. Union of Serious Piety with Habitual Cheerfulness

UNION OF SERIOUS PIETY WITH HABITUAL CHEERFULNESS

It is a mistake often made by young people, to associate piety with a downcast look, a sad countenance, and an aching heart. Perhaps the mistakes of some good people, in putting on a grave and severe visage, approaching even to moroseness, may have given some occasion for this sentiment. I do not know, indeed, how prevalent the sentiment is among the young. I can hardly think it is common with those who are piously educated. As for myself, I well remember that, in my childhood, I thought true Christians must be the happiest people in the world. There is no doubt, however, that many pleasure-loving young people do look upon religion with that peculiar kind of dread which they feel of the presence of a grave, severe maiden aunt, which would spoil all their pleasure.

And, I do not deny, that there are certain kinds of sinful pleasure which piety spoils; but then it first removes the taste and desire for them, after which the spoliation is nothing to be lamented. It is true, also, that there are some things in piety which are painful. Repentance for sin is a painful exercise; self-denial is painful; the resistance of temptation is sometimes trying; and the subduing of evil dispositions is a difficult work. But, to endure whatever of suffering there is in these things, is a saving in the end. It is less painful than the tortures of a guilty conscience, the gnawings of remorse, and the fear of hell. It is easier to be endured than the consequences of neglecting true religion. If you get a sliver in your finger, it is easier to bear the pain of having it removed, than it is to carry it about with you. If you have a decayed tooth, it is easier to have it extracted than to bear the toothache. So it is easier to repent of sin than to bear remorse and fear. And the labor of resisting temptation, and of restraining and subduing evil dispositions, is not so great an interference with one's happiness as it is to carry about a guilty conscience.

There is, however, nothing in true piety inconsistent with habitual cheerfulness. There is a difference between cheerfulness and levity. Cheerfulness is serene and peaceful. Levity is light and trifling. The former promotes evenness of temper and equanimity of enjoyment; the latter drowns sorrow and pain for a short time, only to have it return again with redoubled power. The Christian hope, and the promises and consolations of God's word, furnish the only true ground of cheerfulness. Who should be cheerful and happy, if not one who is delivered from the terrors of hell and the fear of death—who is raised to the dignity of a child of God—who has the hope of eternal life—the prospect of dwelling forever in the presence of God, in the society of the blessed, and in the enjoyment of perfect felicity? But no one would associate these things with that peculiar kind of mirth, which is the delight of the pleasure-loving world. Your sense of propriety recoils from the idea of associating things of such high import with rudeness, frolicking, and mirth. Yet there is an innocent gaiety of spirits, arising from natural vivacity, especially in the period of childhood and youth, the indulgence of which, within proper bounds, piety does not forbid.

There is a happy medium between a settled, severe gravity and gloom—and frivolity, levity, and mirth—which young Christians should strive to cultivate. If you give unbounded license to a

mirthful spirit, and indulge freely in all manner of levity, frivolity, and foolish jesting, you cannot maintain that devout state of heart which is essential to true piety. On the other hand, if you studiously repress the natural vivacity of youthful feeling, and cultivate a romantic kind of melancholy, or a severe gravity—you will destroy the elasticity of your spirits, injure your health, and very likely become peevish and irritable, and of a sour, morose temper; and this will be quite as injurious to true religious feeling as the other. The true medium is, to unite serious piety with habitual cheerfulness. Always bring Christian motives to bear upon your feelings. The gospel of Jesus Christ has a remedy for everything in life that is calculated to make us gloomy and sad. It offers the pardon of sin to the penitent and believing, the aid of grace to those who struggle against an evil disposition, and succor and help against temptation. It promises to relieve the believer from fear, and afford consolation in affliction. There is no reason why a true Christian should not be cheerful. There are, indeed, many things, which he sees, within and without, that must give him pain. But there is that in his Christian hope, and in the considerations brought to his mind from the Word of God, which is able to bear him high above them all.

Let me, then, earnestly recommend you to cultivate a serious but cheerful piety. Let your religion be neither of that spurious kind which expends itself in sighs, and tears, and gloomy feelings; nor that which makes you insensible to all feeling. But while you are alive to your own sins and imperfections, exercising godly sorrow for them, and while you feel a deep and earnest sympathy for those who have no saving interest in Christ, let your faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, and your confidence in God, avail to keep you from sinking into melancholy and gloom, and make you cheerful and happy, while you rest in God. And now, gentle reader, after this long conversation, I must take leave of you, commending you to God, with the prayer that my book may be useful to you, in the formation of a well-balanced Christian character; and that, after you and I shall have done the errand for which the Lord sent us into the world, we may meet in heaven. God bless you!

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