THE

CONDUCT OF LIFE,

A SERIES OF ESSAYS.

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1. FAMILY LIFE.
2. SOCIAL LIFE.
3. STUDIOUS LIFE.
4. ACTIVE LIFE.
5. POLITICAL LIFE.
6. MORAL LIFE.
7. RELIGIOUS LIFE.

BY

GEORGE LONG,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW,

AUTHOR OF "AN ESSAY ON THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN."

"..... To know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom." MILTON.

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TO HER

WHO HAS TAKEN A LIVELY INTEREST

IN THE

PROGRESS OF THIS WORK

IT IS NOW

INSCRIBED

BY HER HUSBAND

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The following Essays contain results of the observations and reflections of the author on human life and conduct, founded on an extensive intercourse with persons in various stations, and in all degrees of intellectual cultivation,—from the peer to the peasant, from the learned to the ignorant, from those of refined manners and elegant taste to the uninstructed children of nature. It has often occurred to him, that reflections on the conduct of human life, grounded on correct observation, and directed by a sincere desire to point out what should be pursued and what avoided, might be generally useful, and could hardly fail to be so to the young and inexperienced, and to that large class of the community, who, though youth has passed away, have acquired but very limited habits of observation and re-

flection. Such a work might, he thought (in the words of Bacon), "come home to "men's business and bosoms."

The most important relations of life are the subjects of the following Essays, which commence with our family connexions, and conclude with that, in comparison with which all others sink into insignificance, —the relation in which we stand to our Maker.

Though the style of this work is necessarily didactic, yet, considering the extent and importance of its subjects, the author cannot send it into the world without a feeling of sincere, and even painful diffidence. Happy will he be, if it, in any degree, attain the end which he has aimed at; still more so, if he should be instrumental in inducing any one fitted by genius and learning to take a leading part in forming and directing the opinions and sentiments of mankind, to devote his time and talents to the important subject of the Conduct of Human Life.

Wimpole Street, December, 1844.

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Page 24, line 10, *for* on *read* no.
— 46, — 4, *for* life *read* lives.
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THE CONDUCT OF LIFE.

ESSAY I.

FAMILY LIFE.

IN commencing a series of essays on the conduct of life, what can be so properly the first subject of our consideration as family life? In our own families we find those who are most deeply affected by our virtues and by our vices; those who will be benefited by the former and injured by the latter in the highest degree. The influence of the majority of mankind extends but little beyond the family circle; but every one has it in his power to be a blessing or a curse to those

of his own household. And is this always duly considered? Does it not, on the contrary, frequently happen that the members of a man's own family are those alone to whom the worst parts of his character are exposed; and that while his smiles and good humour beam on all his acquaintance, he acts at home the part of a negligent, cold and tyrannical husband, a harsh and severe father, and an imperious and unfeeling master? Many, whose characters stand well with the world, are amiable and agreeable to all but the inmates of their own house, to whom their conduct is of by far the greatest importance.

In considering what ought to be the daily course of life in the various relations which constitute a family, we shall pursue the following order:—1. Husband and Wife. 2. Parents and Children. 3. Brothers and Sisters. 4. Masters and Servants.

Husband and Wife.—The most important relations of domestic life are undoubtedly those of husband and wife, and parent and

child. The same principles, feelings, sentiments and habits which lead to a just performance of the duties resulting from one of those relations, will have an equally favourable operation on the other. An affectionate husband will in general be found to be a kind father; and he who fails in his duty in the former character, seldom appears to more advantage in the latter. This we believe to be the general rule, though it cannot be denied that it has exceptions.

The nearest approach which can be made by human beings to a complete union in sentiment and feeling, in joy and sorrow, in hope and fear, in objects and pursuits, is in the relation of husband and wife. They are the companions of all hours, and are to continue to be so during the whole period of their united existence in this world; one interest links them together in every thing; and, if they have children, they stand in the same relation to them, and have the same natural affection, and the same hopes and wishes for their happiness. These cir-

cumstances go far to establish an identity of feelings and objects between married persons, and never fail strongly to tend towards establishing such identity where the parties have entered into the married state on proper principles, and are mutually actuated by a sincere desire to fulfil the duties which they have voluntarily taken upon themselves.

No two human beings, however, with whatever degree of affection, esteem and respect they may regard each other, can be completely in unison in all matters of opinion, feeling, sentiment and taste; nor quite of the same mind in all particulars as to the course of life which they may desire to pursue. Differences must always exist more or less between married persons. Hence the necessity of mutual forbearance, and a willingness on both sides to yield to the wishes of the other party. Now this necessity is in truth an advantage, as it imposes on each of them the constant care of regulating their own conduct with a view to

the happiness of the other; and is just the discipline which is requisite for such a being as man, to give him that self-command, and that control of his passions and inclinations which are highly favourable to his well-being in this world, and eminently fitted to prepare him for the unspeakably greater happiness of the world to come.

The ordinary circumstances of human life afford continual and daily opportunities to married persons to exercise the duty of mutual forbearance. It is constantly called into action in avoiding topics of conversation which are known to be disagreeable to the other party; in abstaining from unnecessarily contradicting one another; in restraining the indulgence of the taste of one when it would lead to something unpleasant to the other; and, in short, in laying the inclinations of each party under continual restraint for the purpose of giving pleasure to the other. Prudence in regard to pecuniary matters affords a great security for the permanence of matrimonial felicity. Nothing is more

calculated to disturb the harmony which should subsist between husband and wife than pecuniary embarrassment. If it be occasioned by the misconduct of both parties, mutual recriminations may be expected; if one only be in fault, it will rarely happen, and only when the innocent party is of an unusually amiable character, that bitter reproaches will not be cast on the other whose imprudence has been the cause of the embarrassment.

An agreement, either express or implied, between husband and wife respecting the mode of living, and all the arrangements of the family, is of the utmost importance. If there be no regular arrangement as to what is to be done every day, confusion must constantly prevail. Each party will be continually doing something inconsistent with the pursuits and employments of the other, and perpetual disputes and dissensions will be the probable consequence.

A constant mutual desire in husband and wife to gratify each other, and, what must

result from it, a watchful attention to each other's wants and wishes, will give continual opportunities of using those little attentions, and availing themselves of those frequently occurring circumstances, which, though individually small, make up in the whole a large item in the amount of matrimonial happiness ; and tend, in no small degree, to cement and to increase the feeling of mutual tenderness and affection which is its principal ingredient.

Disagreements between husband and wife not unfrequently arise respecting their children. The feelings of parents towards their children belong properly to our next head ; but a caution will not be out of place here to parents carefully to avoid making themselves parties in any contest between one of their children and the other parent. Nature points out the respective parts which fathers and mothers ought to take in the management of their children. The tender fondness of the mother will generally incline her to too much indulgence, while the more re-

flecting mind and the firmer resolution of the father may sometimes induce him to adopt means somewhat too rigorous for the attainment of a beneficial end. If they both possess good sense and good feeling, they may, in a considerable degree, correct each other's errors. The firmness of the husband may give strength to the wife ; and the tenderness of the wife may soften the undue rigor of the husband.

In the early period of married life difficulties will often arise from jealousies between the parents and near relations of the husband and wife respectively. As the wife takes the name of her husband, she becomes, as it were, incorporated into his family, and her own relations may be apt to think that with her name she has changed her feelings towards them. On the other hand, the affection of daughters for their parents is in general so much stronger than that of sons as to lead to a greater intimacy and more frequent communication between the family of the wife and the married couple, than be-

tween them and the family of the husband. A considerable degree of care and discretion is often required to prevent or to allay the jealous feelings which arise in these relations of life.

The situation of newly married persons in regard to those with whom they have previously lived in habits of intimacy and friendship is often no less embarrassing. The friend of the husband may be disagreeable to the wife, or the friend of the wife to the husband. It is a great happiness when the friends of each party can become friends of the other, but this cannot always be the case ; and both husband and wife ought to bear in mind that the matrimonial connexion is of higher importance than friendship ; and that if it should become necessary, in some degree, to sacrifice the one to the other, the latter ought to yield to the former.

Most of all is a deep sense of religion, regulating the whole conduct of life, important in the married state. But the subject of religion will be considered in our last essay.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.—As it is intended to give a separate consideration to the subject of religion in the last of these essays, we shall here confine our attention to what concerns the well-being of parents and children in this world.

In the very earliest period of life the parent has little more to do than to attend to the physical wants of the child, and to endeavour to give it all the enjoyment of which it is capable. When a young child feels pain or uneasiness, it never fails to give indications of it by cries and tears. Great care should be taken to remove, if possible, the cause of its uneasiness, not only with a view to its present enjoyment, but because the foundation of its future temper will probably be laid in early life. Perverse and ill-tempered children probably often become so by suffering pain which the anxious care of an observing and sensible mother might have prevented.

The process of forming the moral and the intellectual character should proceed

simultaneously; but by far the greater part of the attention of the parents, and particularly of the mother in the earlier years of the child's existence, should be directed to the development of its moral faculties, and the formation of its moral habits. The bountiful Creator has implanted in the heart of man the seeds of moral worth, and he has given him passions which ought to be made the elements of virtue, but which, when abused, become the sources of vice. The kind, attentive and intelligent parent will carefully and deeply observe and consider the development of those sentiments and passions, and anxiously endeavour to turn them into their proper channels. Sympathy with others makes its appearance at an early period; a very young child soon finds out by whom he is regarded with interest and affection, and begins to love those by whom he is beloved. If, on the other hand, the child be treated unkindly, he quickly resents such treatment. Here then commences the moral education of the child.

It may yet be indulged in most of its wishes, for the time of moral *discipline* has hardly arrived. The object should now be to lay the foundation of its affections, and to fix it on those who are most deeply, and will be most lastingly interested in its welfare. The mother should be as much as possible the companion of her children. If she leave the care of them to nurses, they, and not the mother, will be the first objects of the child's affection. The father cannot to anything like the same extent spend his time with his children; but their attention should be directed as much as possible to him; and they may soon and easily be taught to look forward with eager anticipations of delight to his society and to his caresses.

Next to the parents in their relation to the child stand the brothers and sisters; and the kind and intelligent parent will endeavour to the utmost to form and to strengthen the affections of their children towards each other. Where there is no great difference of age there will in general be little

difficulty. Human nature, in every stage of life beyond the period of infancy, desires society, and feels the necessity of a companion to the completion of its own enjoyment. When the difference of age between children is but small, and their stock of ideas is pretty much the same, their wishes and their amusements are not likely to differ very materially; and the circumstance of their being companions in their amusements will naturally tend to attach them to each other. Very often however differences of taste and feeling will arise between them, notwithstanding this general agreement, as to the particular time of seeking their amusements, and as to various circumstances connected with them. One of more vigorous health and livelier spirits may be often inclined to continue his play when his companion feels fatigued, and desires nothing but rest. This and many other incidents will tend to disputes and quarrels, which a tender parent will always endeavour to crush in the bud. Throughout

the whole period of childhood it is most important to prevent quarrels between brothers and sisters ; which often lead to an estrangement which lasts to the period of manhood, and sometimes through the whole of life. For this reason it does not in general seem desirable that brothers should be educated at the same school. School-boys are apt to quarrel, and to form themselves into sets and parties which are violently opposed to each other. If brothers should quarrel at school, where there are none of those softening and reconciling circumstances which belong to home ; and if they should engage respectively in separate and opposing parties (events very likely to happen), their affection for each other may be often weakened and even destroyed ; and a foundation may thus be laid for coldness and estrangement, and in some cases for dislike and enmity in after life.

As the child advances in life, the moral culture should be carried on by encouraging every act of kindness to those around him ; and it is particularly desirable that this should

be extended beyond those who ought to be the first objects of his love. Children should be early taught to appreciate (what few duly appreciate at any period of life) the advantages they enjoy from the service of domestics; and should be made to understand that servants are of the same nature and possess the same feelings as themselves; and that if they are inferior to their masters and mistresses, it is in general only because they have come into the world under less favorable circumstances. Parents who wish to form the moral character of their children should be especially careful to abstain from all haughty and irritable conduct to their servants. It is to be feared that children but too frequently regard servants as an inferior race of beings, the purpose of whose existence is to administer to the wants and pleasure of their masters.

Children should be early acquainted with the privations and distresses of the poor and indigent, and should be made to know and feel that it is only by the bounty of God

that they are not exposed to the like privation and misery.

Without self-control there can be little which deserves the name of virtue; but to form the mind of a child to self-control is a most difficult task. Disappointment occasions great pain to a child, much greater than grown people are apt to recollect, and, in addition to present pain, it tends to sour the temper. In after life we get inured to disappointment, and are all apt to forget how sore an affliction it is to a child. Every tolerably well-disciplined mind learns to bear pain, bodily or mental, with a degree of composure to which the child is a stranger. He has not yet learned how to suffer. Children ought to be taught to bear disappointment, for that must be their lot in life; but the care of the parent should be that this most important lesson should be learned with the least possible pain. Let the child first feel disappointment in matters about which he is not greatly concerned, and let a severer discipline be adopted by slow degrees.

It is of the utmost importance to impress on a child's mind the most profound regard to truth, and a detestation of every kind and degree of falsehood. But to effect this end parents must not forget that example is far more efficacious than precept. If they allow to themselves any deviation from truth; if they give false or evasive answers to the child's questions, in order to save themselves trouble, as many parents do, or if the child discover in any instance that his parent is deceiving him, how can it be expected that the love of truth will expand and flourish in his young mind? Let truth and sincerity prevail in the whole conduct of the parent to the child, if he hope to find those qualities in the character of his offspring.

Habits of order and regularity should be early taught to a child, as they will eminently conduce to his success in whatever he may be engaged when he has arrived at a maturer age. He should be instructed to put everything in its proper place, and to do everything at the proper time. This

however may easily be carried too far. A certain degree of carelessness is natural and graceful in early youth. A little old man or woman in the shape of a child is not very agreeable; nor is such a one likely to attain any high degree of virtue as a man or woman. If too much restraint be laid on the child, he will probably grow up a dull formalist, more regarding seasons, times and forms, than aiming to acquire intrinsic excellence of character.

Great is the importance of teaching a child the value of money. He should soon have something which he can call his own, and should be taught that his means of gratifying his inclinations will depend in a considerable degree on the use he makes of his little fund. Children are apt to think that their parents' means of giving them pleasure, by procuring for them what they desire to possess, are unlimited. This error should be corrected as early as possible.

The subject of early intellectual education would afford matter for a large volume. Our

observations in this essay must be very general. The great instructress in the early period of life is the mother; and thrice happy is the lot of the child who enjoys the inestimable advantage of an affectionate, intelligent and active mother's love. Nothing can supply the want of her attentions and instructions; and to her far more than to all his future instructors is committed the unspeakably important task of forming his character, both intellectual and moral. No one but herself can feel her tenderness; none will give the like unremitting attention; none, if she live constantly with her children as she ought to do, can so well judge of the extent of their capacity, of their habits of observation and of thought, and of the mental peculiarities which are to be found in every individual.

People are apt to think the great step in the intellectual education of a child is to teach him his letters; and many a self-satisfied mother's heart expands with exultation when she finds that her little one has per-

formed the mighty achievement of learning his alphabet at an unusually early period. This vanity however is likely to end in vexation of spirit. There seems to be no advantage whatever in the very early commencement of literary education. There is another sort of education much more important, and much more easily carried on in the first years of life. A child soon begins to notice with curiosity the objects around him. To satisfy that curiosity should be the business of his mother. The questions which he asks will often be troublesome, and sometimes such as the mother may not be able to answer. She should not however adopt the very general practice of evading the questions; but her rule should be to give all the information in her power to the extent to which the child is capable of understanding her. The gratification of our curiosity is a pleasure at all periods of life. The desire to know something new seems universal in human nature, and is pursued with equal ardour perhaps by the philosopher

in searching for some new truth, and the inhabitant of a country town, who desires to know what his neighbour has for dinner; by the patriot seeking the best means of advancing the interests of his country, and the spinster of advanced years, whose delight it is to superintend the love-affairs of all the young people of her acquaintance. If the mother, in all practicable cases, satisfy the curiosity of the child, that gratification will stimulate him to make further inquiries; and may thus become the source of a spirit of investigation which may be of incalculable benefit to himself and others in the course of his future life. It will also be well to encourage the child to express his own opinions, and to explain to him in what respect he appears to be in error. This "teaching the young idea how to shoot" cannot fail to be a "delightful task," when pursued with kindness and with discretion. No doubt indeed it is sometimes wearying, but what weariness will not a tender mother endure for her child! Let her only watch

the movements of the child's mind, and everything in the room in which they sit, and every object which they see in their walks, may be made a subject of instruction. With regard to the great affair of learning the alphabet, there can be little difficulty. If the child's curiosity be properly stimulated, he will at a suitable age be himself desirous of being taught to read as he sees others do so. The simple plan of throwing about the room the letters of the alphabet on pieces of wood or card, would perhaps lead the minds of most children to desire to know what is the meaning of those things.

When the child has learned to read, what sort of books ought he to read? A very general answer must suffice here. Amusement and instruction must be united; and the latter should be as little set and formal as possible. Narratives, either of fact or fiction, of such a nature as will tend to draw out and strengthen all the most noble and virtuous emotions and sentiments of the human heart, are to be preferred to all other

reading. The views given of human life should be just; but if there be a leaning at all it should be on the favorable side. To fill the mind of a child with gloomy anticipations of the world into which he is about to enter, is laying the foundation of qualities which are likely to be extremely injurious to his own happiness, and to that of those with whom he will be connected in the progress of life. But we are now arrived at the period when the boys are to be sent to school, and the girls likewise, or to be placed in the hands of a governess at home. We will here therefore leave them to the care of their respective instructors, till the period when they return as young men and women to the home of their parents.

How delightful is it to behold a happy family, where one common feeling of affection prevails among all its members; where the parental authority is softened by kindness, and the filial duty accompanied by a feeling of the highest respect and the most

confiding friendship! Thrice happy are the parents and children who regard each other as the most intimate of friends; and such instances are to be found. But how different is the scene in most families! How often do we find the parental authority stretched beyond all reasonable bounds, and the children acting with no other regard to the parents than that which fear inspires! Frequently on confidence exists between parents and their children; but the latter do all they can to conceal their actions from their parents; while the parents are discovering, from other sources, what a happy mutual confidence would occasion them to be informed of by the children themselves. Parents often commit the double error of treating children as if they were never to be men and women, and young men and women as if they were still children. They find them, during the period of childhood, entertaining playthings; and indulge all their wayward humours, without giving themselves the trouble to correct them, and without considering that

they are by this indulgence forming such habits as will in the end make their children unhappy themselves, and the cause of unhappiness to their parents. When they are grown up to be young men and women, the parents are apt to forget the desire of independent action which belongs to their season of life; that their sons and daughters have plans and projects of their own; have pursuits which they wish to follow, and friends with whom they desire to associate. Often the parents think little of all this. They are indeed anxious for the personal appearance of their children in the world, for in this their own vanity is concerned. If the children possess superior talents, the parents delight in witnessing the exercise of them for the same reason, so long as it does not compete with any talent of their own. If the daughters possess beauty or accomplishments, the parents are proud to display them, as some part of the admiration they excite is reflected on themselves. In public there-

fore they seem all kindness, but frequently appear at home in quite a different character.

Such are the faults of parents respecting their children; and charges at least equally heavy may be brought against children on account of their conduct to their parents. The generality of parents are neither very bad nor very good. They perform their duty imperfectly, but still to such an extent as to lay an obligation on their children which can never be adequately discharged. Many put themselves to considerable inconvenience, and submit to many privations, for the purpose of giving their children the advantage of an education superior to what they have themselves enjoyed. This is perhaps the part of the parent's duty which is in general best performed; and though it might often appear, on a careful analysis of the parent's motives, that a regard to self held a larger share in them than we should desire to find, yet much must in candour be ascribed to real affection for the children;

and the benefit conferred upon them is of a high order. The child ought to feel gratitude to his parents for this advantage; instead of which it too often happens that his mind is possessed with a sense of his superiority to his parents, which he owes entirely to their kindness and self-denial exercised for his benefit.

Young persons are too apt to forget that their residence with their parents often occasions new arrangements in the family, which are adopted for their sakes, and obliges the parents to deviate from that course of life which, on their own account, they would prefer. The friends of the children are received at the father's house, society is entered into, to an extent much beyond what the parents desire, for the sake of introducing their children into the world. The parents accompany them to public places of amusement much more for their sakes than for their own; and there is a continual anxiety in the minds of most parents, and a perpetual conflict between a desire on one

hand to give their children all those advantages of appearance and of accomplishments which are considered to belong to their station in life, but which can only be procured at a considerable expense, and a just feeling of the duty of the parent to meet the expenses necessary to set the sons out in the world in the professions and business to which they are brought up, to raise marriage portions for the daughters, and to acquire fortunes for them at the period when death shall put an end to the father's exertions for their benefit. On the whole, in ordinary cases, the weight of obligation of the child to the parent is very great, and should never be forgotten.

Sons and daughters seldom think enough of the incessant toils of the father and the increasing anxieties of the mother on their account. Many fathers devote almost the whole of at least six days of the week to the toils of business, chiefly for the purpose of providing for their families; while the anxious mother, on whom the perpetual avo-

cations of her husband have thrown almost the whole care of the family, has the daily and most difficult task of directing, restraining and advising her children in all that belongs to the conduct of life at that period when direction, restraint and advice are felt burdensome by the children, though known to the mother to be necessary to prevent their engaging in such pursuits and forming such habits and connexions as would be seriously injurious to them.

Nothing in general occasions such unhappy differences between parents and children as the subject of marriage; and both parties are often greatly to blame. It is quite certain that the principles, characters and tempers of husband and wife are the principal constituents of matrimonial happiness; but unhappily both parents and children are usually looking almost exclusively to matters of inferior consideration. Even persons of respectable character, and whose general conduct is influenced by higher motives, think little of anything ex-

cept fortune and rank in the matrimonial connexions of their children. This is partly to be attributed to a regard to prudential considerations, and partly to motives of pride, vanity and ambition. An over-anxiety on the first head is very excusable; the motives last mentioned belong to the worst forms of selfishness. Young persons, on the other hand, have little regard to anything beyond satisfying the present inclination. Attracted by beauty of person, agreeable manners, showy talents, or elegant accomplishments, they surrender their hearts at once; and their imaginations invest the beloved object, of whose real character they know little or nothing, with every virtue under heaven. Nothing can be more difficult than to reconcile parents and children on this subject. The value of money can be justly appreciated by those only who have known the want of it. There seems no other mode of teaching young persons to pay a due regard to pecuniary matters, than what has been already recommended, placing early

in their hands a certain fixed sum, and leaving them to supply a part of their wants for that fund, and to look to it for the means of enjoying amusements, and making purchases to which they may feel inclined. Parents should look back to the earlier period of their lives, and recall as much as they can the feelings by which they were themselves actuated in forming matrimonial connexions. The passion of love is peculiarly exposed to ridicule from the intense feeling belonging to it, which naturally leads each party greatly to exaggerate the merits of the other. Let however a man of the coolest head take the calmest view of the subject, and, unless he be unusually wanting in sensibility, he cannot fail to admit that it is of the highest importance that those who are to stand in the relation of husband and wife, should, previously to engaging in that connexion, feel the warmest affection, and have the most decided preference for each other. Marriage certainly should not be entered into

without a full attention to rational considerations; but the proper business of reason is to confirm what the feelings and affections have prompted. If we look for a reason why particular individuals prefer one another, we take a wrong course. The preference is not a matter of reason, but of sentiment. If reason can show us either that the beloved object is unworthy of our regard, or that circumstances exist which render a marriage between the parties inexpedient, and more likely to produce misery than happiness, these are conclusive objections; but if a man is to wait till he has fairly and fully estimated the good qualities of all his female acquaintance before he selects one whom he hopes to make his wife, it seems probable that celibacy will be his portion for life. Let inclination have its full course when there is no rational objection to its indulgence. Do we not through life find that some persons are agreeable and others disagreeable to us long before we have attained a knowledge of their characters; and that the degree

in which they are so by no means bears an exact proportion to our esteem for their characters when they are known? Does any man blame another for selecting a particular individual for his friend because there are others within his reach who appear to be more worthy? Why then is not the same liberty of following one's inclination to be allowed in marriage as in friendship? And let us a little consider what are the real prospects of persons about to enter into the married state. That married life is, in general, at least in middle and in old age, happier than celibacy, cannot be denied; and indeed it would be hardly short of atheism to deny it, for human beings were evidently formed for marriage. There are no doubt exceptions to this general rule, of persons who from peculiarities of temper, habits and pursuits are not fitted to enjoy matrimonial felicity; but these exceptions are very rare. Though matrimonial life, however, is in general greatly to be preferred, it has its own cares and pains, and of such a nature and

degree, that perhaps there are few who have been long married who have not at some time or other regretted having entered into the married state. If they have children, they cannot escape, even under the happiest circumstances, great and frequent cares, annoyances and vexations; and if they have none, that very circumstance is generally productive of more or less uneasiness and discontent. Marriage is a great restraint on liberty, at least to the husband; and this is often felt, particularly by those who marry early in life, to be a great drawback on matrimonial felicity; so much so indeed as to be a very serious objection to very young men entering into the married state, unless they happen to be of peculiarly quiet and domestic habits. No two newly married persons, even where there has been a long previous intimacy, can be perfectly acquainted with each other's tempers, and they must be unusually fortunate if both parties do not find more to bear and to forbear than they expected. In truth married life has more

pain as well as more pleasure than single life ; and much more self-denial is in general called for in the former than in the latter state. How desirable then must it be that the strong affection should exist between married persons which makes the gratification of the other one of the greatest delights of each of them ! Surely these considerations should have great weight in the minds of parents in deterring them from thwarting the inclinations of their children, unless where prudence and propriety require them to do so. Let them also bear in mind the extreme importance of marriage to their daughters, over whom in general the greatest parental influence is exercised ; and how forlorn is in many cases the condition of single women in the latter period of their lives. A father who opposes the marriage of his daughter from any other motive than a regard to her happiness, incurs an awful responsibility.

Marriage is the most frequent cause of disagreement between parents and their children, particularly their daughters. Next

to this, and perhaps in the case of sons, hardly less frequent, are the disputes which arise respecting the choice of a profession or business. Here the father is, in general, far better able to judge than the son; and the dislike of the latter to any particular profession would no doubt in most cases speedily wear away if he were once fairly engaged in it. Still nothing can justify a father in forcing his son into a line of life to which he feels an insuperable dislike. No one can fully understand the feelings of another; and a distaste for a profession may have taken such deep root in the mind of a young man that nothing may be able to eradicate it. In this matter the province of the father is to convince and persuade; beyond this he ought not to go, but should leave the decision to the son. Parents who have ecclesiastical patronage are too often tempted to put their sons into the church, though they are well aware that they are wholly wanting in that deep sense of religion, and in the knowledge and

attainments which are essential to enable a man adequately to fulfil the sacred duties of a clergyman. Such a proceeding cannot be too severely reprobated.

The situation of women in general, from their physical weakness, as well as from some mental peculiarities, is in a considerable degree a state of dependence during the whole of their lives. The condition of men is very different. Young men desire independence at an early period, and are generally impatient of restraint to an extent which is apt to indispose them to submit to the regulations of the family circle. It is not in general desirable that they should remain members of their father's family much longer than the period when the law of the land makes them masters of their own actions. If however they do continue in the family, they are bound to comply with such rules as their father may think proper to establish; while, on the other hand, the father should pay due regard to that natural

feeling of independence which belongs to adult age.

The differences which arise between parents and their children are usually much fewer, and of a much less inveterate character, than those between step-fathers and step-mothers and the children of the former marriage. The situation of a step-mother in particular requires an exercise of temper and of judgement such as very few women possess. From the moment of her marriage she is likely to be, particularly where the children are beyond the age of childhood at the time of the second marriage, an object of dislike to them; and too often relations and friends of the deceased mother and servants do their utmost to increase the hostile feeling. A union of firmness and forbearance is required on her part which it is very difficult indeed to practise. While she ought to insist on being treated by the children with the respect due to the wife of the father, she should never forget that she cannot

adequately supply to them the place of their mother, and that she has no other claim to their affection than what is founded on her kindness and attention to them.

Parents should endeavour to acquire the confidence and friendship of their children; but this can only be done by allowing and encouraging them on all occasions freely to declare their sentiments, whether agreeable or contrary to those of the parent. There are indeed often subjects of the deepest interest which persons holding different opinions, and who are united in affection, whether as fathers and sons, or brothers, or friends, should carefully avoid. What these subjects are it must be left to the good sense and reflection of the parties to decide. In general it is incumbent on children not to put themselves forward unnecessarily in opposition to the opinions, or even to the prejudices of their parents.

The duty of parents to provide for their children according to their means and opportunities is so obvious, that no one pos-

sessing any religious or moral principles can be insensible of it. Observation of what is going on in the world around us, however, will soon convince us that the far greater number of parents have either never seriously considered the extent of this duty, or that they pay but little regard to it in practice. How often do we see families brought up in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of life, and left at the death of the father with such a paltry provision as will scarcely supply any of its conveniences, or sometimes, even its necessaries! The injustice and cruelty of parents treating their children in this manner cannot be too strongly condemned. Where the income of a family indeed mainly depends on the personal exertions of the father, a great change must inevitably take place in the situation of the family at his death; but the children should be early made acquainted with the true state of the case; and the father should regulate his expenses with all practicable economy, and make the best provision for his chil-

dren which the necessary and reasonable expenses of his station of life will allow. With respect to the distribution of the parent's property among his children, everything depends on the extent of the property and the rank of the father. Where there is hereditary dignity, the eldest son has a strong claim for such a provision as will enable him to support his rank. In other cases, the making of an eldest son (as it is called) should depend on the nature and extent of the property. Whether a landed estate should be given to the eldest son or be sold for the benefit of all the family at the death of the father, is often a difficult question; but in this, and in all other cases, the rule for the father is to have an equal regard to the happiness of all his children, and to distribute his property among them on that principle. The following observations of Paley on one part of this subject are truly excellent:—"On "account of the few lucrative employments "which are left to the female sex, and by

" consequence the little opportunity they " have of adding to their income, daughters " ought to be the particular objects of a " parent's care and foresight; and as an " option of marriage, from which they can " reasonably expect happiness, is not pre- " sented to every woman who deserves it, " especially in times in which a licentious " celibacy is in fashion with the men, a " father should endeavour to enable his " daughters to lead a single life with in- " dependence and decorum, even though he " subtract more for that purpose from the " portions of his sons than is agreeable to " modern usage, or than they expect." Indeed the inadequate provisions often made by fathers for their daughters seems unaccountable. Daughters usually live much more with their parents than sons, and have generally stronger affection for them. The father too usually appears to love his daughters, at least as much as his sons; yet in the distribution of property the daughters in general do not appear to have their fair

share; nor can this be accounted for by their being settled in marriage, for the same thing happens as to single daughters. It is to be feared that the real reason is that daughters are expected to belong to other families, while the name and family of the father will be continued by the sons.

Brothers and Sisters.—Brothers and sisters are, or should be, friends ready made; and if they really esteem and love each other, their friendship is likely to be more lasting and more valuable than any other which can be formed in life. Considering that they are brought up together from their earliest years, instructed and directed in their conduct and pursuits by the same parents; that those who are pretty near each other in age follow the same studies and join in the same amusements; nothing more seems to be required to ensure their mutual affection than the kind superintendence of the parent, in checking in their commencement the disputes and quarrels which

frequently arise among children, and which when carried to a certain extent strongly tend to estrange them from each other. And surely this superintending care is repaid with usurious interest; for what can be more delightful to the heart of affectionate parents than to witness the attachment of their children to each other, formed under their hands, and growing with the children's growth and strengthening with their strength; and how must the parents rejoice in the delightful anticipation, that when they shall be gathered to their fathers, their children will continue to live with confidence and affection, a mutual support to each other in trying seasons of adversity, and rejoicing together when prosperity shines upon them!

Feelings of affection and friendship would much more frequently exist between brothers and sisters, if they would use the same self-restraint and forbearance towards each other which constantly regulates their intercourse with the rest of the

world. The want of that deference for one another, that politeness which consists in the preference of others to ourselves in the ordinary intercourse of society, operates very powerfully and extensively in preventing the existence in families of that concord and those kindly feelings which ought always to prevail. Those who find themselves treated with kindness and attention by all except the members of their own families, naturally look to others as the companions and participators of their pleasures, and the depositaries of their confidence. The feeling of attachment between brothers and sisters is laid more early and more deeply than those friendships which are contracted with others. Still it is of the character of friendship. Now the assumption of superiority and authority by the elder over the younger brothers of a family is likely to prevent the formation of those habits of friendship between them which are so much to be desired. The younger ones will resent what is in fact an usurpation, and the elder feel dissatisfied and annoyed that their claims are not allowed.

Sisters, in general, love each other much more than brothers; nor is it difficult to account for this, for a much larger portion of their life is usually spent together. Boys are often sent to different schools, and if they go to the same school are as likely to become estranged from as attached to each other at school; and often they are separated at an early period of life, each being engaged in his own profession or business; living with a particular class of persons, and acquiring their habits; so that but little remains in common between them. The custom of all the family assembling together every year at Christmas, or at some other season of festivity, has a tendency to keep alive the family affection, and should not therefore be neglected. Sisters, on the other hand, are usually brought up together, and are the constant companions of each other, nor is there in general much to disturb their mutual kindly feelings. Superior attractions of beauty and accomplishments may indeed make one sister an object of envy to the others; but those who are capable of such

a contemptible feeling can scarcely be susceptible of strong and generous feelings of attachment. Rivalry in love may sometimes strongly tend to alienate the affections of sisters; but this is only likely to take place where attentions of which one sister was the object have been understood by the other as intended for her; or where the lover, having in the first instance been favorably impressed by one, afterwards finds greater attractions in the other; and such cases do not perhaps very frequently arise.

There is something peculiarly interesting in witnessing the affection which we sometimes see between a brother and a sister. The different characters of the sexes, and their different positions in the world, must always, even in those cases where there can be no reference to a matrimonial union, give an interest to their feelings towards each other of quite a different nature from that which belongs to an affection between persons of the same sex. Woman always looks to man as her protector, and can repay him

by a thousand acts of kindness and tenderness to which the sensibility of her sex predisposes her. Men, who feel as they ought, consider every woman who stands in need of it entitled to their protection; and of course the feeling is stronger when applied to those who by nature have claims upon them, and whom constant communication and habit have made objects of their particular regard. The delightful union of affection between brothers and sisters can hardly fail of being beneficial to each party. The sisters being introduced into the world at a period when the brothers are either completing their education, or have their time fully occupied in preparing themselves for their respective callings, are made acquainted with the habits of society and the rules of propriety and politeness by which it is regulated at a much earlier age than their brothers, and can therefore be useful in correcting many anomalies in manners which young men are apt to fall into on entering into the world; while the brothers

always can give the sisters valuable hints respecting their conduct in all matters respecting the other sex.

Masters and Servants.—This subject cannot be introduced in a better manner than by the following quotation from Paley's 'Moral Philosophy:'—"A party of "friends setting out together upon a jour- "ney soon find it to be best for all sides, "that, while they are upon the road, one "of the company should wait upon the "rest; another ride forward to seek out "lodging and entertainment; a third carry "the portmanteau; a fourth take charge "of the horses; a fifth bear the purse, "conduct and direct the route; not forget- "ting, however, that as they were equal and "independent when they set out, so they "are all to return to a level at the journey's "end. The same regard and respect; the "same forbearance, lenity and reserve in "using their service; the same mildness in "delivering commands; the same study to

" make their journey comfortable and plea-
" sant, which he whose lot it was to direct
" the rest, would in common decency think
" himself bound to observe towards them;
" ought we to show to those who, in the
" casting of the parts of human society,
" happen to be placed within our power,
" or to depend upon us."

Improvements in the arrangements and accommodations for travelling and travellers have been so great since the time when this passage was written, as to raise a smile on the countenance of the reader on perusing it. In the modern mode of travelling the purse-bearer of the party is the only one who has any peculiar burden cast upon him.

The sentiments in the passage cited are truly excellent, and can never be lost sight of by any who entertain a just sense of the duty which they owe to those who occupy inferior and dependent situations.

Nothing affords more occasion for the animadversion of the moralist than the general conduct of masters to their servants.

Instead of a just sense of the relation in which we stand to them, and of those kind and considerate feelings which Paley describes as properly belonging to that relation, it is to be feared that masters and mistresses too commonly consider their servants as an inferior class of beings "born for their use, and living but to oblige them." We who associate with masters are constantly in the habit of hearing of bad servants. Had our situation been such as to make us the companions of the latter, might we not have heard the like complaints of masters? and would there be less reason for those complaints?

Haughtiness to servants seems to be more prevalent in England than in most other countries. Be that, however, as it may, we are certainly very blameable in this respect. Many masters and mistresses are in the constant habit of speaking to their domestics in a tone which seems intended to excite an humiliating sense of the inferiority of their condition. Servants are often expected to

do more than ordinary health and strength can accomplish. They are kept up late at night and obliged to rise early in the morning. Little is thought by many masters and mistresses of keeping them waiting in cold and rainy weather much longer than the appointed time for their return from parties and places of public amusement. Little regard is paid to the feelings of domestics in the conversation which is carried on while they are in attendance, which not unfrequently turns on the bad characters of servants in general; and is often interspersed with contemptuous remarks on the classes to which they or their near relations belong. The immeasurable superiority of ladies and gentlemen is constantly insisted on in the presence of servants, as if for the purpose of humiliating them. Their faults are sometimes visited with unpardonable severity; and when they leave a service, the character to which they are justly entitled is withheld, from pique or unreasonable resentment. Under such circumstances can it be

expected that servants should feel any attachment to their masters? Have they not like passions with ourselves? "If you prick "them will they not bleed, if you poison "them will they not die, and if you wrong "them will they not revenge?"

Turning from this disagreeable view of things, let us recognise the important truth that good masters and mistresses make good servants; not always undoubtedly; but certainly this is the case in general. How many instances must every observing person have witnessed of the attachment of old and faithful domestics, who have passed a large portion of their lives in the service of the same families, and have acquired by degrees an interest in their welfare scarcely exceeded by that which is felt by the members of the families themselves!

Masters are bound carefully to abstain not only from terms of abuse, but from all passionate expressions to their servants. How can they expect propriety of conduct and command of temper in those to

whom they are continually giving examples of ill manners and ill temper? Let every master consider the very great importance of example to servants. Confined to their domestic duties in a great degree, and habitually looking up to their master, they will naturally be greatly influenced by the example which his conduct affords them. Their situation precludes their seeing much of life beyond the domestic circle, and it is there, if anywhere, that they must acquire habits of virtuous conduct. Let the master consider what good qualities he desires to find in his servants, and endeavour to be himself an example of those qualities.

Masters should take care not to throw temptation in the way of their servants. Carelessly to leave money about the house, or allow them access to wine which they are not permitted to drink, is certainly blameable.

ESSAY II.

SOCIAL LIFE.

Conversation.—When we consider how large a portion of our lives is spent in conversation; how strong our desire is to communicate our ideas to one another; how great is the pleasure of such communication; with what delight all (except those who hear willingly the sound of no voices but their own) give their attention to the conversation of their associates; how sweet is the sympathy enjoyed in conversing with those who agree with us in tastes, opinions and sentiments; and that the pleasures of exercising our faculties in discussions and arguments with those who differ with us is often very great, it can hardly be denied that conversation is the greatest pleasure of life. No one can

indeed long be happy who is deprived of the power of communicating his ideas to others in conversation, and receiving theirs in return. The solitary student, however deeply engaged in his studies, however apparently abstracted from the ordinary pursuits of life, looks with delight to the time when he is to impart the knowledge which he has acquired, the discoveries which he has made, or the mental creations which his imagination has suggested, to those who will feel an interest in his pursuits, and pleasure in his success. The heartiness and warmth of friendship, the deeply-seated affection of parents, the respectful feelings of filial duty, and the thrilling tenderness of love, burst forth spontaneously and irresistibly in terms suggested by those feelings, and addressed to the objects of them. The moralist whose mind carefully surveys the map of human nature, and from that survey endeavours to deduce rules and principles to direct his fellow men in the way in which they should go, longs for the faithful

friend to whom he may impart his sentiments, by whose suggestions he may correct his errors, and by whose sympathy he may feel refreshed and invigorated for further investigations in the ample and interesting field of moral truth. Even the deeply religious man, who feels that this world, with all its interests, is scarcely worth a thought in any other relation than that of a preparation for that eternal state to which we are all hastening, the great object of whose life is to know and to do the will of his Creator, even he feels the necessity of communicating his thoughts to others, and finds his piety enlivened and improved by conversation with those of similar feelings and opinions.

As conversation is a great source of pleasure to all, so also is it of very great advantage for the improvement of the intellect. "Whosoever (says Bacon*) hath "his mind fraught with many thoughts, "his wits and understanding do clarify and

* Essay on Friendship.

" break up in the communicating and dis-
" coursing with another: he tosseth his
" thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them
" more orderly; he seeth how they look
" when they are turned into words; finally,
" he waxeth wiser than himself; and that
" more by an hour's discourse, than by a
" day's meditation.—Neither is this second
" fruit of friendship, in opening the under-
" standing, restrained only to such friends
" as are able to give a man counsel: they
" indeed are best; but even, without that,
" a man learneth of himself and bringeth his
" own thoughts to light, and whetteth his
" wits as against a stone, which of itself cuts
" not." From one of the two greatest English philosophers the mind easily turns to the other. Newton is reported to have said that he never conversed with any one from whom he did not derive some improvement.

Such then being the inclination of all to engage in conversation; such the delight they take in it; so intimate its connexion

with all we love and all we venerate; and so important its results, intellectual, moral and religious; how desirable must it be that it should be conducted in the manner best calculated to gratify our desires, and to carry forward our improvement! How it is usually managed we will proceed to consider.

Conversation is a common property, in which all have a right to partake. Every one desires to talk as well as to hear, and all have a right to do so, though some have much higher claims to the attention of their hearers than others. A perpetual talker is therefore an usurper of the rights of others; and as when a man unlawfully encloses part of a common whereon his neighbours have a right to depasture their cattle, they may lawfully knock down his fences, and lay that open which he had no right to enclose, so it is lawful and right to put down a monopolizing talker by any means in the power of the company. He is a public nuisance, and (in the language of the law) he ought to

be abated. Great talkers are always inflated with vanity, for what else can make them aim at monopolizing all the talk to themselves? and they are in general superficial thinkers and inaccurate reasoners. They abound far more in words than in thoughts; and seldom give themselves the trouble to affix clear ideas to the terms they use. The pernicious habit of perpetual chattering is almost sure to bewilder the mind in undefined and unintelligible notions. He who sets himself up as the perpetual instructor of all his acquaintance, must produce something new from time to time; but the novelty too often consists in old words used in new senses, or, more frequently, in no intelligible sense at all. Amid all the fallacies which beset the human mind in the search after truth, the far greater part is derived from the loose and inaccurate use of words, from which the great talker can only escape by special grace. Let a man be careful that every word he uses has a distinct meaning, and there will

be no fear of his annoying his companions by over-much talking.

Another class of troublesome people infest society, who may be properly denominated *Dampers*. The damper has as large a share of conceit as the monopolizer, but in the latter it is accompanied by vanity, while in the damper it is found in union with pride. The damper speaks but little, but his repose is like that of the tiger, the object of it being to enable him to pounce more fiercely on his prey. He is a "word-catcher that lives on syllables;" and thrice happy is he if he can detect you using an inaccurate expression, giving a wrong date to a fact, or expressing an opinion inconsistent with something you had said before. His memory is very retentive as to whatever has been said or done by any of his acquaintance, which there is a chance of turning to account at some future period, to make the speaker or doer appear inconsistent or ridiculous. If you associate with him, keep a watch over your tongue lest any unguarded

or inconsiderate expression should be brought in judgement against you at some future, and perhaps distant period. The damper is hardly a less nuisance in society than the monopolizer, and he is more odious. The conceit of both is alike contemptible, but vanity, which is the characteristic of the monopolizer, is often found in connexion with good humour and kindness, while pride, the damper's characteristic, is at all times and under all circumstances odious. Pride was not made for man; and wherever it exists in a high degree, the case of the unhappy individual whose mind it possesses must be considered nearly hopeless. Even the bitter trial of adversity is hardly likely to effect a cure in the mind possessed by this vice.

Another species of offenders against the rules of good conversation is the *Dictator*. The elements of the monopolizer are conceit and vanity, and those of the damper conceit and pride; but the dictator's character is made up of these three constituents. He

unites the contempt of others felt by the damper with the desire of their applause which actuates the monopolizer. His countenance is grave; his enunciation slow and solemn; and he speaks "As who should say, I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark!" Not unfrequently the characters of dictator and monopolizer are united in the same person.

The best cure for all these vanities and follies is neglect. Let those who go into society to amuse and be amused, to instruct and be instructed, pursue the ordinary current of conversation regardless of the monopolizer, the damper, and the dictator. If one man engross more of the talk than fairly belongs to him, no rule of good breeding obliges others to listen to him. If another is continually throwing out sarcastic observations, the company may and ought to let them pass unnoticed. If a third on all occasions assume the air of an instructor, let him pursue his course; don't argue with him, but go on quietly to express your own

sentiments without noticing any inconsistency between them and those of the dictator.

It is an important rule for the regulation of conversation, not to introduce any subject which is likely to offend any person present. A great reserve is necessary on political subjects, and still greater on religion, except when all the company are known to be pretty nearly agreed as to their general views on those important matters, when discussions on minor points may be neither unseasonable nor disagreeable.

It is difficult for those who know themselves to be either decidedly superior or decidedly inferior in intelligence and acquirements to the rest of the company not to feel some degree of embarrassment. To an amiable and well-disciplined mind the former is the more embarrassing situation of the two. He who feels himself inferior to those around him, though he may be humbled by that consideration, will still appreciate the advantage of being in the society

of those from whom he can derive information, and by whose conversation his mind will be instructed and improved. On the other hand, the man who is greatly superior to his associates, if possessed of kindly feelings, and a just sense of his own defects, will shrink from the character of the general instructor of the company. He will indeed endeavour to make his superiority to be as little felt as possible, and will contrive to turn the conversation on those topics on which some of his companions possess knowledge superior to his own; but, in spite of all his efforts, he will still feel in no small degree embarrassed.

The superiority of one man to another is, after all, not so great in general as is commonly supposed. No reasonable person can doubt that men of great and surpassing genius appear from time to time in the world. To assume that Homer and Shakspeare, Aristotle and Bacon, Leonardo da Vinci and Handel owed their immense superiority, not at all to native genius, but to

education and circumstances only, seems to be an opinion unsupported by the facts of their respective histories with which we are acquainted. But that the intellectual differences which are to be found among men are in general to be attributed chiefly to the circumstances in which they are placed and the instruction they have received, seems highly probable. Be that, however, as it may, we can seldom meet with two men together, one of whom is superior in all particulars in intelligence and knowledge to the other. Great superiority in one pursuit can hardly be attained without paying such a degree of attention to it as will not leave time to pursue other intellectual objects to the same extent as those have done who have directed their studies to many branches of knowledge without giving a very decided preference to any one. And perhaps these general men (if we may call them so) are those from whom we commonly derive the largest amount of pleasure and instruction in conversation.

We should endeavour in conversation to set every one as much at ease as possible. The old should encourage the young, the learned the unlearned, the bold the timid, and the man of high degree him of inferior station, to express their real sentiments. The peer should refrain from constantly reminding us that he is a peer, the bishop that he is a bishop, the judge that he is a judge. Let parliamentary orators indulge their eloquence in the houses of parliament, and demagogues at popular meetings; but let them not put it forth in conversation, where it is peculiarly desirable that ideas should always be held more important than words.

The great metropolis of the British empire contains probably a larger population than has ever been assembled in one place since the foundation of the world; and certainly its inhabitants, taken collectively, possess more talent and learning than can be found in any other place. Here then we might reasonably expect to find conversation in the nearest approach to perfection

which it has ever reached. No one, however, will assert that our social intercourse is not susceptible of great improvement. Indeed it is a pretty general complaint that we seldom enjoy the degree of pleasure or of instruction in conversation, in whatever circle we may happen to fall, in London which might (as it should seem) be expected from a consideration of the intellect, the talents and the acquirements of those with whom we associate. This disappointment may be imputed to several circumstances which have an unfavourable influence on society, and some of which will now be enumerated.

In some circles, which are distinguished for good breeding, conversation becomes vapid and uninteresting from an over-refinement of manners. It is carried on in a tone somewhat approaching to a whisper; all topics are avoided which can possibly give offence to anyone; nothing is discussed, and no emotion is excited. Conversation flows on coldly and languidly, calm

and unruffled, dull and uninteresting; often on the verge of stagnation, which it not unfrequently reaches.

In more animated and more interesting society vanity is the great impediment to good conversation. All desire to talk, and few are willing to hear. Persons anxious to express their own sentiments often pay but little attention to those of others. A man's opinions may be unknown to those with whom he has associated familiarly for years, merely because they have never paid sufficient attention to his conversation to make themselves acquainted with his sentiments. Now it does seem strange that any intelligent and reflecting person should not desire to understand as much of human nature as his opportunities enable him to attain. Yet if this desire really exist, how can it so well be gratified as by attending to the disclosure of the sentiments of others in conversation? But alas! self idolatry is too strong to be controlled. Many seem to go into society for no other purpose but to show forth their

talents and acquirements, in order to excite the admiration of their auditors. One wears out your patience with narratives of adventures of which he is himself always the hero; every event of his life has in his estimation something of the marvellous; he is satisfied that "all the courses of *his* life do show *he is* not in the roll of common men;" and can he do better than to make others acquainted with the marvellous occurrences which have marked his course! Another, having few thoughts of his own, places his ambition in showing and setting forth his intimate acquaintance with those of other men, and overwhelms and suffocates you with quotations. Thus conversation, instead of being an intercourse and exchange of sentiments, is degraded to a contest of vanity, a striving which shall be heard, and usually ends in the success of him who has the loudest voice and the largest share of self-conceit and assurance. Dr. Franklin informs us, that among the North American Indians, "to interrupt another, even in common conversation, is

reckoned highly indecent." Certainly those people, savages as we are apt to call them, might in this particular teach a valuable lesson to refined and learned England. The habit of interrupting others in the midst of what they are saying is so prevalent that the best bred persons are obliged either to resort to it occasionally, or to endure the penalty of perpetual silence.

Conversation may be considered under three different heads: as a means of creating and improving the social affections; as a source of recreation and pleasure; and as affording means of instruction.

Conversation is one of the principal means by which we become acquainted with the characters of those with whom we associate. We find among our companions some whose habits of thought and feeling are congenial with our own. This lays the foundation of friendship. The general feeling of those who are in the habit of frequently conversing with each other is that of kindness and regard. Conversation is then a school of

benevolence; drawing us out from mere selfish considerations, and exciting our kindly sympathy for others. But to effect this purpose everything irritating or unkind should be absolutely prohibited. Exposing the infirmities or deriding the follies of our companions is always unjustifiable. Every one is bound to abstain in conversation from whatever is calculated to give pain to any one present, except indeed in those cases where his duty requires him to introduce a subject which he knows will have that effect. This however but rarely happens in the ordinary intercourse of society.

Considering conversation as a source of recreation and pleasure, we should endeavour to make it as much as possible agreeable to all the company present. No rule is more frequently disregarded than this. The lawyer can scarcely lose sight of the king's bench and the assizes, nor the physician of chronic diseases and atmospheric influence; while the clergyman can with difficulty refrain from discussing fat rectories

and golden prebends. The lawyers have indeed an advantage over others, as a great deal of what occurs in courts of justice is of general interest; and where they do not give an undue importance to the particular causes in which they have been engaged, for the purpose of glorifying themselves, and manage to control the flux of words with which they are for the most part encumbered, they are very agreeable companions. Men much addicted to literature are sometimes in the habit of disparaging all knowledge which is not acquired by reading, and of making books the only subject of their conversation. This fault, however, is not so prevalent now as formerly, and has been in a considerable degree corrected by the habits of society, as persons of different pursuits and of different professions meet more frequently than was usual in former times.

The acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of the faculties are important results of conversation; but it may well be

doubted whether our existing social arrangements are calculated to effect these objects in the best manner. It has been often said that Englishmen can do nothing without a dinner; and society seems to be more connected with this meal in England than in other countries. Now to say nothing of the talk of meats and drinks, of culinary mysteries and the exquisite flavour of wines, which is apt to encroach too much on topics deserving far more attention, the mere arrangement of a dinner party of fourteen, sixteen or more persons at a long table is very unfavourable to conversation. It can hardly be general among so many individuals; and unless they suffer the infliction of one of loud voice and fluent talk, who sets himself up as the instructor of the company, each individual must look for companionship almost exclusively to those who sit near him. However unsuited the persons who are placed next to each other may be in taste, acquirements and sentiments, they are tied together by an inevitable necessity

so long as the party remains in the dining-room ; while they may often see, in another part of the room, those with whom they are desirous of conversing. The introduction of round tables has somewhat improved the state of things at dinner-parties, by bringing the company nearer to each other. A dinner-party should not, for the enjoyment of general conversation, exceed eight. The lateness of the dinner-hour, which is now carried in fashionable society to an extreme, the absurdity of which is admitted by all rational people, though few seem inclined to exert themselves to alter it, very much limits the time which remains for conversation when the company changes the dining-room for the drawing-room. This is greatly to be regretted ; for in the latter, individuals, not being fixed in any particular place, naturally form themselves into groups with those with whom they wish to converse. This is generally the best part of a visit, intellectually and socially considered, but, in the present state of things, it is very short.

The evening parties, unconnected with dinners, held in London, seem formed for anything in the world rather than for conversation. It does not appear that any one has yet been able to discover the purpose for which shoals assemble, at the time of night when sober people are going to bed, to inhale corrupt air, and to run the risk of suffocation in crowded saloons and drawing-rooms. Music and dancing seem the only amusements that can afford pleasure in such assemblies. But little can be said in favour of the *soirées* and *conversaziones* of the various scientific bodies of the metropolis. The assembling of a small number of individuals in the evening for the purpose of enjoying each other's conversation, seems to be almost entirely disused.

The clubs, perhaps, on the whole afford the best opportunities for conversation, as far, at least, as men only are concerned (for there the more amiable half of the species is excluded), and arrangements might be formed to improve them considerably in this

respect, by appropriating rooms particularly to conversation, while those who were disposed to read or write should betake themselves to other apartments.

It is not desirable that subjects demanding profound investigation should be introduced in general society; but there appears to be no reason why a very limited number of persons might not occupy themselves agreeably and improvingly in the investigation of subjects of depth and abstruseness. They should not perhaps exceed five in number, and they should invariably refrain from interrupting each other, except in the way of explanation; and also from indulging in any thing approaching to dissertation or speech-making.

Conversation, to be agreeable, should be free, and only restrained by propriety and good humour. Meetings of an expressly literary character seem generally to fail. People are usually more agreeable in casual meetings than in set society. It is the abundant opportunities of meeting casually

persons of talent and learning in all branches of knowledge, which is the great advantage of a residence in London. Scarcely a day need be passed by those who have any considerable portion of their time at their own command, without enjoying more or less of this privilege.

Friendship.—Friendship is a want of human nature; and he who has no friends can scarcely be happy, however desirable his situation, and however prosperous his circumstances in other respects. Parents, brothers and sisters, wives and children, are, as it were, parts of ourselves, and we are bound to them by ties which cannot be broken off, though they should be unworthy of our regard and affection. Disobedient and vicious children are to their parents like the poisoned garment of Nessus on the limbs of Hercules; they cannot cast them off without at the same time tearing away their own flesh. But friendship is a voluntary union of minds, founded usually on

similarity of taste and sentiment, but cemented by esteem, and entirely dependent for its permanence on the virtuous qualities of the parties between whom it subsists. A friend, standing apart from our family connexions, is, on that very account, in many cases the more fitted to be our adviser. "A man cannot speak to his son, but as a "father; to his wife, but as a husband; to "his enemy, but upon terms; whereas a "friend may speak as the case requires, "and not as it sorteth with the person*."

"Est autem amicitia," says Cicero, "nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate summa consensio." If this be a true account of the matter, it may well be doubted whether real friendship ever existed in the world. There can, however, be no doubt that agreement in opinion and congeniality of taste tend both to the formation and to the permanence of friendship. The latter seems to do so in a much higher de-

* Bacon.

gree than the former. Difference of opinion, abstractedly indeed, appears neither to interfere with the existence or the continuance of friendship; but where there is a serious difference in practical matters by which the friends are led to pursue objects in opposition to each other, their friendship is likely to be weakened, and even destroyed. A mutual forbearance indeed may do much to preserve it. "I can live on terms of friend-" ship with Burke," said Johnson, "but I " cannot talk with him about the Rockingham " party." If however Johnson had been a member of the House of Commons, his friendship with Burke would not, in all probability, have been proof against the shocks of their perpetual collision. Burke himself, we know, broke off his connexion with a far more amiable man than Johnson on account of their political differences; nor could the advances of Fox, even when Burke was fast sinking to the grave, induce the latter to renew their friendship. That true patriot and excellent man, Sir Samuel Romilly, de-

clares that he felt obliged to renounce the friendship of Perceval on account of the latter pursuing measures which the former deemed injurious to the interests of the country, although he expresses at the same time sincere esteem and respect for the virtues of Perceval. This was perhaps a weakness ; but, if so, it was the weakness of a noble mind.

Young persons are prone to form friendships, and not unfrequently far too hastily. A little caution on this head from those who have had a larger experience of the world will be useful. Yet, after all, the friendships formed in early life are in general the most close and lasting. One precaution cannot however be too deeply impressed on the young; there can be no true friendship with the unprincipled and the vicious. " Virtus amicitiam et gignit et con-
" tinet; nec sine virtute amicitia esse ullo
" pacto potest*. Companions are necessary to the pleasures as well of the vicious as of

* Cicero.

the virtuous; but mere companionship must not be confounded with friendship.

Many writers on friendship are fond of representing it as existing between two individuals only; and indeed it has been asserted that a man can have but one friend. Now this is giving a very false view of human life. Most men have many friends; and though sometimes one may be very decidedly preferred to all the rest, that is by no means universally the case. Friendship, in the very highest sense, that union of minds which binds the parties together in the same sentiments, leads them to pursue the same objects, and establishes unbounded confidence between them, is very rarely indeed to be found; and no one in the outset of life should indulge the expectation of being able to form such a connexion; but those who will be satisfied with a lower degree of friendship can scarcely fail, if they be not wanting to themselves, to find, in the journey of life, such as will be willingly associated with them in their pursuits and plea-

sures ; will feel a sincere interest in their happiness, and exert themselves to heighten their joys, and to alleviate their sorrows ; those to whom they "may impart griefs, "joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, "and whatsoever lieth upon the heart, to "oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift and "confession*."

The best safeguard of friendship is a union in the pursuit of laudable objects. Those who sincerely labour together in obedience to the will of God, and in humble hope of his divine assistance, for the good of their fellow-creatures, by alleviating their distresses, by enlightening their minds, by leading them on in the ways of intellectual and moral improvement, and by impressing them with a deep sense of the duties of religion, possess a cementing principle of friendship which will assuredly never fail them.

Recreations and Amusements.—In these matters people must of course choose

* Bacon.

for themselves the kind of amusements and recreations which give them most pleasure and are best fitted to prepare them to return to their ordinary avocations with renewed vigour and alacrity. The general rule to abstain from all amusement of a decidedly immoral character will of course be adopted by all who intend to regulate their lives by religious and moral principles. There are however many amusements which, though not essentially immoral, must be admitted to be of a somewhat dangerous character. These may require some consideration. Card-playing is entirely prohibited by many persons of serious and religious character; but their judgement seems more severe than the case requires or will justify. To spend much time in this amusement, and thereby to encroach on the larger portions of our lives which should be devoted to intellectual and to useful objects, is certainly censurable; but when a game at cards is played in the evening after a day rationally and usefully spent, or is resorted to as an amusement in age or

sickness, when the mind has in some measure lost its capacity for more important occupations, it is not easy to see on what ground it can be condemned. Two things however are carefully to be avoided; acquiring a taste for gambling, and injuring the temper; both of which may result from card-playing. The pernicious character of gambling, and the misery it often inflicts on those who practise it and on their innocent families, are too generally known to require to be insisted on here. Severe laws have been passed for repressing this vice; but here we may well exclaim, "Quid leges sine moribus vanæ proficiunt?" If indeed persons in influential stations could be induced to form a resolution never under any circumstances to play at games of chance for money, there would be a better prospect of a remedy for the evil of gambling than any legislation is likely to afford. The desire to take money from the pockets of our friends and acquaintance is very base and contemptible; and a combination of persons of rank and fortune

to banish playing for money might in time fix the character of *vulgarity* on that practice which would probably tend powerfully to work a cure. If some Father Matthew in high life would originate this plan of *total abstinence* from playing for money he might prove a public benefactor.

With respect to the other evil connected with playing cards, we may observe that some persons of irritable charanter cannot bear a succession of ill luck at games of chance without a serious injury to their tempers. Such persons should entirely abstain from play.

Some worthy individuals object to theatrical performances altogether; and certainly much may be said on their side of the question. Great indecency is often to be found in comedies, and much profaneness in some tragedies. There are a great many plays to which a religious man could not, consistently with his principles, take his children. It seems, however, going too far to prohibit theatrical entertainments altogether. Good and evil are so mixed in the world as to

render it impossible to separate them. Every time we go into society we run the risk of witnessing something which may be injurious to us. Many of our best tragedies abound with noble sentiments which are enforced with increased effect by the dramatic form in which they are given out, and much in our comedies tends to the correction of smaller vices and foibles, which might not be so easily amended in any other way. There seems to be no reason why we may not take the good and refuse the evil. An indiscriminate attendance on theatrical entertainments cannot be defended; but, with due limitations, they may be made a part of our innocent amusements.

The cultivation of a taste for the fine arts as a means of refining and elevating the mind is now pretty generally encouraged. On this head objections may be raised of the same nature as those which have been urged against the amusements of the theatre. In most galleries such pictures and statues are to be found as a moral and religious father

would be unwilling to allow his daughters to behold. Are we then to abstain altogether from visiting such galleries? Those who are for prohibiting theatrical performances should in consistency say so; and the argument would be conclusive if it were possible to enjoy the innocent pleasures which works of art afford, and to derive from the study of them the refinement and elevation of sentiment which they are calculated to bestow without coming in contact with what is objectionable. This however cannot be done; and here we must, as in the former case, do our best to enjoy the good and to reject the evil.

Those recreations which lead us to take exercise in the open air are highly to be prized.

Tours and Travelling.—The English are a people much given to wandering; and a large proportion of those in the higher and the middle stations of life often indulge themselves with a tour in the summer or

autumn. Certainly their taste is to be commended; for such tours, whether in our own or in foreign countries, may be turned to good account, both as to pleasure and improvement. The following observations will not apply to travelling in the correct sense of the term; which implies a longer residence, and of course better opportunities of entering into the society and studying the characters of the inhabitants of the country which the traveller visits than the tourist contemplates.

The following hints may be thrown out for the consideration of those whose avocations and inclinations permit and prompt them to give up a few weeks in the year to rambling through foreign countries or their own.

Travelling is now so common and the means of acquiring the requisite information for the tourist respecting the countries which he intends to visit are in consequence become so ample, that no one need be in want of them. One of the most difficult matters

to decide upon is the choice of a companion. Families who are in the habit of living together are in general the best travelling companions ; but even among them different individuals will often have various pursuits and inclinations, which will lead them to draw different ways. With respect to other persons, it is a matter of very great difficulty to select a desirable travelling companion ; so much so indeed, that when the tourist is tolerably well acquainted with the language and habits of the people among whom he intends to travel, and where his intended tour is in one of the accustomed routes, so that he may be pretty sure of meeting with a constant succession of occasional companions, it will perhaps be in general best for him to travel alone. This however must of course depend in a great measure on the tastes and habits of the tourist.

A great and common error in travelling is doing too much. By visiting too many places and by too minute investigation of the places which he does visit, the traveller often

subjects himself to great and unnecessary fatigue; sees a great number of things which are scarcely worth seeing; and pays far too small a share of attention to those which are most worthy of his regard. The first day or two spent in a town where there is a great deal to see, are generally far more toilsome than pleasurable. The real pleasure and improvement must await the time when, having made our general survey of the place, we have discovered what is most deserving our notice. But when this is done, not a few tourists find their allotted time exhausted, and start for another place, where the same uninteresting course is to be pursued. The rational object in tours is to see what is best worth seeing; the practice seems to be to omit nothing inserted in the guide-book, or which any other traveller has ever seen. Nowhere are troublesome companions more annoying than in travelling. Should such a one accompany you to a gallery of pictures, be assured that while your attention is fixed

on some noble specimen of art which excites the deepest interest, he will be calling you off to some other picture which may not in your eyes possess half the merit of that from which you are torn away: if you are absorbed in that deep meditation with which a magnificent cathedral more than any other work of man impresses one, he arouses you from your trance to observe some minute beauty in a carved stall or a painted window. Many seem to think that the delight of travelling consists in perpetual motion. Placed amid the noblest scenes of nature which fill and exalt the soul, they are never contented unless they are every minute changing their position and varying their prospects. What a blessing must a railway be to those lovers of perpetual change! If then you look for pleasure in travelling, do your utmost to keep out of the way of annoying companions. Two associates however you should always take with you; candour in judging of customs and habits

different from those of your own country, and good humour, which will enable you to bear with the annoyances which are sure more or less to beset every traveller.

ESSAY III.

STUDIOUS LIFE.

Preliminary Considerations.—Some explanation of the title of this essay seems to be required. In its strictest sense it is applied to those who engage in none of the active scenes of life, or if they do so at all, make them only their occasional occupation, and devote their lives principally to the pursuit of literature or science. In a more enlarged sense it includes those who, though occupied in active pursuits, find time to devote a considerable portion of their lives to study. The number of the latter class is far larger than that of the former; and they appear to be in general more useful and more happy. We must not however forget that in the former class are to

be found the names of many of the greatest benefactors of the human race. A man should indeed consider deeply before he makes up his mind to adopt this mode of life. Three requisites seem essential; an ardent desire to acquire knowledge, habits of steady, regular, persevering industry, and some independent fortune. Locke has told us long ago that there are no gold mines in Parnassus; and the book of human life does not contain many pages more dismal than those which comprise the history of such as have devoted themselves to literature as the means of gaining their living. Even those who, possessing a competence, do not look to literature as a means of subsistence, should bear in mind that in embracing it as their principal pursuit they can entertain but slight hopes of attaining wealth and rank to which the successful prosecution of professions or of business often leads, and that the man of letters must, in most cases, be content to remain, as far as this world's goods are concerned, in an inferior situation to those who

started in life with no better talents than his own. To a well-disciplined mind, indeed, to a soul intent on higher things, these are matters of comparatively small importance. Persons of this description may pursue their vocation and become the lights and guides of the world, if not in their own day, at least in future ages; but let not the sordid wretch who makes his wealth his god, let not him who fawns on the wealthy and the great, and who pants to enjoy the distinctions of rank and wealth, devote himself to literature or science as his profession. Even combining, in any considerable degree, attention to scientific and literary with professional pursuits is likely to be very injurious to a man's success. If the lawyer or the physician make professional success his first object, his wisest course will be to confine his attention as much as possible to his profession, and to study only such subjects as are intimately connected with it; or, at least, if he extend his researches further into the fields of science and literature,

to keep it a profound secret till he has fully established himself in his profession. If he should say this is a sacrifice which I will not make for any professional advantages whatever, the answer is, your choice may be a very wise one, but you must be content to relinquish your chance of obtaining one of the higher prizes in your profession, or, at least, very much to lessen it.

OBJECT OF STUDY.—The intellectual object of study will alone be our subject in this place. The moral and religious ends to be attained by it will be considered in the last essay of this series.

Many in the present day talk and write as if they considered the great object of our intellectual pursuits to be the advancement and increase of the accommodations, conveniences and luxuries of life. That much which is highly valuable has been done by science in these particulars for the benefit of mankind cannot be doubted; and the debt should be gratefully acknowledged; but to

reduce the advantages of literature and science to the standard of utility seems to be stopping far short of a just estimate of their value. Let us never forget that the human mind is formed for continual advancement and improvement; that in our progress larger and more important views are continually opening to us; and that the sincere inquirer goes on in a constant succession of eradicating prejudices and enjoying clearer and more extensive manifestations of truth. These are the noblest intellectual objects of study, to which mere utility ought always to be considered subordinate. As long as the intellectual faculties last the mind should be continually improving. No day should be allowed to pass away without something having been done to add to our knowledge, to correct our errors, and to enlarge our comprehension. It requires however no small share of steady resolution to adopt such a course of study as is best calculated to enable us to attain these ends. The field of science and literature is now so

extended that the most determined intellectual energy and perseverance cannot do more than cultivate a small part of it. The knowledge of the most learned man is small compared with what remains unknown. Unhappily the fashion of the day is to affect to know something of everything; and consequently most people content themselves with such a slight and superficial knowledge of a variety of subjects as will enable them to take a part in general conversation, without entering deeply into any subject. This is obviously fatal to high intellectual improvement. The first inquiries for him who desires to improve his intellect to the utmost, are to what particular branches of knowledge to direct his attention, and what degree of relative importance to give to each.

Course of Study.—The student having decided what branches of knowledge to cultivate, the next inquiry is, what is the plan of study to be pursued. It is not

the object of this essay to enter at all into the subject of what is commonly understood by education. We are now inquiring what course of study should be adopted by those who have completed what is usually called their education. Education, indeed, in an important sense of the word, should be going on as long as the intellectual faculties last.

In forming a resolution to devote one's attention particularly to any branch of literature or science, it is an important step carefully to review all which we already know on the subject; and it will often be desirable to make a written summary of the state of our knowledge. The nature of the study will, in many cases, pretty easily indicate the course which should be pursued; but this is by no means universally the case. When it does not appear to be very material what particular line of study is adopted, it will be best to begin with that part of the subject on which the student is most desirous of obtaining information. The knowledge which is thus associated in the mind

with our previous desire to possess it, sinks deeper and makes a more lasting impression than that which is acquired when the previous want of it has not been strongly felt.

The pursuing of a particular course of study may be too lax or too strict. If we adhere so little to our plan as to allow ourselves to be diverted from it by every novelty which falls in our way, it becomes nearly useless, and can never lead to important results. On the other hand, too strict an adherence to a predetermined course of study has many and great inconveniences. The different branches of learning are so mixed and entwined with one another, and one department of knowledge so often throws light upon another, as to render it impossible to pursue any one science abstractedly, and without reference to others which are connected with it. The question under what circumstances the student should depart from his intended course of study to pursue collateral inquiries connected with his main subject is often one of much difficulty; and

it must be left to the good sense and judgement of the individual to determine in each particular case. He should however be very careful not to yield to that restlessness of temper which is never contented without perpetual change and novelty; a state of mind absolutely fatal to great intellectual improvement.

Our bountiful Creator has so formed our minds that we cannot pursue any intellectual object successfully unless we feel some degree of pleasure in the pursuit. It is in vain to attempt to counteract this law of our intellectual being. When therefore the student finds his application to his studies quite irksome, and unrelieved by any pleasurable feeling, it is time for him to shut his books. Let him then resort to amusement; to gentle exercise in the open air; and, above all, to cheerful society. If he be in earnest in his studies, these irksome periods will return with less and less frequency as his knowledge of his subject advances, and his taste for it increases.

ARRANGEMENT OF TIME.—It is not so much by the number of hours spent in study that profound knowledge is acquired, as by the judicious arrangement of time for the different pursuits in which an individual is engaged. Indeed it is a very common error to spend too much time in study. To continue poring over books when the mind is jaded and the spirits are exhausted, is injuring the body without anything like an equivalent benefit to the mind. The hours of the day should be so arranged, so far as circumstances will admit of it, that each period should have its allotted employment; and the arrangement should be adhered to with as little deviation as business, health, spirits and other necessary occupations will permit. The number of hours which can be beneficially employed in study will be different in different individuals, according to the vigour of their constitutions, mental and corporeal; but to avoid excess should be the rule to all. The healthy state of the mind itself, which enables it to view

all subjects calmly, judiciously, and without strong prejudices (for the wisest man can hardly be without some degree of prejudice), is far more valuable than any extent of knowledge which the mind can attain by such forced exertions as are sure, more or less, to injure its tone.

It is indeed a very inadequate view of the legitimate end and object of study to look to it only as the means of acquiring knowledge. Another and a nobler end is the improving of the mind itself, the correction of errors, the subduing of prejudices, the formation of sound judgements, and of habits of correct reasoning. These excellences we sometimes find in a considerable degree in persons by no means distinguished for extent of knowledge; while, on the other hand, men of great learning are not unfrequently superficial thinkers, inaccurate reasoners, and altogether unfit for all the practical purposes of human life. The acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of the faculties should go on hand in hand. It is

by their union that superior intellectual character is attained.

Regard to Health.—This is a subject on which the ardent student is apt to stand much in need of warning. The mass of mankind must pass the far greater part of their lives in occupations which are not of an intellectual character. This has always been and probably always will be the condition of a great majority of the human race. To a favoured few are given the means of extended mental improvement and enjoyment. They must however pay the price by some diminution of the strength and vigour of their bodies. It seems that either the body or the mind must, in some degree, be sacrificed to the other. But though the intellectual man must not expect the robust health and strength of him whose pursuits are of a character more favourable to the vigour and perfection of the bodily frame, yet may he, if he keep himself under prudent restraint, enjoy good health and long

life. Excess of study, we have already said, is to be avoided on account of its injurious effect on the mind; and there can be no doubt that it injures the body in a greater degree. Pursuing our studies far into the night can hardly fail to be injurious. It is much better to rise early. Nature points out the night as the proper season of rest; and we cannot in this or in anything else safely depart from what she directs. Many fall into great errors respecting exercise. Study tends much to weaken the body; and to take strong exercise after several hours' application is far more likely to do harm than good. Gentle exercise, as walking or riding in the open air, is indeed highly beneficial; but bodily fatigue after study should be carefully avoided. Walking, which is natural to man, is no doubt in general best; but horse exercise is exceedingly valuable to many individuals; and where persons who reside in London are so pressed by professional avocations or engagements of business as to allow a very little time to

spare, riding on horseback has the double advantage of giving exercise without fatigue, and of enabling them more quickly to enjoy a purer air than the streets of London afford. To such persons a horse is often of more importance than the whole college of physicians. If the student find strong exercise necessary to his health, he should so arrange his time as to take it on those days when he has had but a moderate portion of intellectual exertion. The setting apart of a certain portion of the summer or autumn for recreation should never, if practicable, be omitted.

Nothing is more injurious to health than anxiety of mind, to which the student, if he should become an author, is very likely to give way. Ambition of every kind is calculated to wear out both mind and body ; and panting for literary distinction is not less so than other modifications of this disturbing passion. Before a man ventures to appear in print he should well consider how many circumstances may arise to prevent his wri-

tings becoming popular in proportion to their merit. Every age has its particular taste in literature and science, both as to the subjects and the manner of treating them. The same branches of knowledge which are in high repute at one time are sometimes completely disregarded at another, and each age has its own peculiar taste in literary composition. If an author write on a subject which has ceased to be interesting to the reading public, or if his style and mode of treating it be unsuited to the taste of the times, his work will be neglected, however excellent. The desire of applause is, to say the least, a weakness, which a wise man will endeavour to restrain, and a good man can hardly entertain in any high degree.

Cautions.—Great and numerous are the advantages enjoyed by those who devote a considerable part of their lives to the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of their minds. The studious life however

has its dangers and inconveniences, which it requires the most serious attention to avoid. We have already considered the injury to health and to the sound state of the mind likely to arise from intemperance in study. Those whose minds are greatly enlarged and improved are too apt to look with contempt on others who have either not had the same advantages as themselves, or have failed to improve them. Feelings of contempt should never be indulged except towards vice and folly. The man who looks down on another on account of his own intellectual superiority, even supposing his assumption to be well-founded, may be as inferior in moral excellence as he is superior in intellectual endowments to the object of his contempt.

Persons of literary and scientific habits are apt to be unsocial, and to be deficient in affability and attention to those around them. The common amusements and the ordinary conversation of the world are to them " stale and unprofitable ; " and they

are but too often pondering over the subjects to which their attention is chiefly devoted when they should be contributing their share to the instruction and amusement of the company. This is a great fault. High intellectual enjoyments, even to those most richly endowed by nature and most highly improved by study, are the portion of but a part, and that by no means the largest part, of human life. By the inevitable condition of man upon earth such happiness as he can enjoy is very much made up of small but frequently recurring pleasures. It may well be doubted whether the very highest mental delight will afford an adequate compensation for relinquishing the ordinary daily gratifications of life. At any rate, by secluding himself from society, or refraining from entering into its pleasures and amusements, the studious man greatly limits his usefulness, and cuts off the main source of the social affections, without which human life is a desert, and intellectual enjoyments themselves soon lose their highest relish.

Another inconvenience arising from overmuch study and too secluded a way of life is, that a man becomes thereby unfit to discharge many of his duties. We are all born members of society; are all linked to those around us by ties which never can be broken; and we are all bound to exert ourselves for the benefit of those with whom we are connected. But he who would be useful among men must be well acquainted with the manners and habits of those to whom he wishes to render any service. There are particular times and seasons, and suitable manners and modes of address, of which we ought to avail ourselves in our endeavours to serve our fellow-creatures. "A word spoken in season how good it is!" By choosing an improper time, or making our advances in an unsuitable manner, we may defeat the very object in view, and only offend where we intended to be of service. If we wish to serve others, we should carefully nourish our sympathies towards them, avoid to the utmost of our power

saying or doing anything to hurt their feelings or even to shock their prejudices; we ought to endeavour to understand as distinctly as we can the state of their minds; and, in our desire to do them good, to refrain from giving them pain.

ESSAY IV.

ACTIVE LIFE.

But a small proportion of mankind devote themselves principally to science and literature; the great mass are, and ought to be engaged in the active pursuits of life; in political, professional or official employments; in agriculture, trade, commerce, or manufactures. All these pursuits require certain qualifications for success; and all are exposed to peculiar temptations.

Moralists are too apt to represent virtuous conduct as more favorable to a man's success in the world than it really is. "Honesty is the best policy." How often is this said! but can it be truly said? If by this maxim we are to understand that persons of the highest moral principle are

most likely to attain great success, nothing can be further from the truth. Juvenal's "probitas laudatur et alget" is nearer the truth; which however lies between the two. Many of the virtues are very unfavourable to a man's succeeding in life; the sincerity which scorns disguise, and never stoops to practise deception; the sense of justice which obliges a man to do to others as he would wish them to do to him; the high-minded independence which refuses to fawn on the rich and the powerful, to pander to their bad passions, or to forward their immoral designs; which scorns to flatter the prejudices of the multitude, to adopt the contemptible arts of the courtier, or to lend itself to a political faction; these and many other virtues, if they find a man "poor at first," are likely to "keep him so." Those who are entering on the world should be made to see these matters in the proper light. The question to them should be, "choose ye this day whom ye will serve." If you prefer to walk in the paths of virtue,

you must be content to relinquish many of the chances of attaining wealth, rank and fame which a worldly course of conduct would give you. Adopt this course if your chief object be to succeed in the world ; but then you must bid adieu to the peace of mind and the approving conscience which are the earthly rewards of virtue.

But though integrity and many of the highest virtues are impediments to a man's obtaining those stations and distinctions which are generally the most coveted, they are undoubtedly favorable to that moderate degree of success with which a wise and good man may well be satisfied. Integrity and punctuality in all matters of business will acquire the confidence of all those with whom a man has any dealings ; and persevering industry will generally secure, in the end, a moderate share of success.

Considering the many advantages which are obtained by conduct which a virtuous man will not resort to, it behoves him to be particularly careful not to be failing in

using those means of success which are consistent with his principles. These are chiefly industry, regularity, and a proper arrangement of his time. He must shrink from no labour which is necessary to make him master of his profession; must be punctual in all matters of business; and must so arrange his hours as to do every thing at the proper period. A great deal of time is often lost for want of appropriating particular seasons to particular purposes, and entering on business too early, or protracting it too long. There should be order and arrangement in all a man has to do, and we should be very careful to do first that which most requires to be done.

Ambition and inordinate love of gain are the besetting vices of men of business; the former more particularly of those who move in the higher stations, the latter of all. The character of the age in which we are living is probably, on the whole, morally considered, equal to that of any former period. Every age, however, has its peculiarities;

and we are far from being free from those errors, follies and vices which usually belong to an advanced state of civilization and refinement, and to what often accompanies it, a great accumulation of property in the hands of individuals. The faults of the age particularly alluded to, are a desire to live in a style of luxury and expense much beyond what prudence sanctions, and to vie with others of superior fortune. This feeling is unhappily nearly universal, and its effects are truly lamentable. Thus we continually see persons indulging themselves in every luxury till their means entirely fail, and poverty and almost beggary becomes their portion; and many, with good incomes but small property, living without regard to economy, and, at their death, leaving their families unprovided for; debts incurred to tradesmen by those who have no reasonable prospect of payment, and even sometimes servants deprived of their wages by the extravagance and self-indulgence of their masters. It is obvious that such habits

must lead to an inordinate desire of gain, which is likely to make shipwreck of all honest and virtuous principle. In an age and country which abounds with the comforts, conveniences and luxuries of life beyond all former example, almost everybody is in want of money, because nearly all desire to live in a style above what they can afford. Of course, therefore, every one strives to the utmost to get as much money as possible. "I will tell you," said Mr. Windham, "an easy way to be rich; only "be satisfied to live as your fathers did*."

The almost universal desire to indulge in a luxurious and expensive style of living produces the most unhappy results on the character of the British nation, and particularly on political and professional life. Nor is ambition less fatal to public virtue. There are two forms of ambition; the one covets power, the other distinction. Often indeed both are united in the same indi-

* I forget where I met with this remark, but I think it is in one of Windham's speeches.

vidual. The love of power tempts the politician to all the means of flattery and servility which are likely to conciliate those from whom power is derived; he becomes the accomplished courtier; the cringing, bowing, supple, servile dependent of the "great man."

But is the lover of distinction, he who lives on the breath of others, and ardently aspires to the character of possessing superior talents and intellectual accomplishments, better fitted to deserve the character of a patriot? No; this modification of ambition is no better than the other. This man may become the hero of the hustings; may largely influence and direct the current of popular feeling; may, perhaps, by his readiness in debate, his power of sarcasm and his eloquence hold a distinguished station in parliament; but without far higher qualities than these he can neither become a patriot or a statesman. Those characters require a moral elevation above ambition. He who would serve his country as a public

man, must proceed in his steady course unseduced by favor and undismayed by fear; equally remote from the fawning arts of the courtier, and from seeking the favor of the unreflecting multitude. He must be content to meet with neglect from those who should reward his exertions, and with misrepresentation and reproach from the people whom he has endeavoured to serve. He must look with contempt on these things, and rest contented with having lived consistently with the moral dignity of his nature, and with the will of the Author of his being.

Let not these observations be understood to condemn a man's exertions to obtain a fortune or to fill a superior station in the world, provided no moral principle be sacrificed. The wise statesman may lawfully aspire to be a minister, the learned divine a bishop, the able lawyer a judge. The desire to improve our condition is common to all, and can be condemned by none: nor will anything short of the highest moral

elevation of mind enable a man to behold without some degree of dissatisfaction and uneasiness another stepping before him whose qualifications he knows to be very inferior to his own. It is not to be expected that any one will employ his faculties vigorously in the study of his profession without indulging the hope of success in it, and disappointed hope can hardly fail of being accompanied by regret. We are not forbidden to desire worldly success, but it must not be our first object if we intend to "do our duty in that state of life in which "it has pleased God to call us."

The legal and medical professions require the highest integrity in those who exercise them, to enable them to resist the temptations by which they are beset. If a man purchase any commodity of a tradesman he can generally form some opinion of the value of the thing purchased; but if he have occasion for the assistance of his physician or his apothecary, his counsel or his attorney, he must place himself entirely under their

direction, and rely altogether on their judgement and honesty. Now the interest of the medical man is to keep the patient in his hands as long as possible, and that of the lawyer to engage the client in litigation. The physician who never continues his visits to his patients longer than he conscientiously believes them to be necessary, and the lawyer who never advises his client to engage in a lawsuit but when he thinks there is a fair, reasonable hope of success, are hardly likely to enjoy the emoluments derived from professional practice to the same extent as others who are less scrupulous. The science of medicine is in a very imperfect state, and from its nature must probably continue so. The conscientious practitioner knows and acknowledges this; and this very circumstance often occasions his being put aside by the quack whose impudent pretensions are only exceeded by his ignorance.

The barrister has many strong temptations to swerve from the paths of rectitude. In his desire for business he is tempted to

make improper advances to those from whom his briefs and cases are received, but who occupy a station in the profession inferior to his own. If he seek professional promotion, he is in danger of resorting to the mean and servile arts by which it is too frequently procured. In his practice in the courts he is bound always to behave respectfully to the judges, but never to yield a jot of his independence as an advocate. In his exertions for his client he is to be careful not to exceed those limits which moral duty prescribes. The reason why advocates are allowed to appear for their clients in courts of justice is, that both parties may come before the court with equal advantages, each bringing to the contest (as nearly as may be) an equal share of talent and learning. The advocate is therefore bound by the same moral rules as ought to regulate the conduct of the suitor who conducts his cause in person. Now it is quite clear that a man would not be justified in resorting to fraud or falsehood for the purpose of suc-

ceeding in a lawsuit. The same moral rule would bind him here as in other cases. The advocate, then, as the representative of his client, is under the like obligation; and if he falsely state any matter of law or of fact for the purpose of deceiving the judge or the jury, his conduct is wholly unjustifiable, and a violation of moral principle. This is the correct moral view of the subject; yet it has been strangely asserted, that the duty of an advocate to his client is paramount to all other duties.

There is a crying evil in the practice of the bar which is condemned by all respectable persons (lawyers alone excepted); that of misrepresenting and brow-beating witnesses, which is carried by counsel to a shameful extent. A respectable person is called into the witness-box, and gives his evidence fairly. Having concluded his testimony in chief, he is then (pursuant to the ordinary and useful practice in our courts of justice) cross-examined by the counsel for the party opposed to him in whose favor

his evidence has been given. The legitimate object of this cross-examination is to elicit the truth by exposing any mistatement by the witness, and by correcting any mistake or error into which he may have fallen. In cases in which there is reason to believe that the witness has wilfully given false testimony, the opposing counsel is justified, and indeed called on, to use great severity in his cross-examination; but where the witness has given his evidence fairly, he is undoubtedly entitled to be treated with civility. What, then, is the case in practice? Is a proper distinction always made by the cross-examining counsel between a witness whose testimony is fairly given, and one who shuffles and prevaricates? Very remote indeed from this is the practice of many counsel, who treat every witness who has the misfortune to be examined by them (unless, indeed, he happen to be possessed of rank or riches) in a manner most unjust in itself, and most disagreeable and irritating to the feelings of the witness. They usually begin

by grossly misrepresenting, in the way of insinuation, something which has fallen from the witness, and proceed in a style of rudeness and coarseness disgraceful to themselves, and in no degree calculated to serve the cause of justice. It is no doubt the duty of the judges to correct this abomination, but considering how laborious are the functions of those eminent and respected individuals, and what unpleasant results are likely to arise from contests between the bench and the bar, it is not much to be wondered at that this most reprehensible practice still continues to be the disgrace of the English bar.

Piety, purity of heart and life, a serious and constant study of the Holy Scriptures, with a sincere desire to ascertain their meaning, and to make the precepts of our Saviour and his apostles the rule of life, theological learning, and unremitting attention to the physical, moral and religious wants of his parishioners ought to lead to the advancement of a clergyman in the church; but

considering that those who have ecclesiastical preferments to dispose of are not exempt from the ordinary failings of human nature, one may suspect that persons possessing many of the qualifications above enumerated may sometimes have a much larger share of the labours than of the dignities and emoluments of the clerical profession; and that some who would have graced a mitre have never risen beyond the humble condition of curates. At any rate the clergy should bear in mind that their Master has told them that his kingdom is not of this world, and should never forget that no character can be more contemptible than that of a clergyman who makes seeking after preferment the great object of his life.

Persons engaged in trade, manufactures, commerce and agriculture are not in general much exposed to the seductions of ambition; but with them the love of gain is apt to rise to an inordinate height. A taste for literature, science and art has a powerful tendency to correct this evil disposition,

and should on that account, as well as for its intrinsic excellence, be encouraged by all those who feel an interest in the well-being of those large classes of the community. Much has been done in the present century in towns by the establishment of libraries, of literary and philosophical societies and mechanics' institutes to impart knowledge and to elevate and improve the minds of the inhabitants. Persons who live in remote parts of the country, at a distance from towns, have not much opportunity of availing themselves of these advantages. It is highly desirable that residents in the country should be made acquainted with natural history, which their situation gives them good opportunities of studying. The late investigations and discoveries in chemistry which have been made in Germany and France are in the highest degree interesting to agriculturists, and should be studied and understood by all intelligent landowners and farmers.

The largest, and therefore the most im-

portant class of the community, consists of those who earn their livelihood by their bodily exertions, workmen, laborers and servants. These can do little for themselves in the way of mental improvement, or in pursuing those amusements and recreations which should lighten their labours and give them enjoyment; and marvellously little have the rest of the community done for them. Of late a better spirit has arisen, and some pains have been taken to provide grounds in the neighbourhood of large towns for the recreation of the poor, and in other ways to minister to their pleasures. These efforts deserve the warmest encouragement of all whose hearts are capable of sympathising with that class of the community which is exposed to the largest portion of the evils of life, and has the fewest of its enjoyments.

ESSAY V.

POLITICAL LIFE.

A SERIES of essays on the conduct of life would be incomplete were it not to comprise our political relations, and the duties which result from them. This subject has indeed been incidentally touched upon in the last essay ; but something more remains to be said. It is hardly necessary to state that the following observations have not the slightest reference to the matters in dispute between the political parties of the day.

Our political duties are derived from the relation in which we stand to each other as inhabitants of the same country, and enjoying the protection of the same government. The notion that government is founded on a

social compact, by which a certain number of individuals agreed to give up a part of their natural freedom and to submit to such a dominion as they chose to establish for the benefit of the whole, though supported by many eminent individuals, and among them by the venerable name of Locke, seems now to have fallen into disrepute, and to be abandoned by the most sober thinkers and correct reasoners on political subjects.

No creature comes into the world in a more weak and dependent state than man. We are said indeed to be "born free and equal." If we be born free, it is a great happiness that some tyrant is at hand ready to encroach upon our freedom, or we should none of us exist many hours. If we be born equal, one may fairly desire to be informed in what our equality consists. Not certainly in physical organization, for many are so infirm as to die very shortly after birth; while others pass through their infancy without sickness, and the vital principle in some holds out a hundred years.

If mental equality be understood, we should be glad to be made acquainted with the proofs; and, till we are better informed, must continue to think that little William Shakspeare and little Isaac Newton came into the world with mental capacities much beyond those which are ordinarily granted to man. If it be said that their intellectual superiority was the result of the peculiar circumstances of their lives, we desire to be made acquainted with those circumstances, and to be shown how they operated, as we are at present in a state of complete ignorance on the subject.

Let us, then, now consider what is the real condition of a human being in the world. At his birth he is entirely dependent on those around him for the supply of the food, clothing and shelter which are necessary for the continuance of his existence; and he is under the protection of the laws to secure him from any violence or injury. His obligation to the government and the laws therefore begins from the first moment of his

life, and it continues throughout the whole of it. But for the protection they afford him, the weak would be in constant danger of being oppressed by the strong; and even the strongest of suffering injury from the combination of numbers, who, although each individually weaker, would in the aggregate prove more powerful than himself. Our first duty then is submission to the government of our country*. There seems in general no other limit to this obligation but that which is derived from the higher duty which we owe to God. If the state should require us to do what conscience forbids, and what we sincerely believe to be inconsistent with our duty to our Maker, we are undoubtedly bound not to submit. In these cases however we should consider very seriously before we come to a conclusion. It is not unusual for pride, vanity, prejudice

* I say nothing here respecting the right of resistance to a tyrannical government, because I have on a former occasion given my sentiments on that question. See Essay on the Moral Nature of Man, p. 127.

and conceit to assume the character of conscience and to claim its privileges.

As we are bound to yield obedience to the laws of our country, so are we, in general, to support the existing administration, as far as our consciences will allow us to do so. It can never indeed be our duty to give a sanction to such measures as we believe to be injurious to our country; but it is in general wholly unjustifiable to oppose what we think beneficial because we disapprove of the general policy of those by whom it is brought forward. We say nothing here of a political party opposing the existing administration merely for the sake of turning them out of office and supplying their places. Persons capable of acting so base a part are beyond the pale of moral considerations.

Party spirit is the curse of all free countries. The necessity of union to accomplish political objects leads men to unite in parties. This is unavoidable; but the result is, unhappily, that political measures are

looked on not so much as they affect the public interests as with respect to their probable effects on the situation and objects of the party. Self-interest mixes with patriotism and often overwhelms it. From the cold and comfortless seats of opposition the eyes are directed with all the ardour of desire to the treasury bench. These however are high matters, and rather beyond the scope of these essays. We proceed then to the political duties which belong to the common walks of life.

In this country the elective franchise is enjoyed by a large proportion of the community. It is usually regarded as a valuable privilege; but it seems to be sometimes forgotten that this privilege is essentially connected with an important public duty. The elective franchise is not to be exercised capriciously or for the advancement of the interest of the voter. It is in fact a trust which a man is bound to use for the benefit of his country by giving his suffrage to him whom he really believes to be the

candidate most likely to advance the public interest in parliament. It requires a calm and steady mind to guard a voter against all the arts of seduction which are practised to procure his vote. What is called canvassing for a seat in parliament is, in the way in which it is often carried on, most degrading both to the candidate and to those whose vote he solicits. The former frequently assumes for a few days or weeks a character entirely different from his real one. He makes his approach to the voters with fawning servility; submits to any rudeness and impertinence which he may receive from them; deals largely in promises and professions, which, however, he has skill enough to express in such general and indefinite language as not to bind himself to any specific measure, and without scruple accommodates himself to the passions and prejudices of the constituency. These arts are indeed so gross that any person of common sense might be expected to see through them; yet such is the power of flattery over

the human heart, such is the delight of being treated with attention and respect by those who occupy a higher station in society than ourselves, that few are found able to resist them.

A man of gentlemanly feeling and of virtuous principles will disdain such contemptible practices. If he aspire to a seat in parliament he will explain fully and unreservedly to those whose votes he solicits, his opinions on all the leading political subjects of the day ; but he will neither forget what belongs to his station and character, nor condescend in any degree to flatter the passions and prejudices of the voters. He will approach freemen in the spirit of freedom, bearing in mind that he is not soliciting a favour, but presenting himself as a candidate for a seat in parliament, which the voters are bound in conscience to bestow on him whom they esteem best fitted, by his character and abilities, to perform the important duties which devolve on a member of the House of Commons.

A man of sense and integrity, in giving his vote, will wholly disregard professions, and look exclusively to the character of the candidate. He will be much influenced by regard to private character; and will not expect that one who violates his duties in the common relations of life, will be likely to perform those he owes to the public honestly and efficiently. He will require that the candidate whom he supports shall be in independent circumstances; suspecting that a needy political adventurer will go into the House of Commons rather to sell himself than to serve his country. He will be on his guard against the exaggerated suggestions of faction; and be slow to believe that one side of the house is all purity, and the other a mere mass of corruption. Lastly, he will repose a generous confidence in his representative; not attempting to tie him down by promises and pledges to the details of his conduct in parliament, but having ascertained his general principles and sentiments, he will leave him to act as the existing

circumstances may require, carefully watching his conduct, and prepared to renew or withdraw his trust on a future occasion as he may deem his representative worthy of it or otherwise.

Let no one consider the right to give a vote for the election of a member of the House of Commons a small matter. It depends entirely on the constituency whether our political affairs shall be directed by wisdom or by folly; whether the House of Commons shall consist of men well acquainted with the constitution of their country and competently informed of the actual state of all classes of the community; of those whose minds have been formed by instruction and reflection, and who have duly and impartially weighed and considered the vast concerns of this mighty empire; of those who are firmly resolved to do their duty fearlessly and independently, without fawning on the court or flattering the people; or of men who regard words more than things; and prefer the arts of the orator and the de-

bater to the wisdom of the statesman. A period may arrive when the time of the House of Commons shall be occupied in interminable debates, where the same arguments are repeated over and over again, instead of carrying forward the business of the country; well-turned sentences and sarcastic remarks may in time be preferred to the counsels of experience and the maxims of wisdom. Nor let us think, however well satisfied with our present condition, that the apprehension of political power being thrown into hands wholly incompetent to wield it is altogether chimerical. With what skill and talent were the affairs of the Romans conducted for a very long period! How changed the state of affairs was in Cicero's time, the following passage will inform us*:—"Nunc plerique ad honores "adipiscendos, et ad rempublicam geren- "dam nudi veniunt, atque inermes; nulla "cognitione rerum, nulla scientia ornati." Such was the state of things in his time,

* De Oratore, lib. iii. s. 33.

and the destruction of Roman liberty speedily followed. Public virtue is indeed the only security for liberty ; and when the former expires the latter will not long survive it.

ESSAY VI.

MORAL LIFE.

The character of the former essays being ethical, and the rules which have been proposed for the conduct of life having been mainly drawn from moral considerations, a separate essay on moral life may seem superfluous. The author is not quite prepared to defend the title of the present essay; but his apology for adding it is, that the subject on which he is about to enter is of great importance, and that it could not well have been brought forward in any of the preceding essays.

We have hitherto chiefly treated of action; we are now to regard the heart, from which all goodness springs. Many moral writers seem to consider morality as nothing

but a series of acts, and of habits resulting from a repetition of those acts, and which are valuable only on account of their consequences. Morality is with them a mere matter of calculation. On the selfish system*, the only end of moral conduct is our greatest happiness; while more generous views of ethics allow the good of others to be an ultimate object. The latter opinion is to be greatly preferred to the former, but is still very defective, as it lays no stress on the excellence of moral dispositions in themselves. The ancient philosophers, and particularly the Stoics, carried their notions respecting the sufficiency of virtue for our happiness to an extravagant extent; but perhaps the moderns have equally erred in keeping so much out of sight, as they have generally done, the state of mind, the dis-

* I have been blamed for having applied (in a former work) the term selfish to this system. My answers are two:—1. It has long been known by that name. 2. I see no impropriety in so designating a system which leaves no room for a regard to the good of others, except as it promotes our own happiness.

position, the internal sentiment of virtue; while they looked only to its consequences in procuring external good either to the agent or to others. It has been found convenient to use one general word to denote the sum total of all agreeable and pleasureable sensations, feelings and sentiments; and that word is happiness. The sum is made up of things without and things within us; of favourable external circumstances, and of good dispositions. Of these the latter are undoubtedly greatly more important than the former. It has been well said*, that "the whole sagacity and ingenuity of the "world may be safely challenged to point "out a case in which virtuous dispositions, "habits and feelings are not conducive in "the highest degree to the happiness of "the individual; or to maintain that he is "not the happiest whose moral sentiments "and affections are such as to prevent the "possibility of the prospect of advantage

* Mackintosh's Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, p. 177.

" through unlawful means from presenting " itself to his mind." It is this supremacy of the moral principle which very few ethical writers have sufficiently enforced. Good as well as bad men are exposed to misery; and it is mere moral fanaticism to assert that a man, however virtuous, can be happy while suffering severe bodily pain, or deprived of the comforts and necessaries of life. But it may be truly said, that all good dispositions and sentiments are in general sources of continual satisfaction; and that the delight they afford increases in proportion as the principle of virtue is more firmly fixed in the character, and more completely separated from all debasing connexion with vicious or with selfish feelings. To the really virtuous man vice and selfishness are actual misery. He who has duly cultivated the moral nature which God has given him is as incapable of injuring another, or of taking advantage of him in any of the transactions of life, as of tearing his own flesh, or of plunging his hand into boiling water. He

will behold with detestation the flattery, falsehood and fraud by which men daily endeavour to forward their interests in the world, and will prefer poverty and obscurity to wealth and honour obtained by base and contemptible conduct. Without being insensible to the advantages of wealth, he will only seek it by lawful means; although desirous of possessing the esteem and respect of others, he will condescend to no fawning subserviency, to no flattery of their persons, to no concession to their prejudices, to no forwarding of their unjustifiable pursuits, in order to obtain it. It is nothing to him that fashion countenances, and almost universal practice seems to justify what his conscience condemns. To her he looks as the supreme arbitress of his conduct, and abides by her decision, though all around condemn him. He persists through good report and through evil report in one undeviating course of rectitude; unseduced by the favour, and unawed by the frowns of the world. Others will probably enjoy more

worldly prosperity, obtain more wealth, rise to higher station, and attain greater reputation; but he is content to obey his conscience, and to walk calmly in her ways. He may address her in the language of Cicero*, "Est autem unus dies, bene et "ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immor- "talitati anteponendus. Cujus igitur po- "tius opibus utamur quam tuis? quæ et "vitæ tranquillitatem largita nobis es, et "terrorem mortis sustulisti."

The living fountain of virtue is the human heart; and our moral sentiments have begun to develop themselves long before the mind has formed the idea of what is called self-interest; that is, of that course of conduct which will secure to ourselves the largest portion of happiness, and which many moralists have strangely considered as the sole principle of virtuous conduct. To them the whole of virtue is matter of arithmetic, a mere calculation of profit and loss. Nothing is left to the free, spontaneous, generous movement

* Tusc. Disp. lib. 5.

of human sympathies and sentiments; but man is made as much as possible to resemble a calculating machine. Stripped of sentiment and imagination, he retains nothing but cold reasoning to stimulate and to guide him. It seems strange that such views should not be dismissed at once by all who have made any progress in the study of human nature. Man is as essentially a moral as a rational being. He may act in direct contradiction both to his rational and to his moral nature, just as he may lose his sight by a cataract or his taste by a fever. The moral nature develops itself more speedily than the rational. A child sympathises with his brothers and sisters long before he has learned to regulate his conduct in any degree by a regard to what will be most for his advantage in the whole of his life.

All our moral sentiments, those which we look on with approbation, are good in themselves always and at all times; but they require to be guided and restrained by reason. Compassion is ever good, but reason

must tell us when it is to be allowed to guide our conduct. It would dispose us to relieve every beggar who solicits our charity; but reason and observation inform us that in these cases the appearance of distress is often assumed to deceive the unwary, and that the indiscriminate relief of beggars tends to the encouragement of idleness and vice. We ought always to "love mercy;" but it is often a question of some difficulty to decide to what offenders it may be extended. The jury who condemn and the judge who punishes may feel pity for the offender, and a strong desire to save him from enduring the penalty of the law; but they well know that mercy to the individual would be cruelty to the public, and that unless criminals are punished there will be no security for men's property, persons or lives. A parent should never cease to love his child; but he should not allow the parental affection to withhold him from correcting him when necessary, or opposing his wishes when he has reason to think that compliance with them would be

injurious to him. In these, and a thousand other instances, the moral feelings are to be restrained, not extirpated.

Let us, then, carefully nourish those sentiments of virtue which the all-bountiful Creator has given us; they are in themselves the sources of perennial delight; they restrain us from injuring others, and dispose us to do them good by every means in our power; they elevate our minds above the low and sordid pursuits of the world, and enable us to stand aloof from the paltry contests of interest and ambition which agitate the mass of the community. These sentiments, duly cultivated, will do much to keep us steadfast in the way in which we should go; but we stand in need of other helps than these; and we will endeavour to show, in the next essay, that God has given them.

ESSAY VII.

RELIGIOUS LIFE.

We have now arrived at the last stage of our progress, and are to turn our thoughts to that which every wise man, indeed every thinking man of ordinary understanding must consider incomparably the most important of all subjects,—the relation in which we stand to our Maker, the duties which we owe to him, and the means in our power of seeking his favour and doing his holy will. Our relation to God begins with our existence, and will last through the ages of eternity. From him we derive our being, and all our powers and capacities of action and enjoyment. We are at all times in his hands, in health and in sickness, in pleasure and in pain, in life and in death. He has

given us a moral nature prompting us to good actions, and deeply sensible of the beauty and sublimity of virtue. We are formed capable of beholding with delight and admiration all that is great and good in our fellow-creatures; and we are led by reflecting on their excellences, to trace them to their source in the divine nature, and thus to advance to the contemplation of the attributes of the perfectly wise and benevolent Creator, the fountain of all good, to whom his creatures owe their virtue and their happiness. To him who seriously and deeply reflects on moral and religious subjects, the sphere of thought and feeling is continually enlarging; and he finds no object adequate to the aspirations of his soul but the Deity himself. Whatever he may behold which is great and sublime in human nature, his thoughts are carried on to something still greater, still more sublime, and he finds no resting-place but in God. The largeness and comprehension of thought which leads to the formation of conceptions of the perfections of the Deity,

and by that contemplation still more increases and exalts itself, tends to banish all narrow views which would confine the favour of God to a particular nation, church or sect. He who believes and feels that God is the creator of all, will not easily be made to think that his providence does not extend to all, or that he has not benevolent purposes towards all who, according to the light and intelligence they possess, and in obedience to conscience, make it the great purpose of their lives to obey his holy will. Nor will this firm confidence in the benevolence of God to all his creatures in any degree repress the deep heartfelt gratitude with which he will receive the volume of revealed truth; diminish his sense of the inestimable blessings of the Christian religion; or weaken the serious conviction of his soul, that it is his bounden and indispensable duty to regulate his conduct by its precepts, and by the perfect example of him who "came to seek "and to save that which was lost."

Some persons seem blessed by nature with

a happy moral constitution, a peculiar susceptibility of virtuous feelings and sentiments, and therefore to be prepared easily to form habits of virtuous conduct. They display in early childhood a sweetness of temper and a kindliness of disposition which are the germs of virtue. If they enjoy the advantage of good parents and instructors, and there be nothing particularly trying in the circumstances which surround them, such individuals may spend the whole of their lives, not indeed without some portion of human infirmity, but free from the commission of any great offence against the rules of morality, and even from any strong inclination to commit such violation. This is however the lot of but few. The mass of mankind, who neither enjoy the happy predisposition to virtue above-mentioned, nor pass through life without encountering strong temptations to transgress its rules, will find themselves in need of all the strength and support which religion can afford, to purify their morals, to extinguish

their evil desires, to strengthen them to resist the seducing blandishments of vice, to secure them against the powerful suggestions of self-interest, and to fortify their minds against the dangers and perils to which a steady adherence to virtuous principle and conduct may expose them. Could we fully realize the constant presence of the Deity as we do that of a man who exercises authority over us; could we be truly sensible that he is always with us, and is fully acquainted with all our thoughts, words and actions, temptation would be annihilated; for what is there which the world can bestow to be compared for a moment with the favor of God; or what evil can man inflict which can be put in competition with the displeasure of the Almighty? As affording, then, the strongest motives to the practice of virtue, and such as are applicable to all times and to all the circumstances of life, religion is of the highest importance.

If, however, we were to rest here, we should take a most inadequate view of the

subject. Religion is not only the great safeguard of all the virtues which we are bound to practise for the good of our fellow-creatures; but she opens to us the far more important relation in which we stand to our Maker, and inspires those sentiments of awe and love of the Deity, of confidence in him, and of resignation to his will which is the perfection of the human character. "The "perpetual exertion," says the most spiritual-minded of our moral writers, the pure and holy Hartley, "of a pleasing affection "towards a Being infinite in power, know-"ledge and goodness, and who is also our "friend and father, cannot but enhance all "our joys and alleviate all our sorrows; "the sense of his presence and protection "will restrain all actions that are exces-"sive, irregular or hurtful; support and "encourage us in all such as are of a con-"trary nature; and infuse such peace and "tranquillity of mind as will enable us to "see clearly and act uniformly. The per-"fection, therefore, of every part of our na-

" tures must depend upon the love of God " and the constant comfortable sense of his " presence.

" With respect to benevolence or the love " of our neighbour, it may be observed, that " this can never be free from partiality and " selfishness till we take our station in the " divine nature, and view everything from " thence, and in the relation which it bears " to God. If the relation to ourselves be " made the point of view, our prospect must " be narrow, and the appearance of what we " do see distorted. When we consider the " scenes of folly, vanity and misery which " must present themselves to our sight in " this point; when we are disappointed in " the happiness of our friends, or feel the " resentment of our enemies, our benevo- " lence will begin to languish and our hearts " to fail us; we shall complain of the cor- " ruption and wickedness of that world, " which we have hitherto loved with a bene- " volence merely human, and show by our " complaints that we are still deeply tinc-

" tured with the same corruption and wick-
" edness. Human benevolence, though *sweet*
" *in the mouth, is bitter in the belly*; and the
" disappointments which it meets with are
" sometimes apt to incline us to call the
" divine goodness in question. But he who
" is possessed of a full assurance of this,
" who loves God with his whole powers, as
" an inexhaustible source of love and bene-
" ficence to all his creatures, at all times
" and in all places, as much when he chas-
" tises as when he rewards, will learn thereby
" to love enemies as well as friends; the
" sinful and miserable, as well as the holy
" and happy; to rejoice and give thanks
" for every thing which he sees and feels,
" however irreconcileable to his present sug-
" gestions, and to labour as an instrument,
" under God, for the promotion of virtue
" and happiness, with real courage and con-
" stancy, *knowing that his labour shall not be*
" *in vain in the Lord.*"

But in order to form a just estimate of the unspeakable importance of religion, let

us turn our attention to the consideration of the wants and desires of human nature. A child is born in a condition as helpless as any of the inferior creation. An infant is to all appearance a mere animal, and it is only by very slow degrees that his moral and intellectual faculties are unfolded. From an imperceptible beginning and by a slow progress, he at length may reach the heights of moral and intellectual excellence, and the puny babe shines out in time a Fenelon or a Newton. Every attainment, moral and intellectual, lays a foundation for further advances; and there is no limit (so long as the faculties last) to intellectual and moral improvement. But here an inquiry of the deepest interest must suggest itself to every reflecting mind. Are the faculties of the mind, thus capable of indefinite improvement and advancement, and apparently calculated to embrace larger and nobler objects than this world can afford, to end at the hour of death? Are our lofty aspirations after a higher and happier state of being

to be disappointed? Are our intellectual powers, which seem capable of larger and juster apprehensions, to be confined to the narrow and confused knowledge of things, which is all that, in their best state, they can reach in this world? Are the moral perceptions, by which we are linked to our fellow-creatures, and which enable us to form some faint conceptions of the perfections of the Deity, to sink into annihilation when the vital spark is withdrawn from the material frame? Or shall we indeed live in another world, and still pursue a career of moral and intellectual advancement? And supposing these questions to be answered affirmatively, and the mind to attain a firm conviction of the reality of a future state, another inquiry still more important presents itself. Putting aside for the present revealed religion (for if that be admitted the whole mystery is solved), conscience is the only guide of our conduct. Its authority is admitted by all; but who shall say that he has at all times

directed himself by its precepts? Probably every man, and certainly the great mass of mankind, feel a humiliating conviction that they have in many things offended against the law of conscience. The matter, then, stands thus: God has given us conscience to be the guide of our actions, and we have neglected to obey its dictates, and in many respects rebelled against its laws. If, then, we are to live again in another world, what will be the consequence of these transgressions?

Here reason seems to leave us entirely in the dark. No subject can be found concerning which a greater difference of opinion exists among thinking men than the arguments which reason, independently of revelation, supplies in favour of the immortality of the soul. The state of opinion in this matter may perhaps be correctly summed up as follows:—To a few the arguments from reason for a future state seem clear and conclusive; a far greater number consider them as amounting only to probability; while not a few,

and among them perhaps those who have thought most profoundly on the subject, find them to produce no conviction, but rest their expectations of a future existence solely on the authority of him who has "brought life and immortality to light." Assuming, however, the first class to be right, and the arguments for a future life deduced by reason to be conclusive, there seems to be no ground for coming to a conclusion as to what the effect of our transgressions of the law of conscience will be on our future condition in the other world. All that we know is, that we are guilty creatures; and we are totally at a loss as to what degree of privation or punishment in a future state may be the result of our disobedience to the law of God in this world. The notion of retribution of some sort or other seems inseparable from our idea of a future existence. Some may consider it a positive reward and punishment in the ordinary sense of those terms, and others as the natural results of our actions; but none can

believe that in a future state the condition of him who has, as far as human infirmity will permit, lived in constant obedience to the will of God ; who has been animated by the spirit of piety towards his Maker, extended his benevolence to all his fellow-creatures, and preserved himself pure and unspotted from the pollutions of the world, will be in no better condition than he who has, through the whole course of life, given himself up to selfishness and sensuality, and acted in contempt of all laws, human and divine. Corrupted as the moral perceptions of many have become by the practice of vice, and misled as many others have been by the debasing theories of ethics which have unhappily been prevalent in the world, the inherent loveliness of virtue and the natural deformity of vice are felt and acknowledged by the general mind and feelings of human nature. The far greater part of mankind, however inconsistent in practice, feel and know that virtue is the perfection of our nature, the health and strength of the soul ;

while vice, on the other hand, is its disease and deformity. But the wisest and the best must acknowledge that in many things we are all offenders against the law of rectitude, and must long for an assurance that their offences will be forgiven. Reason has no such assurance to give; but Christianity informs us that "God so loved the world, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in him should not "perish, but have everlasting life." Here then we have rest for our souls. Christianity is a dispensation of mercy from the great Creator to his offending creatures. It promises forgiveness on repentance, and encourages the hope of future happiness by faith in Jesus Christ, and such obedience to the divine commandments as the imperfection of our nature will permit. It does not, indeed, and no rational being could expect that it should, define what degree of transgressions of the divine law will be pardoned, but it encourages us to hope for pardon of all our sins on repentance; and holds

out to us every motive for obedience. In some parts of the New Testament we find the most vivid descriptions of the future punishment of the wicked in the world to come, expressed probably in figurative language, but in such terms as are calculated to alarm our fears to the utmost. In other parts of the sacred volume we are incited to the performance of our duty by promises of reward, which, though not put in any definite form, are of such a character as is calculated to encourage the obedient Christian to perseverance in his duty amid the temptations of the world. Far more frequent than these appeals to our hopes and fears are the exhortations addressed to the nobler principles of our nature (which have no regard to self), to that reverence and love of God, and that acquiescence in all his dispensations which a just sense of his perfections is calculated to produce in minds constituted as ours are; to the feelings of sympathy and benevolence by which we are linked to our fellow-creatures; and to the

sentiments of moral purity which are bestowed upon us by the Great Being, from whom are derived both our moral nature and the sacred truths of revelation. Another virtue, humility, is repeatedly and earnestly insisted on; but seems, unhappily, if we may judge by the practice of most churches and sects, to have been omitted in the catalogue of Christian virtues by nearly universal consent.

Religion, then, being essential to the perfection of human nature, harmonizing beautifully with the affections which unite us to our fellow-creatures, and with all which is pure, exalted and noble; affording us support and comfort in adversity, securing us against the snares of prosperity, and giving us strength to resist the temptations which surround us; it might naturally be supposed that all who feel its importance would earnestly strive to improve every form and modification of it in themselves and others; and that, aware of the imperfections of their own knowledge even respecting the things

of this world, which are the constant objects of their senses; of their proneness to error on all subjects not capable of mathematical demonstration; and of the obscurity which always attends the most distinct ideas which our limited faculties enable us to form of the Infinite Being, his attributes and his providence, they would hold their own opinions with humble diffidence, and use the utmost candour respecting those of others who differ with them. But, instead of this, what has been, and what is the conduct of the churches and sects into which the Christian world is divided? Ecclesiastical history is a melancholy record of the folly, presumption and bigotry of man. Controversies on the most abstruse subjects, often beyond the reach of human faculties, and seldom having any connexion with the duties of life, have been carried on with the most bitter animosity; and persecution, in all the varieties which perverted ingenuity has been able to suggest, and with cruelties which the mind shudders to think of, has been the ac-

cursed means resorted to by weak, fallible and erring men to enforce the adoption of their opinions on others, who had the same right to judge for themselves as those by whom they have been persecuted. One church has set up the claim of infallibility; and, with perfect consistency, treated all who have presumed to differ with her as heretics, and all who have quitted her communion as schismatics. The protestant churches have been obliged to claim the right of private judgement as the ground of their separation from the church of Rome; but they have, with deplorable inconsistency, assumed powers over the consciences of men, scarcely, if at all, less extensive than those claimed by the church of Rome. In the age and country in which we live we find Catholics and Protestants, churchmen and dissenters misrepresenting and vilifying each other to the outrage of candour and Christian charity. Instead of the charity which "thinketh no "evil," a large proportion of religious professors of all sects and churches think nothing

but evil of those who are of a different church or sect. Some exclude from the pale of salvation all who do not belong to their own church; and many, who cannot proceed to this extravagant length, do not fail to impute the supposed errors of every one who does not agree with them in opinion to weakness of understanding or to depravity of heart. Puffed up with a conviction of their own orthodoxy, they look with contempt and abhorrence on all who presume to swerve in any degree from their own supposed infallible standard of Christian truth. Assuming their own interpretation of the sacred volume to be undoubtedly true, however widely it may differ from that of others who have studied the Scriptures as carefully and as impartially as themselves, they feel no scruple in assuming in favor of their own dogmas all the authority which belongs to the Scriptures; and in condemning as enemies of God and contemners of his divine word all whose opinions and interpretations of Scripture are inconsistent with their own.

To correct these extravagances of opinion and conduct, more just notions are required than are commonly entertained both of our own nature and of the Deity. Our ideas of God are necessarily formed from what we experience of human nature. A child imagines the Deity to be a man of great power living in heaven, which he supposes to be some place beyond the clouds, and exercising from time to time an unlimited authority over human affairs. This is and must be, as our minds are formed, the first conceptions of the Divinity. The process of refining and improving these conceptions goes on gradually and slowly as our intellectual and moral faculties are developed; but as they are brought out more or less defectively, and never, even in the wisest and best, reach the perfection of which they appear to be capable, and which they will probably attain in another state of existence, our ideas of God continue more or less defective; and we are apt to impute to him more or less of the imperfections of human nature. The

peculiar principles, sentiments and feelings of every individual give a tinge to the conceptions which he forms of his Maker. The kind, the benevolent, the merciful realize in a higher degree than others can possibly do the goodness and mercy of God; while those of a harsh and severe nature will not scruple to impute to him such conduct as would be justly abhorred in a human being. The human mind cannot be better employed than in clearing its conceptions of Deity from whatever imputes to him, in his treatment of his creatures, the partiality and the capricious severity which are but too often witnessed in the conduct even of those men who have made the furthest advances in wisdom and virtue. We should never forget that God is the Creator of the whole human race; of the heathen and the Mahometan as well as the Christian; that he is "no respecter of persons," and that his "tender mercies are over all his works."

But though it is incumbent on us to endeavor to the best of our power to form

exalted ideas of the Creator, we must never forget that all our conceptions are poor and inadequate, and that finite understandings can never comprehend infinity. Considering the inadequacy of our best conceptions of the Deity, we should hold our opinions with diffidence and humility, and never presume to judge and condemn those who differ with us in opinion. "Judge not, that ye be not "judged," is the command of our Saviour himself, to which every one of his disciples is bound to yield obedience.

Nor let it be supposed that the remarks which have been made tend, in the slightest degree, to lead us to undervalue the importance of the Christian religion. If what has been already stated be true, that we have no assured hope of the forgiveness of our sins, and of attaining by faith and obedience a state of everlasting felicity in the world to come but by Christianity, it is plain that its importance cannot be overrated. But it does not follow, that because we consider the Christian religion to be of inesti-

mable value, or because we think our own peculiar views of it to be of great importance, that we are to condemn those who cannot assent to the doctrines which we profess; or even those who unhappily disbelieve revealed religion altogether. We should indeed rejoice in the privilege which we believe that God has given us; our hearts should expand with gratitude and love for being admitted into the covenant of grace; but with respect to those who are without, we should remember that charity "hopeth all things;" and leave them to the uncovenanted mercies of God, who best knows how to dispose of them here and hereafter.

From the spirit of a very large portion of the writings of Christian divines, one would almost feel inclined to think that they desired to make the terms of salvation as narrow as possible, and to keep out of its pale all who could not to the fullest extent concur in the sentiments of the church or sect to which the writers belong. It seems difficult to account for this. Perhaps the

following is the most satisfactory solution. The divine authority of the Holy Scriptures being once admitted, it follows that we are obliged to submit to it as the rule of our faith; and not to allow any preconceived opinions of our own to prevent our admission of the doctrines of the revealed will of God. When then we think that we clearly understand the meaning of the Scriptures on any particular point, we are apt to infer that all other persons must arrive at the same conclusion as we have done as to the meaning of the sacred volume; or have been prevented from doing so by some unpardonable prejudice, which we impute to conceit and an undue reliance on their own understanding. Nothing therefore is more common than for polemical writers to impute the errors, real or supposed, of those whose creed is more restricted than their own to the pride of human reason. The best-balanced minds may well be on their guard against an overweening confidence in their own understandings; but those who impute a pride of

intellect to others merely because they do not receive their own dogmas, seem by that circumstance to evince pretty clearly that they are themselves guilty of that very pride which is the object of their censure; for how can we know that our interpretation of Scripture is the correct one, but by relying on the deductions of our own reason, "which "is indeed the only faculty we have where-"with to judge concerning anything, even "revelation itself*?" Nor is it an answer to this to say that we do not rely on our own judgement, but rest on the authority of the church to which we belong; for it is still an act of our own reason to decide to which of the christian churches which lay claim to be the faithful and accurate interpreters of Scripture we yield this obedience.

It is indeed obvious, that no church which does not lay claim to infallibility can, without gross inconsistency, dictate to others what doctrines they are to receive as divine truth. The established churches of every

* Bishop Butler.

country, and the sects which dissent from the establishment, have an undoubted right to lay down what rules they think proper for those who belong to their particular church or sect; nor can any one justly complain that they are not admitted if they refuse to comply with such rules; but here, as in other matters, men are not at liberty to act capriciously, or with any but just and rational views. It is the bounden duty of all to consider what the Scriptures require, and to refrain from laying unnecessary restraint on their Christian brethren. The gospel was originally preached to the poor as well as to the rich; to the ignorant as well as to the learned; and it is a mission of peace and salvation extending to and equally concerning all classes of the community. Amid the din of controversy and the anathemas of bigotry, some have been found who have stood forward as the assertors of Christian liberty, and the promoters of the peace of the Christian world. Such were Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, Locke and many other

sincere Christians and able and honest men. Few have been more concerned in the settlement of church affairs than Lord Clarendon, who took a leading part in the restoration of the episcopal church of England, of which he has always been considered one of the main pillars. The following passage in his essay against multiplying controversies*, seems to show the state to which his mind was at length brought on the subject of the Christian religion, and his conviction that nothing beyond the plainest and simplest views of it ought to be insisted on. "There are two tables of the New as well "as of the Old Testament; the first con- "tains the body and substance of Christian "religion instituted by our Saviour himself, "and explained as much as was necessary "by his apostles, and comprehended in few, "and plain and easy words: 'This is the "work of God, that ye believe on him whom "he hath sent.' (John vi. 29.) 'If thou shalt "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,

* Miscellaneous Works, fol., p. 245.

" and shalt believe in thy heart that God " hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt " be saved.' (Rom. x. 9.) He that heartily " believes the birth, passion, and resurrec- " tion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, " hath embraced the whole body of Christian " religion. And if he observes the second " table, as he believes the first, his state of " salvation can never be doubted by himself, " nor questioned by any body else."

But a far higher authority than that of the eminent individuals already referred to may be adduced to show that plain, simple and intelligible doctrines are all which ought to be required of those who profess the Christian religion. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is the only authentic record in existence of the first planting of the Christian church. Christianity was not completed till the death of our Saviour. He and his disciples therefore always professed the Jewish religion, attended the worship of the temple and the synagogues, and did not in any way separate themselves from the

great body of the Jewish nation. After the resurrection our Lord did not appear openly in the world, but showed himself several times to the Apostles, who were appointed to be the witnesses of his resurrection, and to others of his disciples.

The epistles were addressed to different Christian churches, or, to speak more correctly, to different portions of the one Christian church, and to individuals who had already embraced the Christian religion. To them therefore we cannot look to find the first promulgation of Christianity. The Revelation is of course out of the question. From the book of the Acts of the Apostles alone, then, can we derive our knowledge of the origin of the Christian church, and of the doctrines which the Apostles first taught.

It is plain from numerous passages in the gospels that the Apostles entertained most erroneous ideas respecting the mission of Jesus Christ, and expected him to establish a temporal kingdom. Nor was this error eradicated by their knowledge of his resur-

rection, as clearly appears by the question which they put to him, Acts i. 6, "Lord, "wilt thou at this time restore again the "kingdom to Israel?" It was not till the day of Pentecost that they were made fully to understand the wholly spiritual character of the religion which they were appointed to promulgate. From this period they began to teach Christianity, first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles. The book of Acts contains an account of the teaching of the Apostles and others; and the same plain and simple doctrines are uniformly taught at all times and in all places. It will be sufficient here to give the following instances.

Immediately after the Apostles and disciples had received the miraculous gifts on the day of Pentecost, we find Saint Peter addressing the Jews in the following terms, Acts ii. 22–24. "Ye men of Israel, hear "these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man "approved of God among you by mira- "cles and wonders and signs, which God

" did by him in the midst of you, as ye " yourselves also know: him, being de- " livered by the determinate counsel and " foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and " by wicked hands have crucified and slain: " whom God hath raised up, having loosed " the pains of death: because it was not " possible that he should be holden of it." And further, v. 32, 33, he says, " This Jesus " hath God raised up, whereof we are all " witnesses. Therefore being by the right " hand of God exalted, and having received " of the Father the promise of the Holy " Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye " now see and hear." And he adds, v. 36, " Therefore let all the house of Israel know " assuredly, that God hath made that same " Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord " and Christ:" v. 38, " Repent and be bap- " tized every one of you in the name of " Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, " and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy " Ghost."

In the 3rd chapter of the book of Acts we

have another discourse of St. Peter, from which the following are extracts:—v. 19. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, "that your sins may be blotted out, when "the times of refreshing shall come from "the presence of the Lord." v. 26. "Unto "you God, having raised up his son Jesus, "sent him to bless you, in turning every "one of you from his iniquities."

Acts iv. 12. Peter again, speaking of Jesus, says, "Neither is there salvation in "any other: for there is none other name "given among men, whereby we must be "saved." Again, the same Apostle says, chap. v. 30, 31, "The God of our fathers "hath raised up Jesus whom ye slew and "hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted "with his right hand to be a prince and a "saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, "and forgiveness of sins."

In the 8th chapter we have an account of the conversion by Philip the Evangelist of a eunuch "of great authority under Candace "queen of the Ethiopians." On this person

inquiring whether he might be baptized, Philip says, v. 37, "If thou believest with "all thine heart, thou mayest. And he an- "swered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ "is the Son of God." Philip then baptized him.

St. Peter says to the centurion Cornelius, x. 36–43, "The word which God sent unto "the children of Israel, preaching peace by "Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all); that word, "I say, ye know, which was published "throughout all Judea, and began from "Galilee, after the baptism which John "preached; how God anointed Jesus of "Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with "power: who went about doing good, and "healing all that were oppressed of the de- "vil; for God was with him. And we are "witnesses of all things which he did both "in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; "whom they slew and hanged on a tree: "him God raised up the third day, and "showed him openly; not to all the people, "but unto witnesses chosen before of God,

" even to us, who did eat and drink with " him after he rose from the dead. And he " commanded us to preach unto the people, " and to testify that it is he which was or- " dained of God to be the judge of quick " and dead. To him give all the prophets " witness, that through his name whosoever " believeth in him shall receive remission " of sins." After this the Holy Ghost fell upon them; and Peter, v. 48, " commanded " them to be baptized in the name of the " Lord."

In the 13th chapter, St. Paul, speaking of Jesus, says, v. 38, 39, " Be it known un- " to you therefore, men and brethren, that ' through this man is preached unto you " the forgiveness of sins: and by him all " that believe are justified from all things, " from which ye could not be justified by " the law of Moses."

In the 16th chapter the keeper of a prison, in which Paul and Silas had been confined, inquires, v. 30, 31, " Sirs, what must " I do to be saved? And they said, believe

" on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt " be saved and thy house."

In chapter 17, St. Paul preaches the gospel at Thessalonica, v. 3, " Opening and " alleging, that Christ must needs have " suffered, and risen again from the dead; " and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto " you, is Christ." And in the 30th and 31st verses, the same Apostle, preaching at Athens, says, " And the times of this igno- " rance God winked at; but now command- " eth all men everywhere to repent: because " he hath appointed a day, in the which he " will judge the world in righteousness by " that man whom he hath ordained; whereof " he hath given assurance unto all men, in " that he hath raised him from the dead."

xix. 4, 5. " Then said Paul, John verily " baptized with the baptism of repentance, " saying unto the people, that they should " believe on him which should come after " him; that is, on Christ Jesus. When they " heard this, they were baptized in the name " of the Lord Jesus."

xx. 20, 21. St. Paul, speaking to the elders of the Ephesian church, says, "I "kept back nothing that was profitable unto "you, but have showed you, and have taught "you publicly, and from house to house, "testifying both to the Jews and also to "the Greeks, repentance towards God, and "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." 28. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, "and to all the flock, over the which the "Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to "feed the church of God*, which he hath "purchased with his own blood."

Surely the accounts thus given of the first preaching of Christianity are deserving of the most serious attention of all who call themselves Christians. The views which they display of the Christian religion are clear and simple, such as no person of ordinary intelligence could find any difficulty in

* It may be proper to remark here that the true reading of this text is very doubtful. Griesbach, in his edition of the Greek Testament, adopts the reading Κυρίου, the Lord, instead of Θεοῦ, God; and gives his reasons in a very learned and able note.

understanding. If, then, the Apostles and other early teachers of Christianity preached it in this plain and simple form, what right can any individual or any church pretend to have to add other doctrines, and to insist on an adherence to them as the conditions by which men are made partakers of the benefits of Christianity? Is it not an awful thing to behold men, who do not even pretend to infallibility, adding to the essentials laid down by the Apostles and first teachers of the Christian religion?

It may, indeed, be said that in the second chapter of the book of Acts St. Luke adds the following words at the end of his account of St. Peter's address to the people, v. 40: "And with many other words did he testify "and exhort, saying, save yourselves from "this untoward generation." No objection, however, of the least weight can arise from these words against what has been already stated respecting the simplicity of the doctrine taught by the Apostle. It is impossible to imagine that the Evangelist Luke

should intend by the "many other words" mentioned in the text to refer to other important doctrines which he had not specifically mentioned. Can it for a moment be supposed that he did not enumerate the essential doctrines of the Christian religion in his history of its early promulgation; and that something beyond the doctrines specifically stated by Luke was taught by Peter as essential to Christianity? The supposition is extravagant, and may be fairly pronounced morally impossible. Indeed the context seems clearly to show that the "many "other words" were practical exhortations to "save themselves from that untoward "generation."

It seems, then, quite clear from the book of Acts that the essentials of Christianity are plain and simple; and that it is "no cun- "ning thing to be a Christian." But it by no means follows that other matters of great importance are not to be found in the Holy Scriptures; and that it is not the indispensable duty of all, according to their ability

and opportunities, to study the sacred writings, and to use their best endeavours to understand their real meaning. No man however can be justified in requiring more from another to constitute him a Christian than the plain doctrines which are laid down by the first teachers of our holy religion. All beyond this is matter of opinion. Many of these opinions have been unwarrantably set forth as essentials of the Christian religion; the opprobrious name of heretic has been applied to those who disbelieve them; and they have sometimes been denied the name of Christians. All this is however comparatively of small importance; but the spirit of persecution has been aroused in support of the dogmas of fallible men. Confiscation of property, imprisonment, tortures and death in the most frightful forms have been the portion of many, whose only fault was following the dictates of conscience and professing openly what they sincerely believed to be Christian truth. To err in the faith has often been treated by

those who have still dared to call themselves Christians as worse than the commission of the greatest sins. Instead of obeying the Christian precept of judging of the tree from the fruit, a maxim exactly the reverse has been adopted, and even the apparently virtuous actions of heretics have been deemed so contaminated by their want of faith as to be in fact of the nature of sin.

The disputes which have arisen among Christians respecting forms of church-government and discipline have been pursued with equal animosity, and have often called forth some of the worst passions of the human heart in their most intense and inveterate form. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Congregationalists have alike swerved from the principles of religious liberty on which protestantism is founded, and by which alone it can be defended. The fierce partizans on all sides have kept down any tendency to doubt of the correctness of their own opinions by feelings of contempt and abhorrence of their opponents. The church of Rome

justly considers these disputes among protestants as her gain; and, regarding all the combatants as alike heretics and schismatics, looks forward with delightful anticipation to the period when all the Christian world shall again be united under the supreme pastor and head of the church.

Why are these things brought forward in this place? It is because they are directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity; and till better feelings and principles shall be called into action among Christians, their holy religion can never effect to its full extent its great object of reforming the world and preparing the human race for a state of happiness in the world to come.

The Christian religion was promulgated more than eighteen centuries ago; and it has long been and still is the professed religion of the most intellectual and the best-instructed portion of the human race. During all the long period which has elapsed since its promulgation, and in all the variety of forms which it has assumed, it has never

produced that improvement in the characters of men, that state of virtue and happiness in the world which its precepts are admirably fitted to effect. We have the authority of the Saviour himself for saying that the love of God and the love of man are the first and second commandments of the Christian religion. Personal purity, temperance and humility are also repeatedly and strongly commanded and enforced in the sacred writings. Were piety and benevolence, purity, temperance and humility to become universal in the world, a complete revolution in human affairs would be the consequence. The far greater part of the pains, mental and bodily, which the human race endures arises from violations of moral duty. The principle of piety is the safeguard of all the virtues, and (as will be endeavoured to be shown hereafter) the source of the greatest happiness of which human nature is capable. Amid the various arguments which may be adduced to prove the truth of Christianity, sufficient attention seems not to have been

paid to that which is derived from its absolute completeness as a system of practical religion and virtue. An attentive and reflecting reader of the New Testament cannot fail to perceive that it lays down principles and precepts applicable to every possible situation and circumstance of human life. Interpreting the sacred volume with a due consideration of the figurative style which has been always in use among the eastern nations, and therefore refraining from too literal an interpretation of its contents, we may easily perceive that every one of its precepts tends to advance and to perfect the virtue and the happiness of man. Such, however, has been the unhappy perversion of the Christian religion both in principle and practice by those who have called themselves the disciples of Christ, as to have greatly weakened, and often entirely prevented the beneficent effects which its doctrines are calculated to produce. Instead of such heart-cheering representations of the goodness and mercy of the Deity as the

study of his works suggest, and numberless passages both of the Old and the New Testament confirm; views of the character of God have been advanced which fill the soul with horror, and seem wholly irreconcileable with any idea which we can form of justice, mercy or goodness. The Deity has been too often represented as a God, not of the universe, but of a nation, a church, a sect, or of a favoured few selected from the mass of his creatures. Particular instances need not be adduced; for no one tolerably well acquainted with the history of opinions in the Christian church can fail to be abundantly provided with them. Still, amid all the corruptions by which its influence has been diminished, Christianity has conferred invaluable blessings on the world. It is in those countries where the Christian religion is established, and more especially where the right of private judgement in religion is most fully recognised, that intellect has made its furthest advances, and virtue achieved its greatest tri-

umphs. All however which has yet been effected may be justly regarded as a foretaste of the happy results which will inevitably follow when the principles of Christianity shall exert a supreme influence on the understandings and the hearts of men.

It would by no means give an accurate idea of the benefits conferred upon the world by the Christian religion to confine our attention to the character and conduct of those who are deeply in earnest in their profession of it, and who sincerely and fervently endeavour to regulate their conduct in strict obedience to its injunctions. Christianity has introduced feelings and habits which largely influence many who do not deeply feel its divine character, and not a few of those who doubt or deny its authority. Feelings excited and habits formed in early life do not easily quit their hold on human character. The sceptic or the unbeliever is often indebted to the early instructions of a pious mother to an extent of which he is perhaps himself little aware. Unbelievers, it must

also be remembered, are the associates of Christians in the ordinary intercourse of the world, and cannot therefore fail of being to some extent influenced by their example. Natural religion too has assumed quite a different form since the promulgation of Christianity from any which it had previously attained. This is well known to every one who has even a superficial acquaintance with the speculations of the ancient philosophers on the subject of religion. Christianity opened the road in which natural religion is now pursued by distinctly laying down the doctrine of the unity of God, and of his superintending providence. Nor can it be denied that natural religion has *now* much to offer calculated to convince the understanding and deeply and beneficially to interest the heart. But it wholly fails in affording that full proof of a future state, and of the efficacy of repentance and faith, which can be derived from Christianity alone. It is however incumbent on Christians to treat unbelievers on all occasions with cour-

tesy and kindness, and to refrain from the common practice of imputing their unbelief to bad motives. The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion appear to most of those who have studied them to amount to a moral demonstration; and they feel fully convinced that no satisfactory account of its origin can be given which does not rest on divine authority. But we are not justified in condemning another. The human mind is beset by prejudices, and the wisest and the most candid are not wholly free from their influence. It is not for any man to decide whether another has rejected the Christian religion from bad motives or from prejudice, which, in his peculiar circumstances, was irresistible. To his own master the unbeliever stands or falls. It may be the duty of the Christian to endeavour to convince and persuade the unbeliever; but he is wholly unjustifiable if he vilify his character, or impute bad motives to him from the mere circumstance of his unbelief.

Happy to escape from any further allusion

to the controversies which have arisen among Christians, to the bad passions which they have called forth, and to the oppression and cruelties which they have occasioned, let us now direct our attention to those duties which are enjoined by our holy religion, and which ought to regulate the daily conduct of all who admit its divine authority. We have now arrived at a station where there is no room for division, and nothing to excite our evil passions. The duties of a Christian life are alike binding on all, of whatever church or sect; all are creatures of the same God; all hope to partake of the same redemption.

It has been attempted, in the foregoing essays, to point out the course of conduct which we ought to pursue in our families, in our social intercourse, in studious, in active and in political life. To this have been added some observations on the cultivation and improvement of our moral principles and sentiments. It remains now to consider those virtues which are of a personal nature, and to conclude the whole

by a reference to the duties of which the Deity is the immediate object, and of our peculiar obligations as Christians. It is evident that these subjects furnish materials for a large work. All that will be attempted here is to give a general view of the whole.

No virtue is more frequently or more strongly insisted on in the New Testament than humility; and in proportion as we make ourselves acquainted with human nature shall we feel its importance. In the early period of life all are liable greatly to overrate their own abilities and acquirements; and although circumstances compel us to make comparisons between ourselves and others, and often oblige us, however unwillingly, to acknowledge their superiority, yet the greater part of mankind continue through life to estimate themselves far beyond their deserts.

The nature of humility is however often greatly misunderstood and misrepresented. It requires us to form a just sense of our sins, follies, errors and demerits of all sorts,

but it requires no more. Every one is justified, and even called upon, to make an accurate estimate of his own character in all particulars. Without this he can never adequately perform the duties of his station. Every reflecting man must of necessity be led to compare himself with others, particularly with those with whom he is in the habit of free and familiar communication, and he will not be often at a loss to discover in what respects he is superior and in what inferior to them. This knowledge is of the greatest importance in directing his own course of conduct. Pride, vanity and conceit no doubt dispose the generality of mankind greatly to overrate themselves; but it can hardly be doubted that instances are to be found of persons who do not sufficiently estimate their own talents and acquirements, and whose usefulness is thereby diminished.

The state of things in this age and country is very unfavorable to the virtue of humility. The extent to which luxury and self-indulgence are carried, and the compe-

tition of vanity which has become nearly universal, have increased our artificial wants far beyond what nature and reason require, and have excited so general and so ardent a desire to possess wealth and distinction as to make life for the most part a continual struggle, in which the display in every way in our power of the talents and knowledge which we possess forms an essential part. Nothing can be more contrary to true humility than this perpetual glorifying of ourselves. Even those who are least disposed to an over-estimate of themselves, and are most deeply conscious of their own deficiencies, can hardly escape being forced into this contest of display. The quiet and retiring habits which are most congenial to a really humble man are not a little unfavorable to success in life in any line. It has already been said, that none of the virtues are likely to lead to great success in the world; and humility is perhaps more injurious to a man's interest than any other virtue.

Though our connexions with the human

race give occasion for the exercise of humility, it is our relation to our Creator which should call it forth in its widest extent. Compared with Him we are nothing; and our humiliation in his sight cannot be too deep and lasting. But humility founded on religious considerations will take a different form according to the condition of the mind, which will depend on the moral and religious discipline to which it has been subjected. In the early period of life all, and through its whole duration by far the greater part of those who are under the influence of religious principles, consider themselves as independent beings; deserving praise for their virtues and blame for their vices; and, considered in respect to our fellow-creatures, these views are just. But they fall far short of a correct idea of the relation in which we stand to our Maker. In proportion as our reason is strengthened, as our moral sentiments are improved, and as we study the sacred volume, we relinquish by degrees our notions of independent existence,

and perceive at length that we are nothing of our ourselves, but are merely instruments in the hands of the Deity for effecting his wise and benevolent purposes. At first, and for a long time, we make a wide distinction between what we consider our own virtues, namely, such as are derived from natural good dispositions, and those which have their source in the instructions contained in the sacred Scriptures and in the spiritual influences of religion. The former we consider as properly our own, the latter as the gift of God. Those, however, who think deeply on religion will find this distinction to vanish in time, and will be enabled by degrees to realize the indisputable fact, that all we have and all we are is God's; that we owe our reason and our moral nature as much to him as the doctrines and spiritual privileges of the Gospel. In this state and frame of mind God is indeed all in all. We see and recognise him alike in our reason, our moral nature, and the sacred truths of revealed religion. Whatever there may be of excellence in our cha-

racters we acknowledge to be his gift, and trace to him as its original source. In ourselves we behold nothing but the recipients of his bounty.

That every kind and degree of intemperance and impurity is forbidden in the Scriptures, and is directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity, can be doubted by none who have any serious impressions of religion and a competent acquaintance with the contents of the sacred volume. It behoves every serious Christian, then, deeply to consider how much there is in the prevailing systems of education, and in the ordinary habits and intercourse of society, which tends to promote intemperance and licentiousness. These subjects can only be referred to very generally here. They afford topics on which many volumes might be written.

The proper business of education is to prepare the youthful mind for fulfilling the duties and enjoying the innocent pleasures of life. Anything which does not tend to these ends is extraneous and useless.

The improvement of the intellectual faculties, the communication of knowledge, the development and right direction of the moral sentiments, instruction in the great truths of revelation, and the love of virtue and religion, are the great objects of a just and sound system of education. Is there any one of the existing modes of instruction in which these ends are pursued by the best means, and each in a degree proportioned to its relative importance? In the opinion of many who have thought deeply and anxiously on the subject, this question must be answered in the negative. A work on education, fully and adequately discussing it under the foregoing heads, is the great *desideratum* of our literature; but it would require the comprehensive genius of Bacon, and far more moral excellence than adorned his character, to accomplish such a work. One so gifted we must not expect to see; but we have many writers capable of conferring a great benefit on society, if they could be induced to turn

their attention to this most important subject. It is obviously the duty of Christian parents and instructors to prevent their children and scholars from reading all books of an immoral tendency. This is by no means so easy a matter as those who have not seriously considered the subject may suppose. In much even of the best of our literature, and particularly in works of fiction, passages are to be found of a decidedly immoral tendency. It was justly said of Thomson, that his writings contained

> "Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
> One line which dying he could wish to blot."

The same praise may be justly given to Mr. Wordsworth; and perhaps a few (it is to be feared but few) names among the authors of works of imagination might be added to the list.

The impurities which are to be found in connexion with dramatic representations and the arts of painting and sculpture have already been adverted to; and to these may

be added the licentiousness which sometimes disgraces conversation; though in this last particular we are certainly much less censurable than our forefathers. Its trifling character and its censoriousness are the prominent faults of modern conversation.

All which has hitherto been said is but introductory to that which is the ultimate object of our being, the most pure and exalted felicity of which we are capable, the love and adoration of the infinite perfections of the Deity. Here there can be no excess. We may exalt and enlarge our ideas to the utmost, and we shall still feel that finite minds can only comprehend feebly and imperfectly some small part of that which is infinite. The intellectual and the moral faculties are by far the most important parts of human nature; and they point alike to the Deity. We delight in the exercise of the intellect, and look with admiration on the productions of genius; but our thoughts extend far beyond this, and our minds are carried on to the contemplation of the infinite

intelligence of God. All our conceptions, indeed, on this subject are inadequate and confused; but the more we study his works and his word, the more deeply do we feel impressed with a sense of his perfections, and the further removed from the conflicts of interest and ambition and the unhallowed passions of the world.

But surrounded as we are on all sides by evil examples, and liable as our passions (which are given to us for a good purpose) are to run to excess and take an ill direction, our reason to err, and our conscience to be misled, it requires the most constant and vigilant attention and the most determined resolution, strengthened by all the spiritual aids which God has given us, to enable us to pursue a steady and undeviating course in the paths of duty.

It seems reasonable to expect that the teachers of religion would present the brightest examples of its influence on the character; and perhaps they do so. They are, however, exposed to peculiar temptations of am-

bition and interest, which often exercise a most unhappy influence directly on their own characters, and indirectly on those who look up to them for instruction and example. Ambition is the besetting sin of almost all who fill the higher stations in society; and its effects are never more deplorable than when it is the actuating principle of ecclesiastics. Tyrannical power in the hands of laymen is supported and extended by the fear of the temporal evils which will probably be the consequence of resistance. The ecclesiastic adds to these the terrors which arise from an apprehension of the punishments which will await the offender in another world. Armed with this instrument, the power of the church of Rome in the middle ages became irresistible. All civil authority sank before it, and the feet of popes trampled on the necks of kings. The Reformation, (which, be it remembered, was a reform as well within the church of Rome as without) and the general advance and diffusion of knowledge which have resulted

from the invention of printing, seem to have made it impossible that such a state of things should ever exist again in the world; but in all countries where the clergy fill exalted stations in society, we may be quite certain that some will be found disposed to pervert religion to the purposes of ambition. In this country the Archbishop of Canterbury enjoys the highest rank after the royal family; and the Lord Chancellor alone stands between him and the Archbishop of York. The bishops are lords of parliament, and sit and vote in the House of Lords. With such prizes in view it is not to be expected that the higher clergy should be free from ambition. There are also deaneries, canonries, &c., which are objects of desire to the clergy. The great majority, however, of the clerical order are happily not in the way of being much corrupted by worldly views. Thousands of the parochial clergy spend their lives in the unostentatious performance of the arduous duties of their stations, far removed from the snares

of ambition; and each, in his circle, the centre from whence the beams of knowledge, refinement and religion irradiate his parishioners.

The situation of dissenting teachers does not usually place the incitements of ambition in their way, but they have temptations of their own of the most forcible character. A dissenting minister is in general chiefly supported by the voluntary contributions of his congregation, and in many cases enjoys no other means of providing for himself and his family. How difficult it must be for a man so circumstanced to pursue an independent course, without being influenced by an undue desire to conciliate the favour of those who can at any time deprive him of his livelihood, may be easily understood.

It is, then, far from easy even for men whose profession leads them to the daily study of religion, and who are constantly employed in administering to the wants spiritual and temporal of others, to keep

themselves "unspotted from the world:" how much more difficult must it be for those whose general avocations are not immediately connected with religion! To counteract the corrupting influences of the world, we must avail ourselves of every means of improvement which our holy religion affords.

The first step in religion is a deep sense of our own sinfulness. If we offend or injure a fellow-creature, we may have the means in our power of making him an adequate compensation; but nothing of this kind can take place in respect to the Deity. We are the work of his hands, and are bound to yield to him the obedience of our whole lives. All we have is from his bounty, and we can never deserve any reward from him. Even were our obedience perfect, we should still be unprofitable servants. We must then feel that if we offend in any point we are justly amenable to punishment, and can entertain no hope of pardon but from the mercy of God. It is Christianity alone

which gives rest to our souls by revealing to us that "God so loved the world, that he "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever "believeth in him should not perish, but "have everlasting life." Cheered by this unspeakably important truth, our hearts should overflow with gratitude and love, first to Almighty God, the Author of our salvation, and secondly, to Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. Let us then consider the means in our power of improving and strengthening the pious affections of the soul.

Of the importance of prayer no real Christian can doubt. The objections to it, though plausible, may be easily answered, even on the principles of natural religion; and the Christian Scriptures abound with exhortations to pray. Our Saviour himself has given us a form of prayer, which may be properly considered as a summary of our principal wants, temporal and spiritual. "Pray without ceasing," is the direction of the Apostle Paul, which implies

the cultivation of a devotional spirit, and being frequently engaged in the act of prayer*.

Prayer may be considered under three heads; private prayer, family prayer, and public prayer. A few observations will be introduced under each of them. It may, however, be observed, that it seems desirable that all prayers should be short. None in the Holy Scriptures are of any considerable length. Our Lord's prayer is very short; and the preceding commands, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, "as the heathen do," and, "After this "manner, therefore, pray ye," seem to show that it is intended to direct us as well to the length as to the matter of our prayers. It is entirely consonant to reason that prayers should be short. Our addresses to the Deity ought to be always made with the most fixed attention, and with the sense

* Barrow's sermons on this text are well deserving the serious attention of every one who would acquire and improve a devotional character.

of his presence as fully realized as the infirmity of our nature will permit. It is most injurious to the spirit of piety to address God with the lips, while the mind is wandering on some other subject; and the constant habit of doing so can scarcely fail to weaken the devotional feelings, and to diminish our reverence for the great Author of our being. It is far better not to pray at all, than merely to utter the words of piety while the mind is engaged with other thoughts and the heart is unaffected. Our conception of the presence of the Deity is so overwhelming, and our attempts adequately to express our devotional feelings towards him are so exhausting, that human nature cannot for any considerable length of time be exalted to such a pitch of elevated feeling as direct addresses to the Deity require. In public prayer, indeed, the sympathies and the concurrence of our fellow-worshipers may add something to our power of keeping alive the devotional feelings; but even with this assistance the proper tone of the mind

can never be kept up for any considerable time.

Private prayer should be the declaration of our individual wants and desires; and of course will be often best expressed by the language suggested by the occasion; but the far greater part of what we ought to pray for, whether of a secular or of a religious character, is such as is of constant occurrence, and therefore may be properly, and will indeed be best set forth by premeditated forms of prayer. The minds, too, of even really pious persons will be often languid and incapable of producing extemporally just and adequate expressions of devotion. On all such occasions, prayers composed either by themselves or others will be highly useful. In using premeditated prayer, too, we enjoy all the benefit arising from the previous reflection which has been engaged in selecting the most proper subjects, and expressing them in the most appropriate language. Forms of private prayer must ever, therefore, be considered of great importance.

If we would keep alive a deep and heart-influencing sense of religion in the soul, we must use regularly appropriated seasons for private prayer. "There cannot," says one whose heart was deeply imbued with the spirit of devotion*, "be a more fatal de-"lusion than to suppose that religion is "nothing but a divine philosophy in the "soul, and that the theopathetic affections "may exist and flourish there, though they "be not cultivated by devout exercises and "expressions."

"A regularity as to the times of private "devotion," says the same writer, "helps to "keep persons steady in a religious course, "and to call them off again and again from "pursuing and setting their hearts upon the "vanities of the world. And we may affirm "in particular, that the morning and evening "sacrifice of private prayer and praise ought "never to be dispensed with, in ordinary "cases, not even by persons far advanced "in the ways of piety. It seems also very

* Hartley.

" consonant to the true spirit of devotion " to have set hours of prayer in the course " of the day, as memorials and means of " begetting this spirit, which, however, can- " not be observed by the bulk of the world " with exactness. Lastly, it will be of great " use to accustom ourselves to certain ejacu- " lations upon the various particular occa- " sions that occur in the daily course of each " person's business and profession."

The following are the observations of this profound thinker and most pious writer on the subject-matter of private prayer and on public and family prayer:—" The matter of " our prayers must be different according " to the state we are in; for in prayer " we ought always to lay our real case, " whatever it be, before God. Confession " of sins and petition for graces are the " most useful and requisite for young peni- " tents, and must always have a considerable " share in those who are further advanced. " But when the heart overflows with joy " and gratitude to God, and tender love to

" others, which is more frequently the case
" with those who have *kept* their *first love*
" for some time, it is easy to see that praise
" and intercession must be most natural and
" suitable. Temporal wants ought not to
" be forgotten. We are to acknowledge
" God in everything; consider him as our
" father and only friend upon all occasions;
" place no confidence in our own wisdom or
" strength, or in the course of nature; have
" moderate desires, and be ready to give up
" even these. Now prayer, with express
" acts of resignation in respect of external
" things, has a tendency to beget in us such
" dispositions. However, I do not extend
" this to such persons as are resigned to
" God in all things, temporal and spiritual,
" for themselves as well as others, who, de-
" siring nothing but that the will of God be
" done, see also that it is done, acquiesce
" and rejoice in it.

" Prayer must always be accompanied by
" faith, *i. e.* we must not only look up to
" God as our sole refuge, but as an effectual

" one. He that believes the existence and " attributes of God really and practically, " will have this entire confidence, so as to " be assured that the thing desired of God " will be granted, either precisely as desired, " or in some way more suitable to his cir- " cumstances; an act of resignation being " here joined to one of faith. How far our " Saviour's directions concerning faith in " prayer are an encouragement and com- " mand to expect the precise thing desired, " is very doubtful to me. However, we " may certainly learn from his example, that " resignation is a necessary requisite in " prayer; that we ought always to say, *ne-* " *vertheless, not my will but thine be done.*

" Public prayer is a necessary duty as " well as private. By this we publicly pro- " fess our obedience to God through Christ; " we excite and are excited by others to " fervency of devotion and to Christian be- " nevolence; and we have a claim to the " promise of Christ to those who are assem- " bled together in his name. The Christian

" religion has been kept alive, as one may " say, during the great corruption and apo- " stasy, by the public worship of God in " churches; and it is probable that reli- " gious assemblies will be much more fre- " quent than they now are, whenever it " shall please God to put it into the hearts " of Christians to proceed to the conversion " of all nations. We ought, therefore, to " prepare ourselves for, and hasten unto, " this glorious time, as much as possible, by " joining together in prayers for this pur- " pose; and *so much the more, as we see the* " *day approaching.*

" Family prayer, which is something be- " tween the public prayers of each church, " and the private ones of each individual, " must be necessary, since these are. The " same reasons are easily applied."

Little need be added to these admirable passages. It is not so easy a matter to pray as there is reason to fear it is commonly thought to be. To *say* one's prayers, indeed, to repeat words in the form of a direct

address to God is not difficult; but this alone does not deserve the name of prayer. Real prayer requires the mind to be abstracted from external influences, and the heart to be warmed by devotional feelings. This is the state to which we ought to strive to the utmost, by reading the devotional parts of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of pious men, and by serious meditation, to bring our minds, when we engage in the solemn service of kneeling before the throne of grace in prayer.

Many persons of intellectual character, and largely acquainted with literature and science, either abstain altogether from attendance on public worship, or very rarely attend it. It would be uncandid to conclude that the characters of these individuals are entirely wanting in religious principles and feelings; and it is well known that Milton (whom no one can doubt to have been profoundly religious both in principle and feeling) discontinued, in the latter part of his life, his attendance on public worship. Nor

is his a solitary instance. To such persons the following reflections are addressed. The expressed sentiments of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the following passage, must be conclusive to all who acknowledge the authority of that book*: "Let us "consider one another to provoke unto love "and to good works: not forsaking the as- "sembling of ourselves together, as the man- "ner of some is; but exhorting one another: "and so much the more, as we see the day "approaching." It can hardly be denied by any one who thinks seriously on the subject, that the assembling of Christians together every Sunday in public worship will naturally excite some degree of mutual regard for one another. A man must have a heart un-

* It is well known that in early times many disputed the authority of this Epistle, and that we have no certain knowledge who was its author. It was, however, received by the great body of Christians into the canon. Lardner has brought together, with his usual fulness and fairness, the arguments respecting its author. Those in favor of its having been written by the Apostle Paul seem greatly to preponderate.

usually cold and callous who feels no interest in the well-being of those who are his constant fellow-worshipers in the house of prayer. Neither can it be denied that our sympathy with those around us must tend to excite and to increase our devotional feelings. But even supposing it could be proved that no benefit would be derived by the class of individuals in question from attendance on public worship, they ought still to recollect, that, although it would be a great error to suppose that the influence of any individual in the world bears an exact proportion to his intellect and knowledge, yet it is most certain that the educated and intellectual classes exercise a most extensive influence in the way of example on the rest of the community. The following observations of Paley are deserving of the most serious consideration:—"If the worship of God be a "duty of religion, public worship is a neces- "sary institution; forasmuch as, without it, "the greater part of mankind would exercise "no religious worship at all.

"These assemblies afford also, at the same "time, opportunities for moral and religious "instruction to those who would otherwise "receive none. In all Protestant and in most "Christian countries, the elements of natu- "ral religion and the important parts of the "Evangelic history are familiar to the lowest "of the people. This competent degree and "general diffusion of religious knowledge "amongst all orders of Christians, which "will appear a great thing when compared "with the intellectual condition of barbarous "nations, can fairly, I think, be ascribed to "no other cause than the regular establish- "ment of assemblies for divine worship; "in which, either portions of Scripture are "recited and explained, or the principles "of Christian erudition are so constantly "taught in sermons, incorporated with "liturgies, or expressed in extemporary "prayer, as to imprint, by the very repeti- "tion, some knowledge and memory of these "subjects upon the most unqualified and "careless hearer.

"The two reasons above stated bind all "the members of the community to uphold "public worship by their presence and ex- "ample, although the helps and opportuni- "ties which it affords may not be necessary "to the devotion and edification of all, and "to some may be useless; for it is easily "foreseen, how soon religious assemblies "would fall into contempt and disuse, if that "class of mankind who are above seeking "instruction in them, and want not that "their own piety should be assisted by "either forms or society in devotion, were "to withdraw their attendance; especially "when it is considered, that all who please "are at liberty to rank themselves of this "class."

The importance of family prayer is pretty generally admitted, and it is much more practised now than it was in the earlier period of the present century. "The peculiar "use," says Paley, "of family piety consists "in its influence upon servants and the "younger members of a family, who want

" sufficient seriousness and reflection to re-
" tire of their own accord to the exercise of
" private devotion, and whose attention you
" cannot easily command in public worship.
" The example also and authority of a father
" and master act in this way with the great-
" est force ; for his private prayers, to which
" his children and servants are not wit-
" nesses, act not at all upon them as ex-
" amples ; and his attendance upon public
" worship they will readily impute to fashion,
" to a care to preserve appearances, to a con-
" cern for decency of character, and to many
" motives besides a sense of duty to God."
It seems, indeed, strange that any one can doubt that the daily assembling of a family for the purpose of offering up their united prayers to the great Being to whom they owe their existence and all their enjoyment, can fail to produce impressions more or less favorable to devotional feeling and to the practice of the duties of religion. How far the reading of the Scriptures, or any other mode of religious instruction ought to be

connected with family prayer, must be left to each person to judge for himself. One caution seems necessary. The prayers and religious instruction of a family should be short. We should endeavor (if possible) to make servants look to joining in family prayer as a privilege; and should carefully avoid continuing them engaged in it so long as to make them consider it, rightly or wrongly, as an encroachment on the time which is required for their work.

In Catholic countries people have the privilege of resorting to the churches whenever they please, as they are open during the greater part of the day; and, besides the very frequent public services, individuals have the opportunity of offering their private devotions at any time in places consecrated exclusively to the purposes of religion. It is to be regretted that protestants have adopted a different course. Our noble cathedrals, the glory of the middle ages, and by far the finest specimens of architecture which we possess, are generally locked up,

except in service time, and we have no means of visiting them without paying for it; and are often hurried through them by an impatient verger. There are, however, at present exceptions; and the public are admitted to at least part of some of our finest cathedrals during a large portion of the day without being subject to the payment of any fee. Surely this should be universally the case. The offering up of private prayers in churches, would, perhaps, in the present state of our habits and feelings, be deemed ostentatious. By degrees however it would probably come into practice if the churches were always open; and it may be safely asserted that every one possessed of any degree of religious feeling, who takes a solitary walk in one of our Gothic cathedrals, erected by the piety of our forefathers in that grand and majestic style which belongs exclusively to ecclesiastical architecture, and devoted for ages to religious services, must be influenced by the genius and associations of the place, and feel his heart warmed and

expanded by devotion ; nor will he easily refrain from giving expression, at least mentally, to feelings of praise and adoration of the great Creator.

Prayer may be considered in two lights. As the expression of our love, our gratitude, our reverence, our awe, our profoundest adoration of the divine perfections, it is a most important and an essential Christian duty. But its importance extends far beyond this, as it is one of the most powerful means of bringing our minds to that entire conformity and perfect resignation to the will of God, and that constant reliance on his providence, which is the perfection of our nature. "When men," says Hartley, "have entered sufficiently into the ways of "piety, God appears more and more to "them in the whole course and tenor of their "lives ; and by uniting himself with all their "sensations and intellectual perceptions, "overpowers all the pains, augments and "attracts to himself all the pleasures. Every "thing sweet, beautiful, or glorious, brings

" in the idea of God, mixes with it, and " vanishes into it. For all is God's; he is " the only cause and reality; and the exist- " ence of everything else is only the effect, " pledge, and proof, of his existence and " glory. Let the mind be once duly sea- " soned with this truth, and its practical " applications, and every the most indiffer- " ent thing will become food for religious " meditation, a book of devotion, and a " psalm of praise."

" There is nothing," says a most pious writer*, " wise, or holy, or just, but the great " will of God. This is as strictly true in " the most rigid sense, as to say, that no- " thing is infinite and eternal but God. No " being, therefore, whether in heaven or on " earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so " far as they conform to this will of God. " It is conformity to this will that gives " virtue and perfection to the highest ser- " vices of angels in heaven; and it is con- " formity to the same will that makes the

* Law's Serious Call, chap. 22.

" ordinary actions of men on earth become " an acceptable service unto God. Resig- " nation to the divine will signifies a cheer- " ful approbation and thankful acceptance " of everything that comes from God. It " is not enough patiently to submit, but we " must thankfully receive, and fully approve " of everything that by order of God's pro- " vidence happens to us."

It is to attain this conformity to the will of God, so that our wills may be completely identified with and absorbed in his, that our most strenuous endeavours should be directed. " The love and contemplation," says Hartley, " of his perfection and happi- " ness will transform us into his likeness, " into that image of him in which we were " first made; will make us *partakers of the* " *divine nature**, and consequently of the " perfection and happiness of it. Our wills " may be thus united to his will, and there- " fore rendered free from disappointment; " we shall, by degrees, see everything as

* 2 Peter, i. 4.

" God sees it, *i. e.* everything that he has " made to be good, to be an object of plea- " sure."

To arrive at this complete conformity and entire resignation to the will of God, requires all the aids which prayer, reading and meditation, made effectual by the divine blessing, can afford us. It does not require that we should reject the innocent pleasures of life; and it neither requires, nor in general allows us to quit our respective stations in the world, and, for the purpose of keeping ourselves out of the way of temptation, and devoting our time exclusively to prayer, reading, and meditation on religion, to withdraw from situations of usefulness to our fellow-men. When indeed health has decayed, the spirits are broken by calamities which have pressed too severely for the mind to bear up against them, or the intellect is impaired by age and infirmity, a retirement from the world may be allowed; and nothing then remains but submission to the divine will, and a humble hope of

future happiness in the state to which we are all hastening. But as long as health and strength, and the power of doing good to others remain, no man can be justified in relinquishing the active duties of life.

Let us not, however, think, because we are not required by our religion to retire from the active business, or to relinquish the innocent enjoyments of life, that the state of christian warfare in which we must be engaged so long as we exist in the world, and are exposed to its temptations, does not require the most constant vigilance, the most strenuous exertions, and the daily exercise of self-denial. If we would serve God with our whole heart, we must renounce every kind and degree of vicious indulgence. Sensuality, impurity, intemperance, censoriousness, vanity, pride, ambition, as well as the black passions, hatred, revenge and cruelty, must all be renounced. If we allow ourselves in the indulgence of any one of these, or of any other known sin, we are altogether unworthy of the name of Christians. We must

strive daily and with all our might against these things ; and when, through the infirmity of our nature, the strength of our passions, or the influence of evil example, we are led to offend, we must immediately retrace our steps by a deep and heart-felt repentance. We should hold no compromise with moral evil in any shape ; but should pursue our course, with full purpose of soul, with humble supplications to the throne of grace, and with entire reliance on the divine assistance, towards that state of perfect holiness to which Christianity is fitted to lead us.

This indeed the best may never reach ; but we may, if not wanting to ourselves, and we must if we earnestly endeavour to do so, make continual advances towards it. A deep sense of the perfections of the Deity, if it do not annihilate, will at least greatly assuage and relieve our sorrows. Among the ordinary calamities of life, none are so grievous as our separation by death from those we love, and who have long been the tender objects of our constant care and at-

tention. In the nearest and dearest relations of life this affliction is indeed overwhelming. How unspeakable are the consolations of religion to those who are thus broken in spirit! Christianity calls our attention to the comparative insignificance of this world considered in any other light than as a preparation for a better. It reminds us that it was never intended to be our abiding city, but that it is a mere temporary sojourn, and He with whom are the issues of life best knows at what time, and under what circumstances, to remove us from this first stage of our existence. The Christian will indulge in the pleasing hope that our tender and virtuous affections will be continued and improved in the unseen state, and purified from whatever corruption they have contracted in this world. The mourner will feel that those he loved, and of whose society God has deprived him, will only precede him by a few fleeting years in that path which all are destined to tread. With such supports and consolations it will

be impossible to mourn "as those who "have no hope." The deep anguish which must at first seize upon the heart on the death of those we love, will by degrees sink into a more moderate grief, and ultimately subside into feelings of tender regret, mingled with the cheering hope of being again united with them in the world to come. The mind of the religious man will cherish the recollection of those he loved, whose remains have been consigned to the grave, with a tender interest of which the worldly-minded can form no idea, which is calculated to soften and improve the heart, and to prepare us for that pure and holy state which awaits the righteous in the world to come. This world is a passing scene which we are soon to quit. It has not pleased Almighty God to give us any distinct information respecting the condition of the blessed in a future state. It is enough for us in general to know that it will be a state of purity and of happiness. It is however impossible for those whose minds have been deeply en-

gaged in studying human nature, and the principles and doctrines of natural and revealed religion, not to form some conjectures on this most important subject; and when their reflections are pursued in the spirit of humility, and with a deep conviction of the inability of the mind of man, in its present state, to form any other than feeble and inadequate ideas of the future world, such considerations tend to exalt and purify the mind. The social principle by which we sympathize and are united in affection with our fellow-creatures, seems essential to our nature; and we may naturally expect that it will form part of our felicity in the world to come; exalted and purified, and closely and indissolubly connected with the idea of God as the giver of this and of all other good. To Him we must expect that our profoundest gratitude, veneration and love, will be undeviatingly directed. We may hope to have our understandings enlarged and our hearts improved; to see and feel more clearly his unspeakable per-

fections ; to rejoice more and more in clearer manifestations of the wisdom and goodness displayed in the whole system of the universe, and to behold in everything

"Him first, Him last, Him midst and without end."

Here is presented to us an employment suited to call forth the highest powers of our intellects, and most profoundly to interest the noblest feelings of our hearts. The countless ages of eternity may well be employed in searching out the perfections of God, which even the most exalted creatures whom he has formed can never be able fully to comprehend ; for how shall finite intellects understand that which is infinite ? We may advance more and more in our knowledge of Him ; but still a vast and unfathomable expanse will lie before us.

"Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise."

THE END.

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