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ELEMENTS

OF

MORAL SCIENCE.

BY

P. R. LEATHERMAN.

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## P R E F A C E.

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SINCE I commenced writing this book which I now offer to the public, frequent calls have been made by my fellow-citizens in various parts of the country for a work of this kind. In offering this to you, my fellow-citizens, I feel some doubt as to whether it possesses sufficient merit to fill the place of the work which you have been desiring. If it should prove to be sufficiently meritorious, I shall be gratified at being able to comply with your wishes whilst executing my own design.

Being for a number of years impressed with a belief that much harm was being done by the false teaching of the Moral Philosophies now most popular, I determined to endeavor to produce a work which should be more in harmony

with the precepts of the Sacred Scriptures than any now in use.

In preparing this work I have endeavored to make the Bible my standard of right, and if in any instance I have failed to do so, I am not aware of the fact. I would not have any one adopt an opinion which I have advanced, unless that opinion is fully sustained by the Sacred Scriptures.

I have not attempted to invent a system of morality; believing that if I could arrange the principles of morality which are taught in the Sacred Scriptures so as to form a book adapted to the use of schools and interesting to the general reader, enough would be accomplished.

On examining this work, you will find that many subjects are treated of in a manner quite different from the common teaching. You will find that the chapters on conscience, natural religion, and slavery are entirely different from what is usually taught in Ethics.

In preparing this work, the authors whom I have consulted mostly are Messrs. Wayland, Paley, and Whewell. In writing upon subjects



concerning which I agreed with these authors, I have followed to some extent the plan which they have marked out. It is not to be expected that a work on the elements of morality shall be wholly original; for many of the principles of Ethics are too well established to admit of the possibility of producing a correct treatise on Moral Philosophy which is entirely original. I have no desire to make old things seem to be new, but wish rather, to render "honor to whom honor is due;" and regret exceedingly that there is so great necessity for a change in the Moral Philosophies now used.

I regret this, not because the knowledge of the fact has induced me to undergo the labor which was necessary to prepare this volume, but because the name of those who have to unlearn what they have learned amiss, in Ethics, is "Legion."



# C O N T E N T S.

---

## BOOK FIRST.

### MORAL OBLIGATIONS.

#### CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Elements of Morality . . . . .	13
Law . . . . .	15

#### CHAPTER II.

The Origin of our Notions of the Moral Quality of Actions . . . . .	37
---	----

#### CHAPTER III.

Conscience . . . . .	56
----------------------	----

#### CHAPTER IV.

Virtue . . . . .	79
------------------	----

#### CHAPTER V.

Human Happiness . . . . .	100
---------------------------	-----

#### CHAPTER VI.

Moral Obligation . . . . .	114
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
The Will of God. Natural Religion considered . . .	125

## BOOK SECOND.

## THE BIBLE AND OUR DUTIES.

## CHAPTER I.

The Bible . . . . .	157
---------------------	-----

## CHAPTER II.

Love to God . . . . .	174
-----------------------	-----

## CHAPTER III.

Gratitude . . . . .	188
---------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

Prayer . . . . .	193
------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V.

The Lord's Day . . . . .	204
--------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VI.

Polygamy . . . . .	213
--------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

Marriage . . . . .	219
--------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

Duties of Parents . . . . .	226
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

Duties of Children . . . . .	242
------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X.

The Duties of Servants—Slavery . . . . .	253
--	-----

CONTENTS.

xi

CHAPTER XI.

	PAGE
Of Property . . . . .	298

CHAPTER XII.

Violations of the Right of Property . . . . .	317
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Promises . . . . .	323
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Contracts . . . . .	329
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

Lies . . . . .	333
----------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

Slander . . . . .	343
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

Drunkenness . . . . .	356
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oaths . . . . .	366
-----------------	-----

BOOK THIRD.

OF GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

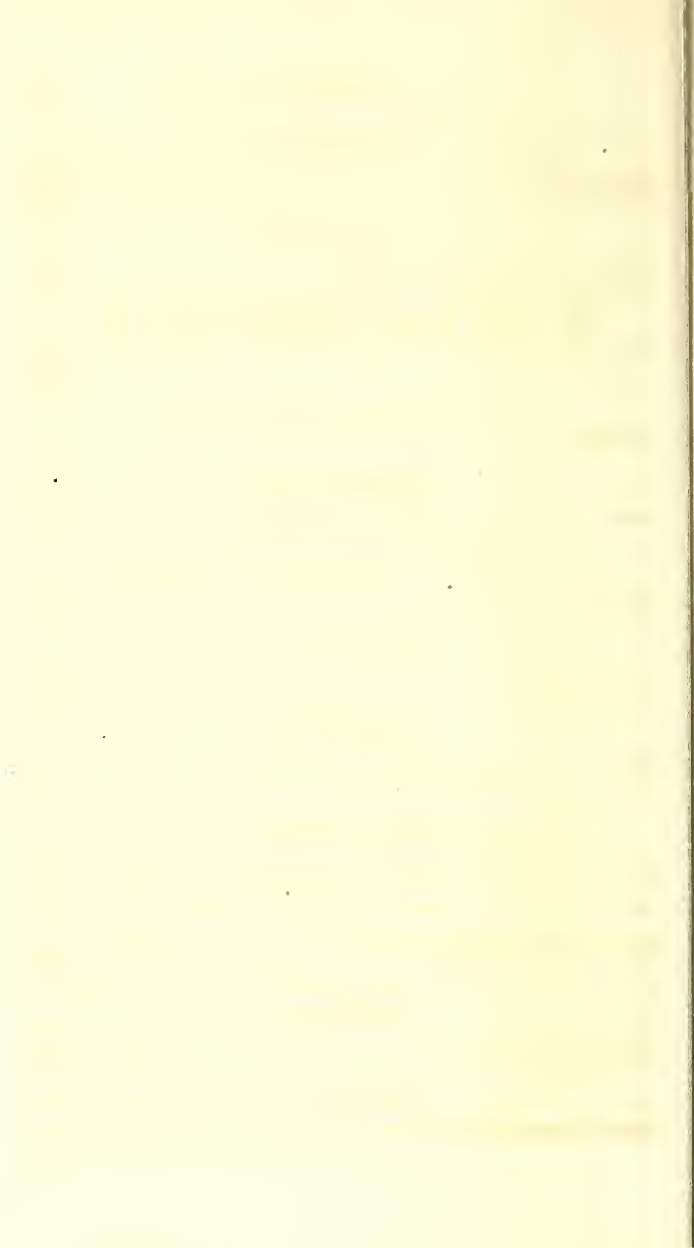
General Remarks on Government . . . . .	376
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

Civil Government . . . . .	384
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III.

Duties of Government Officers . . . . .	407
---	-----



# M O R A L   S C I E N C E .

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## BOOK FIRST.

### M O R A L   O B L I G A T I O N S .

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ELEMENTS OF MORALITY.

IT may be somewhat perplexing to those who are about to begin the study of ethics, to decide why any work on the elements of morality should be studied, when they remember that the Sacred Scriptures contain the will of God as revealed to man, and that all the moral law with which we are acquainted, and which we are under any obligation to obey, must proceed from that source; that all the information we need to enable us to be righteous in the sight of God,

and all the precepts necessary for the regulation of our moral conduct, are written upon those sacred pages.

The Elements of Morality cannot suffice as a substitute for the Sacred Scriptures. Poor, indeed, would be the substitute, and dim the light which it would afford to mankind.

The object of a work of this kind is, to treat of the principles of moral law in a lucid manner, and so to arrange the subjects as to enable the student the more readily to take a comprehensive view of the principles of morality, and thereby be aided in a more thorough investigation of the doctrines taught in the Sacred Scriptures; to show what the moral law is concerning various human actions, and to adduce such testimony, both from the Sacred Scriptures and from the laws of nature, as will suffice to establish those points of the law that may be considered doubtful, or concerning which moralists disagree.

Our object in offering some arguments drawn from natural consequences will not be to strengthen the proof which the Bible affords concerning any moral obligation; for if it is established by Scriptural teaching that it is our duty to perform any particular act, or conform our lives to certain rules, we consider it morally certain that it is our duty to do so. But having learned our duty from the Sacred Scriptures, if



some should still doubt, there is always ample proof outside of the Bible to convince any one who is willing to know the truth, that obedience to the rules of action contained in that book, will contribute more to our happiness, both in this life and in the life to come, than any other course of conduct which we can pursue.

The truths taught in the Elements of Morality interfere with the tenets of no religious sect, for no form of worship is either discussed or recommended, only the moral law is elucidated and those principles of morality which form the basis of every system of Christian worship are explained. These are subjects of common interest concerning which we can all calmly reason with each other, and together study the important truths they teach, affected by a single impulse,—the desire of knowing the truth.

#### LAW.

Our object is to acquire knowledge of the Moral Law. In our investigation of the various subjects of which we must necessarily treat, we should have some standard by which to determine whether our views are true or false. We should neither be guided by the dictates of conscience, nor by what we may suppose the laws of nature teach us, in determining what is right and what wrong in morals. The Sacred Scriptures are the only infallible guide in morals. If we

can find there a "*Thus saith the Lord,*" we know that it is right.

We are under no obligation whatever to yield obedience to any law or rule of action which men may choose to establish, except those by which we are governed in our social relations, and which are enacted by the individuals to whom the citizens of a state have, by common consent, granted the right of enactment.

If men publish a code of laws or a system of rules which they denominate Moral Science, Ethics, or Elements of Morality, we have a right, it is our duty, to try that system by the standard which God has given us. In him alone all authority over the morals of men is vested, and without his will there is no moral law.

He, as our Creator, has the right to enact laws by which we shall be governed; His is an authority which no man can question; a right not derived from public opinion or the will of the majority, but an inherent right, the right of a Creator to govern the thing created.

If we calmly yield our assent to rules which are said to inculcate the principles of Moral Law, without first trying them by that standard of right which our Creator has most graciously provided for us, we may be unwittingly violating those laws which we suppose we are scrupulously obeying.

The word law is a term which is familiar to every

one, and therefore need not be defined. If we should wish to define it, it would be difficult to express its meaning in words which are more familiar than the word itself. It is, however, necessary to observe that the signification of the word is sometimes varied by the connection in which it is used. When we speak of the laws by which the citizens of a state are governed, the term *laws*, as here used, signifies certain rules, established by proper authority, for the government of our actions as citizens of a state. When we speak of physical laws, I think the term law signifies an established sequence. When we speak of *moral law*, the term signifies a rule of action established by our Creator for our government as moral agents.

Man is governed by certain laws which are enacted expressly for the purpose of regulating his actions as a *social* being; by certain other laws which pertain to his *physical* organization, and by still another form of law which has authority over the morals of men.

It is important that he should have a knowledge of the laws which govern him as a social being, in order that he may know what duties are required of him by the society of which he is a member, and that he may be conscious of the obligations which others owe to him. Without this knowledge he is not apt to be a contented and happy citizen. Being ignorant of the law, he is liable to trespass on his neighbor's rights

and offend others, not only without designing to do wrong, but without even knowing in what particular he has erred; and his ignorance of the law offers a temptation to designing, wicked men to restrict his privileges, and claim for themselves rights superior to those which they are willing to allow him.

A knowledge of the laws by which our physical organization is governed, is necessary, that we may be enabled to preserve our health, and increase the number of our days.

If we are not acquainted with these laws, we may ignorantly perform some act which will cause us to be afflicted, render us miserable and unhappy beings, or perhaps snap the thread of life, and hurry us down to an untimely grave.

If we violate the laws of hygiene, we forfeit our right to health, and must suffer the tortures of that disease which is the natural consequent of disobedience to the law which we have violated. If we imbibe a sufficient quantity of poison to produce death, we must shortly die; if the inflicting of the penalty for this violation of law, be not averted by the timely aid of a skilful physician. If we breathe an atmosphere which is impregnated with the miasma of an epidemic disease, or come within the circle of a contagion, we are almost sure to be afflicted with that disease within whose range we have had the

temerity to venture, unless, by a knowledge of the laws which govern the disease, we have been able previously to render ourselves impervious to its debilitating influence.

It is equally important for us to understand the moral law, lest we should, like Paul, find that we are acting contrary to the will of God, when we verily believe that we are doing God service. We do not always do right when we know our duty; we are not apt often to do so ignorantly, and if we should, it would be merely an accident, for which we should deserve no praise, and from which we could derive no gratification, being ignorant of it. Unless we understand the moral law, and know what God wills for us to do, we cannot secure the blessings which he has promised to bestow upon those who faithfully perform his will.

The laws which govern man as a *social* being, direct his actions as a member of a certain community, and are designed only to govern such of his actions as have some relation to his happiness as a member of that community. They would forbid murder, and perhaps punish a violation of the law in this respect, with death; because, if one man should be permitted to indulge his desire for revenge to so great an extent as to murder the man who has offended him, others might choose to avail themselves of the same privilege,

and the whole community be in a short time dispersed or destroyed. The blessings which obedience to the civil laws secure to us are the protection of our rights, and the preservation of our liberties. The punishments are principally corporeal, and their greatest severity consists in taking the life of the criminal.

The laws which govern man's physical organization, have jurisdiction over him as an individual, and are designed to contribute to his happiness as a being independent of the rest of mankind; and the punishment for disobedience to these laws also consists in the sufferings of the flesh, and terminates in death.

The moral law is much more comprehensive than either of the others. They regard man's happiness only as a temporal being, an inhabitant of earth; whilst the moral law comprises rules which are capable of contributing to his happiness, not only as a temporal being, an ephemeral creature whose existence, or whose ceasing to exist, has no perceptible bearing on the economy of creation; not as a dweller on earth alone, but also as an inhabitant of eternity.

The moral law differs in its operations from the civil law and the laws governing our physical organization, in several remarkable particulars.

The punishment which is inflicted for a violation of these laws, usually follows the offence in quick succession; but the punishment for a violation of moral

law, if inflicted on earth at all, is never fully completed in this world. Our Creator is merciful, and delays the punishment for moral depravity until the whole journey of life is passed over, except so far as our immorality causes us to violate laws governing our physical nature. He gives us ample time to change our conduct, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well, before He pronounces the final sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

The punishment which we must endure for offences against the moral law, though delayed for a longer period of time, being not inflicted in life, except to a very limited extent, is addressed to the soul; beginning after death, and continuing through vast eternity.

Inasmuch as the soul is capable of feeling intensely the sufferings that may be inflicted for disobeying God, and since that suffering is to last through all eternity, we must perceive that the difference between the penalty to be inflicted for a violation of civil or physical law, and the never ceasing torment of an eternal banishment from the presence of God, is incalculable.

The rewards which are bestowed on men for obedience to these different forms of law, are as dissimilar as the punishments which are inflicted for a violation of them.

Our reward for obedience to the laws of our country,

is the protection of our property, our lives, and our civil liberties.

The reward which is granted us for obedience to the laws of our physical organization, is health, and consequently long life.

The reward of obedience to the moral law, as contained in the Sacred Scriptures, is a crown of glory that fadeth not away ; the joys of life everlasting.

It should be the grand object of our lives, then, to acquire a knowledge of the moral law, and obey its requisitions. Its authority is over us always ; the blessings of obedience to its requirements are of the most exalted nature, enduring for ever ; and the suffering for disobedience is intense and unceasing agony.

The moral law condemns or excuses us, according to our *actions*.

In acquiring a knowledge of the moral law, one of the first and most important steps is to comprehend the nature of our actions. Our actions are always right when performed in obedience to the moral law, and wrong when in violation of the moral precepts.

It becomes a question of great importance to know how to decide whether our actions are in obedience to the moral law or not, when we remember that it is by our actions that we shall be judged ; that if our actions are in obedience to the will of God, He can at last receive us with the welcome plaudit, Well done,



good and faithful servant; but he cannot say well done, when we have not acted in obedience to his will.

The following passages of the Sacred Scriptures confirm us in the opinion that it is by our *actions* that we are to be judged. Sam. i. 2, 3, "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him *actions* are weighed." James ii. 24, "By works a man is justified." Matt. xvi. 27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Rev. xx. 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works.*"

It is plain that an action is right which is in accordance with the will of God, and wrong when it is not. If we know the will of God and have the power to obey it, we may, without doubt, do that which is right. But many occasions occur in which we are doubtful what it is our duty to do, and even when we know our duty, it may be exceedingly difficult to perform it; the path of duty may be, and often is, strewn with thorns. No one, I suppose, will imagine that we are excusable for not doing our duty, simply because it is difficult for us to perform it. But, owing to the influence which our own actions exert upon our happiness, it

will be interesting and profitable for us to study very minutely the nature of human actions.

Since sane men never do anything without having some design in view, without desiring to accomplish some object by the action which they perform, and since there can be no doubt as to the nature of the intention, if we know what one's intention is; we usually endeavor to learn what is the intention which has prompted a man to the performance of a certain action, before we condemn or excuse him. If he intends to do what is right, and fails to do it from some cause which he has no power to avert, we think he is excusable. This, however, cannot make a wrong action right. If a man thus intending to do right fails to do so, and unintentionally does something that is wrong, he may be excused for the wrong he has done, but cannot claim a reward for having done right, merely because he *intended* to do so. How can he claim a reward for doing right, when he knows that he has done wrong? If, during life, we suppose that we have been performing the will of God in all our acts, when we appear before the Majesty on high and learn that we have been acting contrary to his will, can we say, Lord, I have performed Thy will on earth, what blessing wilt Thou confer on Thy servant?

We cannot reasonably expect a reward for actions we have not performed, or for those things which we

have done that we ought not to have done; but we may hope to be forgiven, if our misdeeds were performed under the influence of a desire to do right, and expect a reward for doing those acts which our Father in heaven has promised to reward us for performing.

The nature of the actions which men perform is frequently very different from that of the intention with which they act. A man may intend to tell the truth, but from a lack of correct information on the subject concerning which he is speaking, may utter that which is false. We would not accuse that man of a want of veracity, nor could we say that he had told the truth.

The question may be presented in this way: If a man does wrong when he intends to do right, does he deserve praise or blame? He would certainly deserve the approbation of all good men for having a good intention; that is, for intending to do right; but this does not cover all the grounds of the question. He may have done wrong through ignorance, and his ignorance of his duty may have been his own fault. In this case he would not deserve praise, although he intended to do right; for his failure to do so would be his own fault. He would be twice in fault. First, because he had not used the means in his power to learn his duty; and secondly, because he performed an act which was wrong. If he did wrong when he intended to do right, and accident, or some agency

entirely beyond his control, changed the nature of the action, then he would be free from all blame, and deserve only praise. His intention then could alone be taken into account, for the act performed could not justly be considered his act; since some unavoidable circumstance entirely changed the nature of the act which he attempted to perform. For example, Sir Walter Tyrrel, whilst hunting with King William Rufus, aimed an arrow at a fleeting deer which they were pursuing with all the ardor of an exciting chase. The arrow, though aimed by the most skilful archer in England, was directed amiss, and striking lightly against the side of a tree, turned from the direction in which it was aimed, and entering the body of the king, caused his death.

In such a case the intention only could be considered; since the sport in which they were engaged was strictly lawful. And the act of killing the king could not justly be called the act of Sir Walter. His act was that of shooting at a deer. The fact of killing the king was the result of a force acting upon his arrow after it had left his hand, and when he had not the least power over it.

In such cases we are inclined to pity rather than blame the individual who is so nearly concerned with an event which, if voluntarily performed by him, would render him liable to suffer the severest punish-

ment. And we have no reason to believe that our Creator would hold one guilty who is so situated.

In most of the acts which men perform, the action harmonizes with the intention. But that a man does not always perform the act which he intends, is so well known that the laws of enlightened nations provide for such occurrences, which are deemed accidental and not punishable.

Accident, or some agency which a man cannot control, may prevent him from performing a wicked design. He is then culpable on account of the intention. As in the case previously mentioned, if he intends to perform an act which is right, but some agency which he cannot control changes the nature of the act, he is not held guilty; so, in the present case, if he intends to perform a wrong action, and some agency which he cannot control changes the nature of the act he would perform, he is held guilty, according to moral law, of the act which he intended to perform. For the reason before given, the act cannot justly be considered his own if its nature is changed by accident or some agency which he cannot control; but the wrong intention certainly is his, and he deserves as much blame for intending to do wrong as he would have deserved praise, had his intention been to do right.

We find, then, but two cases in which a man will be

judged by his intention only, and not by the act performed; and in both these cases the act performed is not strictly his own act. If we were to be judged by our intention alone, and not at all by the act performed or any collateral circumstance, if our intention to do right makes a wrong action a right one or our intention to do wrong makes a right action wrong, all we have to do, in order to fill the requirements of the moral law, is to *intend* to do right. We are, according to this rule, under no obligation at all to make an effort to learn what is right, because, although we may have the means of learning God's will, still we need not put ourselves to any trouble, if we will just intend to do right; this is all the rule requires of us, and according to it we are guiltless, no matter how many wrong acts we perform, if we only intend to do right. By this rule, even if we have a direct command from God to perform a certain act, in a certain way, if we intend to perform the act or something else like it, it matters not if we do choose a different mode of performing it from that which we were commanded, it will do just as well. We might even think our plan of obeying the command better than the one ordered; if we are to be judged by our intention only, we certainly would deserve great praise for thus acting, although our plan might pervert entirely the nature of the act which God intended us to perform.

This rule will not stand the test which ought to be applied to every question in morals, viz., the teaching of the sacred Scriptures.

Let us consider the case of Saul (1 Samuel xv.). God commanded that King Saul should "smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they had, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." King Saul obeyed the command in part only; he utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword, but spared Agag the king of the Amalekites. He also spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord. His intention was evidently right. He intended to obey the Lord, but chose his own plan for doing it; and, even in the portion of the command which he disobeyed, the circumstances were of such a nature as to prove that his intention was to please God. He spared a part of the sheep and oxen, not for his own use, but to sacrifice unto the Lord. He considered that he had done right and performed the command of God. When Samuel came to him, Saul said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Samuel said, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" If Saul had been judged according to the intention only, and not according to the act he performed, which was an

act of disobedience, when it was wholly in his power to have obeyed the command of the Lord, his kingdom would not have been taken away from him, nor would he have been compelled to endure the sufferings which were the penalty of his disobedience. If Saul had been judged according to the intention, Samuel would not have said to him, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." He would have thought that Saul deserved praise rather than blame. The case of Uzza teaches the same lesson. (2 Samuel vi.) The case also of the prophet who went out of Judah unto Bethel to make a certain prophecy, also teaches us that we are to be judged by our *actions*, and not by our *intentions*, except when it is impossible for us to do what we intend. The example to which we allude may be found in 1 Kings xiii.

Such examples prove conclusively that we shall not be judged according to our intention only, but according to our works. We are satisfied that the Lord "will render to every man according to his deeds;" that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath *done*, whether it be good or bad."

We are held guilty for intending to do wrong, and deserving of praise for intending to do right, when it



is impossible on account of circumstances that we cannot control, for us to perform the actions which we intend doing. Matthew v. 28, furnishes an example to prove that we are held guilty of an evil action, if we intend to perform such deed. But every evil desire that enters a man's mind cannot be charged against him as a crime. He may suppress such a desire from pious motives; in this case, he would deserve praise rather than blame; not for allowing a wicked desire to enter his mind, but for rejecting it from praiseworthy motives.

No man is, perhaps, so pure that unrighteous desires never enter his mind; temptations of this kind may assail the best of men; but he who invariably rejects every evil wish, will seldom be tempted by impure desires, and if he is, he can readily resist their persuasive influence.

If we intend to perform a righteous action, but are prevented from doing so by some cause which we cannot control, we are accounted worthy of praise. If we intend to do a favor for a friend, and prove our intention by making every effort in our power to serve him, even if we do fail to accomplish our object, still he will feel grateful for our efforts in his behalf, and will remember our kind intentions with pleasing emotions.

Abraham intended to sacrifice Isaac, his son, to

the Lord, in obedience to the Lord's command, and he was only prevented from doing so by divine interposition. After he had bound his son on the rude altar, and even whilst he was raising the glittering steel to plunge it into the bosom of his devoted child, an angel of the Lord called unto him from heaven and said, "Lay not thy hand on the lad, neither do thou anything unto him." This obedience of Abraham in such a case was owing to his unbounded faith in the Lord; therefore the Lord imputed that faith unto him for righteousness. We have here apparently a case of the Lord's rewarding a man because his *intention* was to obey the command which he had received; but in this case there was no act of disobedience whatever, for Abraham was prevented from performing the first command by a later command revoking the former, and that, too, at the very moment when his obedience to the former command was being consummated. Even in this case the reward was not granted for intention alone; the intention was accompanied by every corresponding act of obedience that he was allowed to perform; and he ceased not to perform the command which God had given him until that command was revoked.

With regard to the relation between the intention and the act which is performed, the following cases may occur:—

1st. The intention may be wrong, yet, owing to some contingent circumstance, the act performed may, in itself considered, be praiseworthy. As when a man, through a desire to gratify a mischievous propensity, intends to direct a traveller on the wrong road, but by mistake directs him aright; or in case one intends to tell a falsehood, but unconsciously utters the truth.

In such instances, the individual deserves no praise for the good deeds performed, for it is by accident, and not from design, that he does what is right. Of course he deserves no reward for what is accomplished through some other agency. He sustains the position of a machine, and deserves no more honor for performing a right action, under such circumstances, than an apple does for being sweet, or a rose for being beautiful.

2d. It sometimes happens that an individual intends to do what is right, but by accident, or some agency which he cannot control, really performs a very wicked deed. As when, discharging a gun at some pestiferous wild animal, missing his aim, the charge inflicts a mortal wound upon a friend, of whose being in the range of the animal he was not aware, and which he did not even suspect. It is evident that although he is the agent in causing a man's death, yet he cannot be charged with crime.

3d. Numerous cases occur in which the act and in-

tention are both right. Such actions need no comment; they praise themselves.

4th. The reverse of the preceding case, I fear, as often happens, in which the intention and act performed coincide in being wrong; in such cases, the merits or demerits of the actions are easily perceived, without the aid of philosophy.

If we ask the question, upon what does the moral quality of an action depend? many reasons may be given for believing that it depends upon the intention. The arguments, however, cannot be taken from the Sacred Scriptures, because the Bible does not teach us that the moral quality of actions depends on the intention, nor are they founded in truth. They are arguments having the semblance of truth, but in reality teaching a principle contrary to that which is taught in the Bible.

The expression, the moral quality of actions, is one which conveys a vague, indefinite idea to the minds of many persons, and on this account, they readily believe a man, when he tells them that the moral quality of an action depends on the intention, and offers some reasons which seem to confirm his opinion. No man will believe you, if you tell him that *intending* to do right will make a wrong action right, or that intending to do wrong, makes right wrong. The terms, right and wrong, convey a clear and definite idea to the mind of

every intelligent person, and no one will believe that an action is right unless it is in obedience to the will of God; and no matter what you say about your *intention*, you cannot convince a man that you have done right, when he knows that you have done something which is contrary to the will of God. He may readily believe that you intended to do right, but he very well knows that you did not do as you intended. But convince him that the moral quality of an action depends on the intention, and then ask him if you did not do right; what answer could he make? He knows that to do right is to obey the will of God, yet if he believes that the moral quality of an action depends on the intention, he is confused, and scarcely knows whether you did right or not, although he knows that any act which is contrary to the will of God is wrong.

To prove that the moral quality of our actions depends on the intention, we must prove that it does not depend on obedience to the will of God; that our actions are right when we intend to do God's will, whether we do so or not; that they are right under such circumstances, even when contrary to the will of God.

The moral quality of an action, must signify that property of an action which determines whether the action is right or wrong. This cannot be the intention, for the intention alone cannot determine whether the act is according to God's will or not. We must com-

pare the act performed with what we know to be God's will concerning such actions, before we can decide whether the act is right or wrong.

Acting upon the principle that the intention alone is to be considered in judging of the merit or demerit of human actions, men may do pretty much as they please, and still claim to be servants of God. Upon this principle, if we *intend* to do right, we perform God's will, whether we do what he has commanded or not. It is God's will that we should assist the needy. Suppose we defraud our neighbor, who is in prosperous circumstances, to obtain the means of assisting an indigent person who is suffering for the want of food and clothing. Our intention to relieve the distressed would be right, but every one must know that the rectitude of our intention to relieve the distress of others, does not make it right for us to defraud our neighbor to obtain the means of doing so. It is evident, in such a case, a right intention cannot justify a wrong act; nor can it in any case, except where the nature of the act is changed by accident or some cause which we cannot control; and then the act performed is not strictly our own.

## CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR NOTIONS OF THE MORAL QUALITY  
OF ACTIONS.

MORALISTS entertain different opinions concerning the origin of our notions of the moral quality of actions. That which seems to be the most generally received, is that our notion of the moral quality of actions is instinctive. Because an opinion is generally believed, or because it is supported by a popular author, is no proof of its truthfulness.

An opinion which cannot be proved with the certainty of a mathematical demonstration, the truth of which can only be arrived at by a correct train of moral reasoning, should not be received as an undeniable truth, either because many believe it, or because a favorite author defends it.

When Galileo proclaimed to the world the newly-discovered truth, that the sun, and not the earth, is the centre of the solar system, around which the earth and other planets move in their appointed course, this doctrine was considered an abominable heresy.

The popular opinion then was, that, the earth being fixed in a certain position, all the bright luminaries

of the skies revolved around it. The majority of learned men believed this doctrine, and endeavored to confirm the opinion that the earth is the immovable centre of the universe. The belief was sanctioned by the greatest men of ancient times; it had long been taught; it was conformable to the common appearance of things: Yet, notwithstanding these evidences in its favor, it was false. Galileo knew this.

Impressed with an ardent love of truth and a desire to make known his valuable discoveries, he published a work explaining the theory.

It happened that the religious people of those days believed that his theory was opposed to their religious tenets; they therefore condemned the theory, and persecuted its author.

A congregation of cardinals, monks, and mathematicians, was appointed to examine his work, which they unhesitatingly condemned as highly dangerous, and summoned him before the tribunal of inquisition. He was compelled to go to Rome, and was immediately immured in a cell in one of the prisons of the Inquisition. Being brought forth from this imprisonment, before an assembly of judges, he was condemned to renounce, with his hands upon the Bible, the truths which he had published, and which were denounced as detestable errors and heresies.

Overawed by the power of his judges, and the



dangers of his present situation, Galileo's firmness gave way, and he pronounced the recantation. But when he arose, his heart swelling with indignation at having sworn in violation of his conviction, he stamped with his foot and exclaimed, *It still moves.*

The case of Galileo is not an isolated one; many discoverers of truths that had long been concealed from mankind, have suffered severely from having boldly proclaimed them to the world.

If a man under such trying circumstances, would announce the truth to an ignorant, ungrateful, and cruel people who would rejoice at seeing him tortured, for the favor which he had bestowed upon them, it does seem that science ought to make rapid strides in a land of liberty like that which we possess, a land inhabited by an enlightened and progressive people.

This is truly the case with regard to some of the departments of science, but it seems that some authors endeavor to involve certain subjects which are treated of in their works on morality, in as much mystery as possible; for what purpose I cannot tell, unless it is done from a desire to render the subject unintelligible, and thereby enable them to offer a more plausible reason for certain fanciful or fanatical notions which they desire to defend.

The subject which we are now about to examine, is one of this class.

It seems to me, that he who undertakes to tell us from whence we derive our notions of the moral quality of actions, only renders it more difficult for us to discover the truth ourselves, by telling us that those ideas are instinctive.

We know that man is mainly distinguished from the brute by being guided by reason instead of instinct, and when one of our best reasoners begins to mix this attribute of brutes with reason, it confuses us.

But since this idea has obtained a considerable degree of notoriety, we will see if it has any just claims to our belief. We will try it first by the unerring test given by our Saviour in Luke vi. 43, 44, "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; every tree is known by his own fruit."

I think that the hypothesis, our notion of the moral quality of actions is instructive, will soon be pronounced erroneous if tried by this rule.

The effects produced by reasoning from this hypothesis have proved pernicious to the interests of civil government, and destructive to the authority and pre-eminence of the Bible.

Men reason thus: If our ideas of the moral quality of actions are instructive; if God has given us a faculty for the purpose of enabling us to decide immediately concerning the moral quality of actions; if that

faculty is instinctive and not dependent on any other faculty or agency of the human mind, its promptings must be of superior authority to any intellectual power possessed by man. If God has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, to grant to man an instinctive faculty by which he can discern good and evil; of course that faculty was not intended to deceive us, and it cannot cause us to err. Therefore any teaching which does not accord with the decisions of this instinctive principle must be incorrect.

Upon certain subjects the laws of our country and the constitution upon which our government is established, contain principles, which the instinct of certain men tells them are wrong; and, upon this shallow reason, they argue that the laws which now bind the states together in one grand and glorious union are wrong, and ought not to be obeyed.

The Bible, too, teaches doctrines which the instinct of some men tells its possessors are wrong. They, therefore, conclude that the Bible is not a reliable authority, unless it be so interpreted as to harmonize with their instinctive knowledge of right and wrong.

Such are the fruits of the hypothesis, man's notion of the moral quality of actions is instinctive. By its fruits let it be judged. Of course a belief which produces such unhappy results, a hypothesis from which a train of reasoning arises, which causes men to reject

the Bible as being worthless, or, at the best, an inferior revelation of the will of God, should itself be rejected as being false and destructive to the present and future happiness of man.

The word *instinct* signifies the sagacity and natural inclinations of brutes, which supplies the place of reason in mankind.

To say that man's ideas of right and wrong are the result of instinct, would be degrading him at once to a level with the brutes. We may as well say that man, like the brutes, is an unaccountable being, or that brutes, like men, are accountable beings. For if our notions of the moral quality of actions are the effect of instinct, why may not the brutes, which possess instinct in its highest degree of perfection, have a more correct idea of right and wrong than we? Since, if we are guided by instinct at all, it must be of the very lowest degree; so slight, indeed, that I do not perceive its existence.

But those who argue that man derives his notion of the moral quality of actions from instinct, also contend that the authority of this instinctive principle is superior to that of reason. If this be true, man's instinct must be superior to the instinct of the brute; for all men agree in believing that man is a higher order of being than the brutes, and that his reason elevates him so high above them in the scale of created

beings that the intervening space is immeasurable. If man's instinct is superior to his reason, of course his instinct must be superior to the instinct of the brutes; but this we know is not true. Man has no instinct which guides him with that unerring certainty that we see exhibited in the actions of brutes.

You may take a wild pig from his lair in the wilderness, blindfold him so that he can have no opportunity of observing the direction in which he is borne, carry him thus, several miles; then set him free, and as soon as he is sufficiently far from you to feel no fear of being recaptured, he will bend his course to his accustomed haunts in the trackless wilderness. He will be sure to return to the vicinity of the lair from whence he was taken.

Man possesses no gift of a nature similar to this; he must have some basis upon which to found a reason for what he is about to do, or he wanders about like a ship at sea which has lost its rudder.

Man is not like the fowls of the air, which build their nests as perfectly when they are preparing for their first brood as they ever do; nor is he like the animals, which build their first habitations as perfectly as it is possible for them to build, and never make any improvement in the arrangement thereof.

Man first begins by making a rude hut, which presents a disagreeable appearance to the eye and an

insufficient protection against the fierce storm or the rough blasts of the wintry winds.

When the cold winds howl over his simple hut, and the piercing cold penetrates his shivering limbs, he begins to reason concerning some plan for ameliorating his condition and perfecting his habitation. He goes to work and builds a beautiful cottage, a splendid mansion, or a towering edifice.

The brutes, which are guided by instinct, neither improve nor grow less expert in obeying its promptings. But man is continually making mistakes, making improvements, making new discoveries, and approaching nearer and still nearer to perfection, but never attaining to it.

If our notion of the moral quality of actions depended upon instinct, barbarous and savage people would decide concerning the moral quality of actions precisely as the civilized do. Instead of this universal harmony in our ideas of right and wrong, we observe that men's notions differ precisely as their education differs. Barbarous and idolatrous nations decide very differently concerning what is right and what wrong, from the decisions of civilized and enlightened nations. The idolatrous decide that it is right to sacrifice human beings to the creatures which they worship as gods, and some think it right to eat the flesh of the victims thus sacrificed. The inhabitants of enlightened nations

decide that nothing is more revolting to the feelings, nothing more absurd, and but few acts more wicked.

This diversity of opinion is evidently owing to education. The idolatrous parent teaches his child that it is right to sacrifice human victims to the gods; the child believes this is right; he acts upon this conviction, which is the result of instruction received from his parents. His father sacrificed human victims to the gods, and taught him to do so; he obeys this parental teaching, and thus the custom of making such sacrifices is perpetuated until arrested by the labors of some philanthropic missionary, who teaches the savage a purer and holier doctrine.

The idolater teaches his child to worship an immense and horrid structure formed of wood or stone, whose unsightly visage is distorted to agree with the perverted notions of the misguided architect; or to bend the knee in servile adoration of some beast, bird, or reptile. Of course the child believes that to do this is right.

Would instinct teach him to act thus? I think not. If our Heavenly Father had bestowed upon us, or placed within us, a faculty which teaches men to decide instinctively what is right, I do not think that it would ever lead any man to the performance of such horrible practices.

Our God could not make so great a mistake in the

formation of man as to endow him with a certain instinctive principle for the sole purpose of enabling him to decide concerning the moral quality of actions, and that gift be so inefficient as to fail utterly in the accomplishment of the object for which it was designed.

An account which is given in the memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences for the year 1703, of a deaf and dumb young man in the city of Chartres, serves to prove very conclusively that we do not derive our notion of the moral quality of actions from instinct.

“At the age of three-and-twenty, it so happened, to the great surprise of the whole town, that he was suddenly restored to the sense of hearing, and in a short time he acquired the use of language. Being examined by some men of discernment, it was found that he had no idea of a God, of a soul, or of the moral merit or demerit of human actions.”

If our notion of the moral quality of actions has its origin in instinct, it seems that this young man would have had a perfectly correct idea of right and wrong; for he was possessed of all the feelings and faculties of other human beings, except the lack of hearing and speaking. Indeed, it seems to me that his notions of the moral quality of actions would have been correct in every *minutia*, being derived from instinct uninfluenced by any improper feeling. Instead of this, he had no idea at all of the moral quality of



actions. It is evident, the reason he did not know anything of the moral merit or demerit of human actions, was because he had never been taught to distinguish between right and wrong, and to know why one act is right, and its reverse wrong.

I will add another argument against the belief that our notion of the moral quality of actions is an instinctive impulse. The progenitors of the human species, Adam and Eve, were created without a knowledge of good and evil. I suppose no one doubts that they were endowed with every faculty and impulse that human beings of the most complete organization possess. If our notion of the moral quality of actions is the result of an instinctive impulse, how does it happen that Adam and Eve could not distinguish between good and evil? No instinctive principle which they possessed discovered to their minds the moral quality of actions. They knew of but one wrong action that they could perform, and that act was the one which would cause a knowledge of good and evil to burst upon their vision. From this we learn that, to acquire a knowledge of right and wrong, something must be done. This knowledge will not spring up spontaneously in the human mind.

Adam and Eve were forbidden to perform the act by which they acquired this knowledge; but after the act was committed, we learn from the Sacred Scrip-

tures that in those days God frequently conversed with men, and taught them to distinguish more correctly the moral quality of human actions. He unfolded to them more thoroughly the knowledge of good and evil. At a later period he sent his holy prophets among men to teach them to distinguish correctly between right and wrong; to exhort them to perform that which is right and to avoid evil.

At a still later period our Blessed Saviour came into the world, teaching men the way of life eternal. He also taught men to distinguish between right and wrong.

Whence then arise the notions which exist in the minds of human beings of the moral quality of actions? They are evidently the result of education. For the notion does not exist in human beings who have not been taught to distinguish between right and wrong. The deaf and dumb young man we have mentioned had no notion at all of the moral merit or demerit of human actions; such a thought had never entered his mind. Nor had Adam and Eve any knowledge of good and evil until they had acquired it; it did not spring up spontaneously in their minds.

The nature of the human mind is such that it is impossible for any notion or idea to exist in it, unless it is deduced from, or in some way connected with,

something which really exists, and from which it arises.

Man could not, just by beholding good and evil actions, decide that the one is right and the other wrong, if he has no rule by which to form his decision. He would be as likely to decide that to kill a deer is wrong, and to kill a man right, as to decide in favor of the reverse of this; and if the question were never asked, he would observe either action without ever thinking whether it was right or wrong. What is there in the act of killing a deer that causes the idea to arise in the mind that to do so is right or that it is wrong?

What is there in suicide that would cause the notion to arise in the mind that the act is wrong? If we had never been taught what is right and what wrong, we would be more likely to think it right than wrong, if we had any such ideas about it; for the person whose mind is uncultivated with respect to the moral quality of actions, would, I think, if asked the question, decide that if a man wishes to kill himself, it is right for him to do so. Yet those who are correctly taught consider it a most unrighteous deed.

I cannot perceive that there is anything in the deeds which men perform, that would suggest to them the notion of right and wrong. This notion must first exist, before we can decide that any action is either

right or wrong; but if the notion were suggested to the mind by the action, then the decision would be made first, and the notion of right and wrong would be the consequent instead of the antecedent. Thus; if we were to learn that a man had committed suicide, if we had no notion of the moral quality of actions previously, and this action should suggest the notion to our minds, in reflecting upon this action we would either decide that the act was right or that it was wrong; but how could we decide thus, if the notion of right and wrong did not exist in the mind? It would be impossible.

The notion of the moral quality of actions evidently is not an instinctive impulse, but it exists in the minds of men because they have been taught to consider certain actions right and other actions wrong.

That our ideas of right and wrong are derived from education, may be observed in the opening and expanding of the mind in childhood.

As soon as the infant is capable of receiving instruction of any kind, it is taught that certain acts are right and certain other acts are wrong. This is practised to some extent as soon as the child begins to utter the first syllables that it learns to speak. It is the *first* instruction that a child receives from its parents after it has learned to utter words, and is begun before it can speak a full sentence correctly.

Parents not only teach their children whilst they are very young to distinguish between right and wrong, but they enforce the practice of what is right. It is true that some are negligent of such instruction during infancy, believing that the child is excusable because it cannot understand what is said to it; but this is a mistake, and those parents who act upon this principle usually have a great deal of trouble in teaching their children to act in conformity with their own notions of right.

As young persons are growing up and their reasoning powers are not fully developed, and their judgment deficient, they necessarily refer frequently to their parents to learn what is right and what wrong on subjects with which they are not yet familiar; but as they grow older, and their judgment becomes more mature, by reason of the instruction which they have received, they begin to decide for themselves concerning the moral quality of actions. Still their decisions are in strict harmony with the instruction which they have received.

It is a daily practice with human beings to decide upon the moral quality of actions. It is not at all surprising, then, that man should decide with great readiness whether an act is right or wrong; for to do so is a daily practice with them from childhood to old age, and continual practice gives us skill in everything

we do. In morals, by it we become enabled to do what is right and to shun evil the more readily, the oftener we resist temptation; and the oftener we are called upon to decide between good and evil, the more easily we can form a correct decision; because we become more familiar with the rules by which we must decide. If our decisions concerning questions in morals were made in obedience to an instinctive principle, we would not become more expert in making our decisions, neither would an acquaintance with rules founded on moral principles, enable us to decide more correctly. We would have no need of being taught what is right and what wrong, nor would it be necessary for us to study the sacred Scriptures; we could tell exactly what is right and what wrong without the trouble of studying about it.

That which is done instinctively, is done without reasoning, without deliberation, and without instruction or experience. No one can say truly that our decisions concerning the moral quality of our actions are made after this manner. There are some subjects concerning which we decide at once, and apparently without reflection; but in all cases with which we are not familiar, we weigh the circumstances both in favor of and against the action, and endeavor to learn whether the action performed is according to the will of God; if we find that it is, we decide that it is right;

if not, that it is wrong. Frequently we find it very difficult to decide at all.\* This could not be the case if our decisions were instinctive; we would then decide upon all questions of morals immediately and without reflection.

We decide at once and seemingly without reflection only concerning those actions with which we are well acquainted, or in cases similar to those with which we are familiar, and to which we can readily refer the one in question.

We have long ago decided that gratitude is right. We have taken the proper care to inform ourselves, and we are fully satisfied that it is God's will that we shall be grateful for the favors which we receive. If I am informed of an act of gratitude which an individual has performed, and asked whether the action was right or wrong, of course I could decide at once and without reflection, because I know that it is God's will for us to be grateful. I might not be able at once to tell the reason why I believe it is according to God's will for us to be grateful; but this would be no evidence that my decision was instinctive, for I would be very likely to forget the various steps which led me to decide that gratitude is right, although the decision remained permanent in my mind. In like manner, we all know that honesty, justice, virtue, and piety are right. If we hear of an action which is honest, just,

virtuous, or pious, we can decide immediately and without reflection that it is right; for we have long since decided that all such acts are right.

It is on this principle that we are able to decide at once concerning the moral quality of many of the acts which men perform. We refer the act to a certain class; if it belongs to a class of actions which we recognise as being right, we decide that it also is right. If it belongs to a class of actions which are wrong, we at once pronounce it wrong. If we cannot readily refer it to some class of actions, the nature of which we are familiar with, we cannot decide immediately; we have to study the case, and see what the Scriptural teaching is concerning it. Being unable at once to give a satisfactory reason for our decision, is no evidence that the decision is instinctive. Besides the reason already given, it is a well known principle of the human mind that it frequently passes over a long train of reasoning with so great rapidity that it takes no cognisance of the train of thought, but only marks the conclusion to which it has arrived. Some men are peculiarly distinguished for this faculty of rapid thought, and hasty though correct conclusions.

The Emperor Napoleon is said to have decided correctly and almost instantaneously upon most subjects which attracted his attention. Because a man can think rapidly and reason correctly, is no evidence that



he is governed by instinct. If his mind discovers the truth much quicker than our own, and his judgment is more correct, this by no means proves that he is governed less by reason than we are. It only evinces the sprightliness and superiority of his intellect. But no matter how rapidly we are accustomed to think, and how correct our judgment usually is, still we will meet with some questions of an intricate and perplexing nature upon which we cannot readily decide, and concerning which, after weighing them maturely, we are still in doubt.

Our notion of the moral quality of actions is not derived from any instinctive impulse, it does not naturally arise from reflecting on actions which we see performed; but it is purely the effect of education; and man would not to this day have known whether an act was right or wrong, if he had never eaten the fruit "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." He would have had no need of the knowledge of right and wrong; it could not have existed in his mind without his having a knowledge of good and evil.

## CHAPTER III.

## CONSCIENCE.

IF a man wishes to become acquainted with any of the trades or professions which engage the industrial classes of mankind, he must, for several years, be busily employed in passing through a course of instruction, an ordeal of errors and correction, before he is at all qualified to perform the duties of his trade or profession, as the case may be, without further aid from his instructors. And even when he has become a proficient in the art or science which he intends to pursue through life, he may still continue to become more skilful, and more thoroughly acquainted with his profession or pursuit.

Perfection is an attribute of God, and evidently beyond the reach of man, in every condition and every occasion in life.

How can a man be otherwise than a creature apt to err, so long as the immortal soul resides in the midst of corruptible flesh? Even the eyes, which may be called the windows through which the soul looks out upon the broad expanse of the universe, and surveys, with awe and admiration, the beauty, grandeur, and sublimity of the works of its own omniscient Creator,

are frequently the medium of deception to the mind. Optical illusions often occur, and when we see clearly the object which we are beholding, it is frequently an ingenious contrivance of men, which leads us to form erroneous conclusions.

The same is equally true of all the senses ; through the medium of which we gain our earliest, most lasting, and most correct ideas of the world around us.

The sense of touch frequently conveys an incorrect idea to the mind.

A person may, on a winter's evening, before retiring to rest, prepare to bathe his feet ; he believes the water prepared, to be warm, he plunges his feet into it, the sensation of heat is so great that with an exclamation of surprise, he quickly withdraws his feet, fearing that they will be scalded ; he pauses a moment, then cautiously puts the tip of his finger into the water to try the temperature again, he even ventures to lay his palm upon its scalding surface, and lo ! it is uncomfortably cold. Such instances of the fallibility of the information which man receives through the medium of his senses, are too numerous and too familiar to need repetition.

Every sentient individual can easily recall similar proofs of fallibility, and every intelligent person can adduce testimony which will bear witness to this truth : viz. : The judgment of man is as liable to lead him

to a conclusion which is erroneous, as his faculties are to exercise a deceptive influence.

If sensation, the medium through which we gain the foundation of our knowledge, is liable to convey erroneous ideas to the mind, if our judgment is liable to be incorrect, if, as is also true, after we have concentrated all the intellectual faculties on a certain subject, and have collected the opinions and arguments of learned men of every nation concerning it, we may still entertain an erroneous opinion; I ask, is it not reasonable to suppose, may we not confidently assert, that man has no gift or faculty which is an unerring guide to truth? That there is not, and from the nature of the constitutional formation of the creature, there cannot be, any innate power, gift, or faculty of the mind or soul, which will always tell a man what is right and what wrong?

But some moral philosophers contend that the conscience is an independent faculty of the mind, a moral sense by which we are enabled to decide immediately concerning the moral quality of actions. They believe that the conscience is an instinctive faculty, which causes us to decide correctly concerning the moral quality of actions, and since it is instinctive, that it enables us to decide immediately, without reasoning, and without reflection.

We have already fully shown that man is not

governed by any instinctive impulse in his decisions concerning the moral quality of actions; we have discussed the claims which instinct has to our consideration, in speaking of the origin of our notions of the moral quality of actions. We also alluded to what we believe to be the foundation of the opinion; or the cause which induced some to adopt it.

They who contend that conscience is an instinctive impulse, observe that we approve examples of generosity, gratitude, fidelity, and the like, and condemn the contrary instantly, without deliberation, without having any interest of our own concerned in them, oftentimes without being conscious of the reason of our approbation, or able to give any reason for it. They also allege that this approbation is uniform and universal, the same kind of conduct being approved or disapproved in all ages and countries of the world.

This latter assertion does not seem to form a part of their ground of belief, but appears to be a mistake which they were led to give credence to, in order that they might be able to reconcile their own judgments to assent to the belief which they defended.

It is evident to the mind of every one, if conscience is an instinctive faculty with which all men are gifted to enable them to decide at once and without reflection, what is right and what wrong with regard to the actions which men may perform, that it must be uni-

form and universal in its approbation of certain acts. Hence those who defend the opinion that the conscience is an instinctive faculty, must also contend that it is uniform and universal in what it approves and disapproves. Their contending for this seems to be a matter of necessity with them, and not at all optional. For from authentic accounts of historians and travellers, we learn that there is scarcely a single vice which, in some age or country of the world, has not been countenanced by public opinion.

In one country it is esteemed an office of piety in children to sustain their aged parents; in another, to despatch them as soon as they begin to become so helpless as to need filial aid. Suicide has been heroism in one age of the world; in another, felony. Theft, which by the laws of most countries is punished, was by the laws of Sparta frequently rewarded. The inhabitants of enlightened nations are delighted with the appearance of happiness, tranquillity, and comfort, and are shocked at beholding the torture or needless suffering of any living creature; but savages are delighted with the writhings and contortions of a victim at the stake.

So that, to believe the conscience is uniform in its approval or disapproval of every action which we may perform, we are obliged to believe what is directly

contrary to the experience of man in every age of the world.

I suppose those who contend that it is an instinctive faculty make a virtue of necessity, and believe the conscience is uniform in its approbation of certain actions, because they must believe this or reject the idea that it is instinctive.

I do not think they would contend for the uniformity of its decisions if their minds were not confused and bewildered by the fact that men approve examples of generosity, gratitude, fidelity, and the like, and condemn the contrary instantly; apparently without deliberation, and frequently without being conscious of possessing a reason, or able to tell the cause of their approbation.

This seems to be the basis of their belief. They do not discover the true cause of our deciding at once and apparently without reflection concerning the moral quality of certain actions; and without taking time to sift the matter, they conclude that conscience must be instinctive, or we would not approve of certain actions without taking time for reflection, and without even being able to give any reason for our approbation.

The truth appears to be this: We approve of acts of generosity, fidelity, &c., because we are taught from infancy to believe that such acts are right; of course we do not take time to consider whether they are right

or wrong before we give our approval to them, because our mind is made up concerning such actions. We have been taught from childhood to believe that they are right. All that we need know, then, is whether the act may be termed generous or faithful; having learned that it may, we decide immediately that it is right. There is no need at all of reflection.

It may be asked, if this is truly the reason that we approve immediately certain actions, and as readily condemn others, why is it that we cannot always give a reason at once for our approbation or disapprobation? The cause of our inability to do so is quite evident. It often happens that we study a subject maturely, weigh every argument for and against, and finally give our judgment. In after years the question is brought up again; we are asked our opinion, we can give it without a moment's reflection; but when we are asked the reason that we entertain such opinion, we find it impossible to recall without some reflection the arguments on which our opinion was founded. It may be that some of the arguments have escaped from the memory never to be recalled again; still our judgment is the same that it would be could we recall every thought.

Some who cannot deny that the decisions of conscience are not universal in fact, who have too much regard for their reputation as learned men to deny the



plainest and most familiar facts, such as that some nations consider infanticide and parricide right, whilst others consider such acts most abominably wicked, whilst they admit candidly that the consciences of men who are taught differently decide differently concerning the same act, endeavor to prove that there is no difference in the decisions of the consciences of men concerning the same question if we judge of the decision by the *intention*.

Of course two persons might do acts which were directly opposed to each other, and yet both intend to do right. This affords more evidence, however, that different men's consciences decide differently on the same subject than that they decide alike. If both men intend to do right, and their consciences decide alike, they will both do the same kind of action.

My conscience tells me that it would be an awfully wicked act to make a sacrifice of my child to Almighty God, and still more wicked to make a sacrificial offering of it to an idol. An idolater's conscience tells him that it is right to sacrifice his child to the god he worships. I intend what is right, and my conscience decides that I must not sacrifice my child; the idolater intends what is right, and his conscience tells him that he must sacrifice his child. The question now is, does my conscience and the conscience of the heathen agree or differ in their decision on this subject? Any one

whom much learning hath not made mad, would say they differ.

We are told that, "in these very cases, in which wrong actions are practised, they are justified on the ground of a good *intention*, or some view of the relation between the parties, which, if true, would render them innocent. 'Thus, if infanticide be justified, it is on the ground that this world is a place of misery, and that the infant is better off' not to encounter its troubles."

In the above paragraph, which is a quotation from "Dr. Wayland's Moral Science," we are told that *wrong actions* are justified by a good intention. He says, if infanticide be justified, it is on the ground that this world is a place of misery; meaning the same as to tell us that *if* infanticide be justified, it is on the ground of good intention. Why does he say *if* infanticide be justified, it is on the ground of good intention? Why could he not justify it himself on that ground? Does he not know that it is right, if the parents have a good INTENTION in murdering their children?

If intention qualifies the act in every case, of course it is right for parents to murder their children if their object in so doing is to hurry them out of this world where they think they will be unhappy, and send them to another where their souls will be eternally happy. This is the conclusion at which we are bound to arrive,

if we adhere strictly to the Doctor's rules about intention. The Doctor must have doubted his own rules when he found they were leading to the decision, the more children we destroy, or the more old men we kill, the more good we accomplish.

Conscience is a name given to our judgment when in the exercise of determining what is right and what wrong in regard to our own acts, and is not more instinctive or intuitive than is our judgment about any other subject.

A man's conscience is no more likely to decide right concerning his own acts when he has not been taught correctly concerning the fundamental principles of morality, than his judgment is to be correct concerning any principle of a science which he has not thoroughly learned; and in judging of acts, the nature of which he has never been taught, his conscience would be as apt to decide wrong, as he would be to decide wrong concerning the principles of a science which he had never studied.

If a man wishes to have a correct judgment as a physician, he must learn the rules and principles by which a physician is governed in forming his opinion of a case. If he wishes to be a judge of common law, he must learn the law and understand the principles on which his judgment is to be based. It is just so with regard to the decisions of conscience. If he does

not understand the principles of moral law, if he does not know the rules by which he is to be governed in his judgment on cases of conscience, he is likely to decide incorrectly. This is evident from the fact that different men's consciences decide differently about the same act. Whilst one man's conscience tells him that a certain act is right, another's conscience says that the opposite of this is right.

By studying the principles of moral law, we become acquainted with our obligations, and there are established in our minds rules of duty, in accordance with which rules we judge of our own acts, and accuse or else excuse ourselves. How could we decide concerning the moral quality of our actions, if we had no rule to guide us in our decisions? And how can we have the rules necessary for enabling us to decide correctly, if we do not learn the principles of moral law?

The rules of duty which are established in our minds by the moral training which we have received, form in our minds a standard to which we can apply any action which we may perform, and judge whether, in accordance with those rules, the action is right or wrong. This judgment is called the dictate of conscience; and is performed in a manner precisely similar to our judgment on any other subject.

In deciding on any question of right or wrong, a train of mental action arises in the mind, by which

the ideas already in the mind are compared with the facts of the case, observing whether these facts correspond with our ideas of right, or conform to what we consider wrong; accordingly, our decision is made. This decision is called judgment. A similar decision with regard to our own acts is called conscience.

Each man's conscience must decide concerning his own acts, according to the standard which he has in his own mind. A difference in education, a difference in mental ability, and the influence of prejudice and of the feelings, must necessarily make a difference in the decisions which men will make concerning the same subject. Some men are inclined to judge of their own acts with great lenity, whilst others will scrutinize themselves closely, and judge their own acts rigorously. This also will cause a difference in the decisions of the consciences of different men.

When a man's conscience condemns the act which he has performed, he feels guilty, he is abased, and feels that he is already severely punished for the wicked action.

It may be asked by some who have felt severely the pangs which conscience inflicts for their guilty deeds, if this is not sufficient punishment? It may possibly prove sufficient, if it produces sufficient repentance to cause them to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. But if they cease not to perform acts

which their consciences condemn, the pain inflicted by offended conscience will grow more and more feeble as their acts of wickedness become more frequent; so that the more wicked a man becomes, the less pain he feels from an offended conscience. It is evident that the more wicked a man is, the more punishment he deserves; but his conscience does not punish him more severely as he sinks deeper into crime. Men sometimes become so wicked, and so utterly insensible to every moral sentiment, that they are said to be devoid of conscience. For such men there must be, as the Bible teaches us, a more excruciating torment reserved than any that it is in the power of conscience to inflict.

He who is condemned by his own conscience is, indeed, guilty. The decisions of conscience are made in accordance with the best rules of morality with which the individual is acquainted.

If, when judging of acts which he wishes to perform, his conscience decides that they are wrong, he may be sure that it would be wrong for him to do them. He would not even have the satisfaction of a good intention. Every one believes those actions to be wrong which his conscience decides are so, until he is convinced to the contrary.

If a man performs an act which his conscience decides is wrong, his intention cannot be to do right,

for he is doing what he believes in his heart to be wrong. He who acts against his conscience is always guilty of wrong. The question may be asked, does a man always act right when he acts according to his conscience? Is he free from blame whenever his conscience acquits him? We cannot answer these questions in the affirmative. We know of too many instances of men acting strictly in accordance with their consciences, whilst they were performing very cruel and wicked deeds.

The Spaniards, no doubt, acted conscientiously when they bore the holy cross before them in their invasion of Mexico, and supposed that they were doing the will of God when they were robbing the poor Mexicans of everything they held dear, of everything they valued. No doubt the consciences of those Spaniards gave them much comfort, and decided that they were doing a truly virtuous act to force a more correct knowledge of religion on these people, who, though possessed of some knowledge of the worship of their Creator, were wholly ignorant of Christianity, and sacrificers of human victims upon their altars. No doubt they also were acting according to their consciences when they caused their altars to reek with the blood of human victims. We cannot say that men who act conscientiously in performing such cruel deeds are doing right.

It is the duty of man constantly to prosecute his moral culture, and to be continually raising his standard of morality higher. It is his duty to cultivate his conscience by continually acquiring a more correct knowledge of the principles of the moral law. If he has but a low standard of right and wrong in his mind, he may be greatly blameable for not making proper exertions to increase his knowledge of moral law, and enable himself to judge more correctly.

The nearer an individual's standard of right approaches to the great standard of moral law, the Bible, the more correctly he will be able to decide concerning the moral quality of actions.

Since we have a standard of moral rules by which we may correct whatever is faulty about the rules which we already acknowledge in our own minds as being right, it is not only in our power to improve our consciences, but it is our duty to do so. This could not be done if conscience were an instinctive faculty; for it is a law of instinct that the animals which are directed by it never improve nor grow less expert in following its promptings.

If the conscience were an instinctive faculty which always directed us aright, we would certainly always be doing right when we acted agreeably to our consciences. But man's conscience is not, like instinct, incapable of improvement; we can continue to en-



lighten our consciences and raise our standard of morality still higher, as long as we possess intellectual powers. "Conscience is never fully formed, but always in the course of formation."

If a man's conscience is not sufficiently enlightened always to determine precisely what is the will of God concerning any action, it cannot be referred to as an ultimate and supreme authority. That a man acts according to his conscience, is not a reason for his actions which can supersede the necessity of assigning other reasons. He may have a very imperfect conscience, and, if acting in accordance with his conscience were all the reason required to justify his actions, it would not matter whether his actions were right or wrong, provided it were justified by his own conscience.

That an act is according to the will of God is the true ground of action, and each man's conscience is to be the judge of his own actions, to determine whether they are in obedience to the will of God or not; consequently, we must be acquainted with God's will before our consciences are prepared to decide correctly, and when our consciences differ on the same subject, one of us must be wrong; the will of God, as he has revealed it in the Holy Bible, must decide between us. To this we can, at all times, safely refer as an ultimate authority.

If the conscience is an instinctive faculty, and of

ultimate authority, we can render no better reason for any act which we would perform, than that conscience tells us it is right. Those who believe in the supreme authority of conscience as an instinctive principle, do sometimes offer as a reason for their opinion, the conviction of their own consciences, and seem to think that because their consciences tell them a thing is so, it must infallibly be correct. They seem to forget that those holding an opinion directly opposed to that for which they are contending, also have consciences.

We will take the following as an example of this kind of reasoning. An individual has made a promise to do an act which is immoral. Before the act is performed, he reflects upon his promise and the immorality of the act, and regrets that he has promised, but nevertheless determines that he will perform the act because he has promised, and his conscience tells him that he ought not to violate his promise, although to fulfil it, he must perform an immoral act; my conscience would decide that he ought to refuse to perform an immoral act, even if he had promised. A promise cannot justify an immoral act. If he should say he is sure that he is right, because his conscience decides that he is, I could, with the same propriety, say that he is mistaken, because my conscience tells me that the act would not be justifiable.

Suppose those who believe that slavery is a moral evil, should urge in confirmation of their opinion, that it must be a moral evil, because their consciences tell them it is morally wrong. I assert that my conscience tells me that slavery is right, therefore it *must* be right, for the dictates of conscience cannot be erroneous. It is evident that conscience cannot be called in to prove an argument, for if we do so, we may frequently have the dictates of conscience opposed to the dictates of conscience.

To urge in favor of any doubtful or contested opinion that it must be correct, because it is agreeable to the dictates of my conscience, is no reason at all in its favor; to use such expression in the form of an argument is not admissible. The use of it in this way is a very good evidence against an opinion which one endeavors to defend, for he would not resort to an argument which can be used with as much force against his opinion as for it, if he were not at a loss for a reason.

Conscience cannot be used as an argument to prove any position. To say, my conscience tells me that a certain belief which I entertain is right, is no proof at all that it is so, for another's conscience may tell him that it is not. In this way we would never arrive at the truth, but could prove just anything that we believe. So that to say, my conscience tells me a

certain action is right, is no stronger proof that it is, than to say I believe it is right.

Because a man believes a thing is true, is very little evidence that it is, for he can believe what is false just as firmly as if it were true. This seems to be so evident that it needs no proof; and I should not offer a single example to prove that we can believe that which is false, as firmly as if it were true, if it were not said by some of the principal defenders of the opinion that conscience is instinctive, we cannot believe what is false. If all that we believe is true, truth is the easiest thing imaginable to discover, and it no longer "lies at the bottom of a well."

Dr. Francis Wayland has expressed the following opinion: "Now, as our Creator has constituted us such as we are, and as, by our very constitution, we do thus consider conscience to be the most authoritative impulse of our nature, it must be the most authoritative, unless we believe that He has deceived us, or, which is the same thing, that He has so formed us as to give credit to a lie."

Every one who chooses to do so, can give a great number of examples which show conclusively that we *can* give credit to a lie. I do not see that there is anything wrong, either, in our being so constituted as to believe a lie. We would not be human if we could not believe that which is false. Hear, in the beautiful

language of Milton, how the human mind can give credit to a lie. The serpent exclaims to Eve,

“Queen of this universe! do not believe  
Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die;  
How should ye? by the fruit? it gives you life  
To knowledge: by the threatener? look on me,  
Me who have touched and tasted; yet both live,  
And life more perfect have attained than fate  
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.”

Trusting the words of the serpent, and believing that which was false to be without guile, she ate of the forbidden fruit, and still, not aware that she had given credit to a lie, she hastened to Adam, bearing in her now polluted hand some of the fatal fruit, and, accosting him, said,

“This tree is not, as we are told, a tree  
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown  
Opening the way; but of divine effect  
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste.”

Eve believed the words of the serpent, she ate of the forbidden fruit, she died.

That man is so constituted as to believe what is false as readily as that which is true, is too evident to need much proof. His credulity is so often a source of disappointment, that it is frequently difficult for him to believe that which is really true; he often believes what is false, and rejects the truth.

In the days of Noah, he alone, of all the inhabitants of the earth, believed that it would be submerged beneath the waters of the flood. He believed the truth, the rest of mankind gave credit to an untrue belief. He was saved, the rest were lost.

In the Sacred Scriptures, the conscience is spoken of as being either good or evil. 1 Tim. i. 5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a *good* conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Acts xxiv. 16, "And herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." Heb. x. 22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an *evil* conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Since the conscience may be either good or evil, it does not seem that it can be an instinctive principle which God has bestowed on man to enable him to decide at once concerning the moral quality of actions; for if it were such a principle bestowed upon us by our Creator for our good, it could be only good, it could not be evil.

We have already given a definition of conscience, it remains now for us to determine what is a good conscience and what an evil one.

A good conscience is void of offence toward God and man. Since our consciences are such as our

education makes them, differing according to the different kinds of instruction which we have received, when we arrive at mature years and begin to excuse or accuse ourselves for the actions we perform, we all find that we are very incompetent judges of right and wrong; it becomes our duty at once to endeavor to gain such information as will enable us to decide correctly concerning the moral quality of our actions; we must improve our consciences; we must eradicate the incorrect impressions which have been made upon our minds by false instruction, and supply the deficiency with correct information.

We must search the Scriptures, and form our consciences according to the model which our Saviour and his apostles have given us.

We must endeavor to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man; but we must not always be satisfied with a good answer of conscience, for the conscience may be evil. In which case it would excuse us when we perform evil actions. We should endeavor to act in such a manner as to enjoy the approbation of a good conscience. We should endeavor to become thoroughly acquainted with our obligations to God and man, and daily perform those obligations with unfailing fidelity.

He who is aware of all the obligations which he owes to God and man, and invariably performs every

duty which he owes to his Creator and to his fellow-man, can fully enjoy the comforting answer of a good conscience. But how few of us can with the Apostle Paul exclaim: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man"?

When we neglect or refuse to perform those actions which our judgment has decided to be right, we soon cease to exercise the judgment at all, in deciding whether it is right or wrong to perform certain actions. We care not about that, but exercise our judgment upon a question which is entirely different. The object of our inquiry then is, whether the action which we wish to perform is expedient or not. We seek to discern, whether it will be profitable or not; and if the action which we would perform is punishable by the law of the land, we know it is wrong to do it, yet we care not for that, the object of our solicitude is whether we are liable to detection. If these questions are answered by our judgment in a satisfactory manner, we perform the act without asking or caring whether it be right or wrong.

Such is the course of action to which an evil conscience would lead us. An evil conscience does not accuse us when we do wrong, but rather excuses us if we can do so without being detected.

How different is our course if we resolve to im-



prove our conscience; to endeavor to lead a life void of offence toward God and toward man! We strive daily to become more thoroughly acquainted with the will of God; we seek to know all the obligations which we owe to God, and to each other; we try to learn our duty, and to perform it with unflinching determination. In the performance of such acts we feel that we are leading a life void of offence toward God and man, and we enjoy the comforting answer of a good conscience.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### VIRTUE.

VIRTUE consists in a performance of the duties which we owe to God, to mankind, and to ourselves.

Piety, reverence, resignation, and gratitude are a portion of the duties which we owe to God. Of these piety is the chief duty; since without it the others are of little worth, and could scarcely be practised.

Piety includes both veneration and love to God. The pious man fulfils the greatest commandment that was given to man. Without piety we could not obey that greatest of commandments, "Thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Without piety we could not perform other duties which we owe to God. It is the basis, the chief corner-stone of moral character. Without it, we are not apt to perform any duty which is virtuous, unless we do so for the purpose of gaining the approbation of men, that they may confer some favor on us, which we could not hope to receive unless they thought we were worthy recipients of the favors which they have a right to confer.

Reverence very naturally follows piety; for he who loves God, cannot restrain emotions of admiration mingled with fear when he beholds the beauty, magnificence, and sublimity of the mighty works of His hand. He cannot fail to admire a Being whose goodness and abundant knowledge are rendered so evident by even the most minute portions of his creation. He cannot fail to fear that power which is so great, so omnipotent as to produce all the wonderful works of creation.

Resignation also depends on piety. When afflictions, sorrow, and disease are pressing heavily upon us; when adversity is bowing the spirits, and the unhappy emotions arising from disappointment are swelling within the breast, it is hard to say, Lord, Thy will

be done. Without piety our resignation would fail under such circumstances.

Gratitude to God is an emotion of the heart consisting in a feeling of thankfulness for the many blessings which are daily conferred upon us by our beneficent Creator. It implies a feeling heart and a proper sense of duty in him whose mind is affected by the emotions which it produces. It swells the heart with a desire to praise God, and is beautifully exhibited in the fervent, thankful prayer.

The duties which we owe to mankind are virtues of an ennobling character. The principal of these are justice, charity, and fidelity. The greatest is charity. This virtue is most beautifully eulogized by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. chap. xiii. He begins thus: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

The duties which we owe to ourselves are of a prudential nature, such as sobriety, temperance, care of health, and preservation of life.

Virtue consists not in the performance of any one of the duties above mentioned, though each one of these duties may, in itself considered, be called a virtue. But strictly speaking, virtue includes all the duties which we are under obligation to discharge.

If we perform the duties which we owe to ourselves,

neglecting those which we owe to God and mankind; or if we perform those which we owe to ourselves and to mankind, without discharging those we owe to God, we are not virtuous.

If an individual should perform, with scrupulous exactness, the duties which he owes to himself and to mankind, being regardless of his obligations to God, he could not claim the reward of virtue. Yet he would, no doubt, receive the reward of such a degree of virtue as he possessed. If he endeavored to please men rather than God, he might be faithful, just, and charitable, and by these means he might gain the esteem and approbation of his fellow-men. But if he has no piety, and does not seek to please God, he cannot expect a reward from his Creator for such virtue.

Every man is rewarded in proportion to the amount of virtue he possesses. If he only possesses so much virtue as will induce him to perform the obligations which he owes to mankind, he will enjoy the confidence and approbation of those who know him. If he performs the obligations which he owes to himself, he will enjoy good health, a competence of worldly goods, and length of days. But if he is truly virtuous, if he performs all the obligations which he owes to himself, to mankind, and to his Creator, he may confidently expect to enjoy the full reward of virtue.

The performance of the duties which we owe to mankind, will be rewarded by the esteem of our fellow-man. But if we would enjoy the approbation of our Creator, we must perform not those duties only, which we owe especially to God, as a being superior to, and distinct from all other beings, but those also which we owe to mankind and to ourselves.

The question may arise: How do we become acquainted with the existence and nature of those duties which virtue requires us to perform? And whence arises the obligation resting on us to perform those duties? In answer to these questions, we are told that, "By an exertion of our intellectual faculties, we become acquainted with the existence and attributes of God," and in this way we become acquainted with our duties and obligations. A better answer seems to me to be, that God's will is revealed to us, and by becoming acquainted with it, we learn what our duties are, and the obligation resting on us to live virtuously.

I do not think it true that man could, simply by an effort of the intellect, unaided by revelation, have become acquainted with the existence and attributes of God. If it were so, it would argue that God had performed a work of supererogation by revealing himself and his attributes to mankind through the Sacred Scriptures. In no case can it be shown that our Creator has left undone, that which ought to have

been done, or has done more than was necessary to accomplish His designs.

It is through the medium of revelation we learn that there is a God, the Creator of all things. Through the same medium, we gain a knowledge of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness. By means of our intellects, we are enabled to discern innumerable proofs of the existence of those attributes which are peculiar to God: and by the same means, when we behold the wonderful works of His hands; when at night we cast our wondering gaze upon the sparkling dome above, brilliant with shining stars; when we look upon the broad ocean, and behold the waters separated from the land; or when we view the busy scenes of life in which all animated nature is performing its allotted work, the mind rapidly runs back to the Great First Cause, and we exclaim, Man *can* reason from effect to cause. This is very true; to a certain extent he can; but he can do this only when he is acquainted with certain causes which can produce the effect he beholds. For example, he is acquainted with the existence of man, and his ability to build structures similar to the pyramids of Egypt; hence he concludes that they are the work of men. But he is astonished at their wonderful durability, having stood, almost perfect in every respect, as when first erected, during the lapse of ages; and he is at a loss to conjecture what means

were employed to construct those wonderful monuments of a bygone age.

We can form, at least, a satisfactory conclusion as to what cause has produced a certain effect, if we are familiar with things that can produce the effect under consideration. But it is utterly impossible for us to form any reasonable conjecture concerning the cause which has produced the effect we behold, if we never have seen or heard of any being possessed of power sufficient to perform such a work. How then could man, without the aid of revelation, have learned that there is a God, the Creator of all things? He could behold this wonderful work, the earth, and the wonderfully constructed creatures that inhabit it; but what being is he acquainted with, except by revelation, who could perform such a work? None. Then, to none could he have attributed it.

We could comprehend the term eternity, just as easily as we could discover the existence and attributes of God without their being revealed to us. We know there is a God, the Creator of all things. We know also that he is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; we know his attributes; we are told that he is self-created; but this, our feeble intellects cannot comprehend, since all things with which we are acquainted are created by some primordial power. From this circumstance, man is naturally

inclined to ask, Who made God? He finds it just as impossible to answer this question satisfactorily, as it is to comprehend the self-creation, or as it would have been to know of the existence and attributes of God, simply by an exertion of the intellect, unaided by revelation.

It is not necessary to prove that we could know God and his attributes by an exertion of the intellect, in order to prove that all men are under obligation to act virtuously; if it were so, I should doubt the universality of the obligation.

The obligation to act virtuously is the same whether we are ignorant of our duty or well instructed. It is the duty of all men to obey the will of God; and it being his will that men should be virtuous, constitutes the obligation to be so.

Since it is our belief that men should depend upon the sacred Scriptures as the source from whence they derive a knowledge of the will of God, and since we believe that it is through the revelation of truths contained in that sacred volume that we acquire the only correct information which we possess concerning the existence, attributes, and will of God, it would perhaps be proper, in this place, to argue a little farther, the question, Can man gain a knowledge of the existence and attributes of God, by an exertion of the intellect?



All mankind, even the most ignorant, barbarous, and savage tribes, have some faint idea of the existence of a God. But the universal prevalence of this notion of the Deity, does not prove that man may, by an effort of the intellect, acquire a knowledge of the existence and attributes of the Deity; for they are not acquainted, fully, either with the existence of God or with the nature of his attributes. They are almost wholly ignorant of his will. They have but a confused idea of the existence of a supreme being, which idea must have been derived from revelation, and not from reasoning concerning what they behold in nature.

If by means of the intellect alone, without the aid of revelation, man could become acquainted with the existence and attributes of God, it is strange indeed, that the absurd notions of heathen mythology prevailed so universally among men, even at a time when some of the brightest intellects that ever animated man were exerting their full force upon this subject. Why did not the wise men of those days discover that the long list of gods and goddesses which they worshipped, were mere creatures of the imagination? Why did they not discover that there is but one God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe? Even after Paul told them that those images which were made with hands were no gods, instead of

believing him, "they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The wise men of those days had great intellect, and their reasoning faculties were fully developed; but what did it teach them of the will of God, or of his existence and attributes? We are told that some of the wise men taught that there is but one God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe. We doubt not that they taught this fact, but we have no idea that they learned it from reasoning on what they could see before them in nature, we have every reason to believe that they were taught it by men. Men who had learned it from those to whom God had revealed himself.

"This light of reason, these dictates of conscience, where are they found? Show me, produce me one example of the power of this light of nature, this light of reason, these dictates of conscience. Show me this eye of reason with this light of nature, working faith in God; working out Christian civilization, refinement of manners, temperance, justice, public virtue, and humanity; to say nothing of piety, and the love and admiration of the purity of God! and I will lend a willing ear to such a demonstration. But the annals of the world, and the experience of the present generation, afford no such instances.

"I am told of the wisdom and civilization, and of

the moral virtues of a Solon, a Pythagoras, a Socrates, a Plato, a Xenophon, an Aristotle, a Zeno, a Seneca, &c. I also know something about them, and of the schools in which they were brought up, the schools which they founded, and the lives which they led. I will not 'draw their frailties from their dread abode.'

*"But they were educated men.* In what schools of tradition were they brought up? *They received instruction.* They did not create it. The glimmering, flickering lamp which gave them light, was kindled by radiations from a fire that God kindled on Mount Sinai, in Arabia, from a mystic lamp that shone in a tabernacle pitched by Moses in the desert, and from a temple which Solomon the Wise raised in Jerusalem. Sinai is older than Athens or Parnassus; and Mount Zion than Mars-hill. Moses was born more than a thousand years before Pythagoras, Solon, Soerates, Plato, Xenophon, Zeno, or Seneca. Some of these were contemporaries of the Jewish prophets. But Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, antedate them all more than fifteen hundred years. David sang before Homer, and Solomon wrote his Proverbs and his Ecclesiastes before Solon, the oldest of them, was born."

It is not difficult to account for the knowledge which men have of the Deity, without believing that they obtained their knowledge from the light of nature. It is much easier to account for it by believing what

the Bible says. It tells us that God revealed himself to man, and told man what he wished him to do. The knowledge of God would naturally spread, from those to whom he had revealed himself, to the rest of mankind. God revealed himself to Adam, and Noah was well acquainted with the existence and attributes of God. From Adam the human race descended, and since his day, the knowledge of God has existed in the minds of men.

It would make no difference, however, with respect to the obligations resting upon us, whether we become acquainted with them by means of revelation, or by an exertion of the intellect; if we possess the means of acquiring that knowledge, and do not avail ourselves of the means afforded, we are inexcusable. We cannot perform our duties when we are ignorant of them, except by accident, and of course we should not in that case be acting with a desire to obey the will of God.

Man's intellectual powers are capable of progressive improvement, and his progress in virtue may be commensurate with his ability to acquire knowledge; for the more we know of our obligations, the better we are prepared to perform them. And since, by our progressive improvement in virtue, we approach nearer and still nearer to perfection, it seems evident that our constitution is such, that we may, by per-

severing in well-doing, attain to that degree of perfection in virtue, that transcendent purity, which will really fit us for entering the society of the celestial spirits which surround the throne of the eternal Jehovah. Such transcendent virtue is the highest aspiration of the best of men.

As the soul can go on thus, purifying itself and becoming more and more virtuous, so it can follow the downward course of vice, and sink deeper and still deeper by its influence, until it at last becomes so depraved as to be irretrievably lost; so vile, indeed, as to pass unnoticed the fair promises and glorious reward which virtue offers to entice it from the error of its ways. It is evident, then, that the best way to promote our happiness and to protect ourselves from the corrupting, dangerous, and destructive influence of vice, is to flee from it at all times, and not permit ourselves to take the first step in it; for, having taken the first step, we are too apt to proceed step by step, slowly it may be, yet surely, to the inevitable destruction which awaits those who depart from the paths of virtue and return not. Even if we return to virtue after having indulged for a time in the allurements of vice, there is a void to fill up, a portion of our time lost to virtue, which no act of our lives can ever afterward repay, a void which we are powerless to fill.

Since it is our duty to act virtuously at all times, and

since we cannot, at any time, be more virtuous than duty requires, it would, of course, be impossible for us to repair the breach which we have made in a virtuous life. It is like allowing a moment of time to pass by unheeded; it is gone, never to be restored. Such is the case with virtue; no act of ours can remove the dark spot upon our characters which is caused by departing from virtue; yet our Heavenly Father, in His infinite goodness and mercy, will throw a veil over it, so that it will appear no more against us for ever, if we turn from vice, and serve Him with a pure heart.

Owing to a lack of moral culture, in some instances to the intricacy of the subject, and, in others, to false teaching, men do not always perceive the relations in which they stand, and which give rise to moral obligation; consequently, men are sometimes unconscious of the obligation resting upon them, for the reasons just stated.

They sometimes perceive the relation without having the will to perform the obligation. In this case their want of virtue is evident: but in the other cases mentioned we cannot so readily determine whether a man is to be held guilty of culpable neglect, or whether he is excusable for failing to perform his obligations.

However, his ignorance, or his being led into error

by false teaching, cannot, in any way, change the relations under which he is created; therefore his obligations remain unaltered. If he does not know that he ought to do unto others as he would have others do unto him, his ignorance does not change the obligation; it is a duty which all men owe to each other. If he does not know that he ought to love God, still piety is a virtue which every one ought to practise; and one's ignorance of the fact by no means removes the obligation; for God is the author of man's existence, the preserver of his life, and the promoter of his happiness, and this is, nevertheless, true, even though he should be ignorant of the existence of God.

I do not believe it is taught in any part of the Bible that a man is excusable for not discharging his duty, if he is ignorant of his moral obligations. On the contrary, there are many portions of the sacred Scriptures which seem to oppose the belief that ignorance is an excuse for not discharging our duties.

Of course, no reasonable person believes that wilful ignorance is an excuse for failing to perform our obligations. It is doubly wicked to perform a sinful act ignorantly, if our ignorance is owing to a want of inclination to learn our duty. But many have not the means of becoming acquainted with the will of God; and our ignorance of what is right is often owing to our inability to decide on account of the in-

tricacy of the subject. Our duty in such cases is not to do anything doubtfully. Such is the instruction of St. Paul. James also teaches the same (General Epistle, chap. i. verse 5), "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally and upbraids not, and it shall be given him. (V. 6,) But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. (V. 7,) For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

It would, indeed, seem that a man should be pitied and spared condemnation, if his failure to perceive the relations in which he is constituted is owing to his unwary credulity; being misguided by false teaching. But, if we consider ignorance an excuse in such cases for neglect of duty, we overlook the fault of taking the works and instructions of other men for our rules of right, and neglecting to study the sacred Scriptures for ourselves; in which way we might learn correctly our duties and obligations.

If men's ignorance of their duty proceeds from entire lack of instruction, and they never during their lives have had an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, it would seem evident to our imperfect judgment that they are excusable if they fail to perform their obligations.

Barbarous and savage tribes, for instance, are be-



lieved by many to be excusable in the sight of God for most of the wicked acts which they perform. This may be true, but it is almost impossible for us to decide to what extent they are responsible.

They all have some knowledge of the Deity, though the faint ray of light which illumines their dark path is but feeble and flickering. It furnishes such a guide to those benighted wanderers to eternity, as the pale, dim light of the far distant stars to the traveller who wanders forth from his dwelling when the shadows of evening have enveloped the earth in thick darkness. Yet, if they do but follow the light which they perceive, their reward is sure.

From the following portion of the sacred Scriptures it appears that if they fail to discharge their duties to the utmost of their abilities, they must suffer the penalty of their transgressions, notwithstanding their ignorance: "For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

It often happens in the course of life that we perceive our obligation to perform certain duties, but do not feel disposed to discharge the obligation. If, from a love of duty, we perform our obligations, independ

ently of our inclinations, we strengthen our resolution to act in obedience to the will of God. By repeatedly performing any duty which is not, at first, agreeable to our feelings, we enjoy so much satisfaction in the consciousness of having done right, that it finally becomes a pleasure to do that which has been the means of our repeatedly enjoying the comforting answer of a good conscience.

Any one who has gained that degree of self-control by which he is enabled to discharge his duties from a high resolve to perform his obligations to others independently of feeling, has attained to no slight degree of virtue. There is far more praiseworthiness in performing an action from a regard for moral obligation irrespective of feeling, than in doing the same act from feeling irrespective of the obligation.

If a man is impelled to the performance of his duty, both by feeling and moral obligation, it is no trial for him to do it. Acts of virtue would be his chief pleasure; but if he acts contrary to his feelings to fulfil his moral obligations, it requires a struggle; a great effort of the will, aided by a considerable degree of moral worth, is necessary to enable him to subdue the feelings and make them subservient to the will.

If a man is by nature inclined to be honest, he cannot covet his neighbor's goods, and he would be

honest whether impelled by moral obligation or not; to be honest, would require no effort on his part.

{Suppose that another person who had an ardent desire to become possessed of his neighbor's goods should invariably resist all thievish propensities, he would be honest too; but with him there would be a continual struggle going on between the will and the feelings. If a man so constituted can be strictly honest, he deserves greater praise than he whose feelings harmonize with his obligations; for he gives stronger proof of enduring virtue.

The man who is not tempted to sin, can very easily obey the will of his Creator. The man who has no desire to perform a certain act of wickedness, and no inducement to do so, is not likely to err in that particular. But we are all tempted in some way to sin; and if we resist the temptation we deserve the greater praise, and our virtue is strengthened. The apostle James says: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

A few remarks concerning habit appear very properly to claim a place among other things which affect our virtue.

Men perform many acts of virtue without having their moral obligations either to mankind or to their Creator in their thoughts; this is the effect of habit;

and this fact warns us of the importance of forming virtuous habits. Habit has a powerful influence on the mind and actions of man, both in impelling him to the performance of virtuous actions when he has formed correct habits, and in preventing him from avoiding evil practices when vicious habits have been formed.

It is important to become habitually virtuous, not only because we then act virtuously almost involuntarily; but because if we are not thus virtuous we are occasionally indulging in some vice—thus forming a habit of vicious conduct, and by degrees riveting the chains of death upon ourselves.

The difficulty of freeing ourselves from evil habits, when they are once confirmed, is forcibly illustrated by the drinker of ardent spirits.

“The bibber of wine and the drinker of ardent spirits readily acknowledge that the sensation was at first only moderately pleasing, and perhaps in the very slightest degree. Every time they carried the intoxicating potion to their lips the sensation grew more pleasing, and the desire for it waxed stronger. Perhaps they were not aware that this process was going on in virtue of a great law of humanity; but they do not pretend to deny the fact. They might, indeed, have suspected at an early period that chains were gathering around them, whatever might be the cause;

but what objection had they to being bound with links of flowers, delightful while they lasted, and easily broken when necessary? But here was the mistake: link was added to link, chain was woven with chain, till he who boasted of his strength was at last made sensible of his weakness, and himself a prisoner, a captive, a slave."

Thus we perceive that the mind and the physical organization may become so subservient to habit, that it is almost impossible to free ourselves from its shackles.

Habits of virtue are just as stern and as difficult to overcome as vicious habits; and if we persevere in a course of virtue for many years, we will become so accustomed to doing right that we will continue to do so without being often inclined to err, and without even pausing to think of the moral obligations which originally induced us to form such habits.

## CHAPTER V.

## HUMAN HAPPINESS.

HUMAN happiness consists in the enjoyment of pleasure unmixed with pain. In this definition of happiness we take no account of that calm tranquillity of soul which is the result of Christian purity of life. That of itself renders a man happy under the most distressing circumstances. The soul of the Christian may be calm and even happy, whilst his body is burning on the funeral pile of the martyr. He looks forward with confident expectation of being received by his Father in Heaven with the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" and, regardless of the temporary suffering of the body, he is happy in anticipating that bliss which is to last for ever.

Without this hope which animates the bosom of the pious Christian, there can be no such thing as permanent happiness on earth.

Man is so constituted that both his mental and physical organization conspire to change a state of existence which, it would seem, is most desirable.

The body is, at all times, subject to various maladies which cause pain and distress, which, for a time,

greatly exceed any pleasurable emotion that can be excited. So long as disease is racking the body with pain, we cannot be happy; we cannot enjoy a pleasure mingled with pain. Health, then, is essential to happiness; that degree of happiness which man may enjoy without the consolation which Christianity affords.

Our physical organization is such that we do not usually enjoy a continuation of health and entire freedom from pain for a long period of time, so that the interruptions to happiness from this source alone would prevent us from ever becoming permanently happy on earth.

An ill-organized mind is continually depriving its possessor of those means of happiness which every one has a right to enjoy.

If the mind of a man dwells upon unpleasant occurrences, looks forward to the time when others still more disagreeable shall happen, always beholds the dark side of the picture of human life, a deep-seated melancholy will overshadow his spirits, and his gloomy countenance will, at a glance, reveal the fact that sad and sorrowful thoughts exclude happiness from his bosom.

If man could become permanently happy on earth, the most important inquiry would be, By what mode of life is that state of existence to be attained? But

since he cannot hope for continual and uninterrupted enjoyment, we will endeavor to learn by what mode of life he may reasonably expect to receive the greatest amount of enjoyment unmixed with pain. We will endeavor to learn whether a life of virtue or of vice will contribute more to happiness.

The virtuous man enjoys in moderation the means of happiness which God has furnished; he is prudent in all things; so that he seldom violates the will of God in any respect, living, as nearly as man can, in strict obedience to the will of his Creator.

The vicious man plunges into excess of every kind; lays hold on every enjoyment within his reach, regardless whether it may be partaken of lawfully or unlawfully; he drains the cup of pleasure to the very dregs. The wretchedness of such individuals at a later period of their lives, and their insatiable thirst for new pleasures, a thirst which is never satisfied; their dispirited dejection and melancholy when in a state of quiet and sobriety, all attest the fact that they have acted unwisely, and taken the wrong road in their eager pursuit of happiness. They wander entirely away from the path of virtue, the true road to happiness.

Mankind have been in pursuit of happiness since the days of the dwellers in the garden of Eden till the present time. Various are the modes by which they have endeavored to attain to this desirable state of



existence, and various the success with which they have met.

The restless activity of the human mind is such that in the pursuit of this grand object of our lives, all the joys of Eden could not afford happiness enough to satisfy just two human beings. Even in that beautiful abode, surrounded by all the joys of earth, man learned to believe that he was not as happy as he might be. He felt that there was a void not yet filled, a degree of happiness to which he had not yet attained. In the vain hope of enjoying this imagined degree of happiness, he dared to violate the direct command of his Creator.

Of all the plans which men have hitherto tried, of all the conditions and positions in which they have been placed in life, none have proved capable of producing permanent happiness. The experience of all ages proves that man cannot be permanently happy on earth. Yet man is so constituted as to derive a certain degree of happiness from a variety of sources.

The philosopher, for example, derives a certain degree of happiness from the pleasure which study affords him; from discovering the cause of existing phenomena, hitherto unknown; from being governed by reason rather than by desire, and from such other

sources of enjoyment as are connected with scientific pursuits.

The sensualist derives, or more properly endeavors to derive, happiness from the pleasures of sense and the unrestrained indulgence of his appetites. This plan of seeking happiness only serves to lure its votaries on to a sure and speedy destruction.

The laboring man derives a certain amount of happiness from his pursuits, which is afforded him by the enjoyment he has in the profits of his labor. And so it is with every pursuit in life; each promising an increase of happiness, but none having the power to make happiness permanent.

When we reflect upon the various means which our Father in Heaven has provided for contributing to the happiness of man, it would indeed seem to the partial observer to be a part of his design that man should be permanently happy on earth, as well as in heaven. When we behold how plainly every part of his creation exhibits a certain means adapted to a certain end, when we consider the intricate construction of the human system and the perfection with which every portion of that system is formed, we are apt to think that such a being ought to be happy. We behold all this, and ask with some degree of surprise, Why is he not happy?

The pleasures which flow into the soul through the

medium of the senses, are as countless as the sands of the sea-shore. But there is a peculiarity about the physical construction of man which we must not overlook; for it not only answers the question, in part, Why are we not happy? but it also testifies in favor of our belief, that man is most happy when he is most virtuous.

In every means provided in the physical construction of man, for contributing to his happiness, there is an accompanying cause of sorrow; and that, too, in the very medium through which the pleasure is derived; so that the utmost degree of caution, prudence, and temperance are requisite in all of our acts, else a greater degree of sorrow than of pleasure will be our portion.

Through the medium of vision, we enjoy the pleasure of beholding flowering meadows, richly-adorned gardens, picturesque landscapes, beautiful cascades, grand and magnificent cataracts. We behold the rainbow with its varied hues, and the deep sea dotted here and there with a verdant island.

Such scenes, too numerous to mention, contribute greatly to the happiness of men, by diverting their minds for a time from the cares and toils of life, and filling the soul with that unalloyed pleasure which we call happiness. But although we may, through the medium of vision, behold many gratifying scenes,

some of which may for a time produce an ecstasy of delight, still, through the same medium, we may behold the most odious and revolting scenes, such as would produce exceedingly disagreeable and unhappy sensations.

So it is with each of the senses with which man is endowed. We may be enraptured with soft, melodious, and tuneful sounds; or we may be almost distracted by those which are harsh, discordant, and inharmonious. We may be delighted by sweet odors, or nauseated by disagreeable ones. Touch and taste follow the same rule. Hence it is evident that man is not so constituted as to be permanently happy in life. And since the same medium through which joy is received, is liable to become the source of sorrow, he who seeks happiness in sensual gratification, is as liable to find sorrow as joy.

There are many persons who do not expect to enjoy happiness in an uninterrupted indulgence of their appetites, but seek it in some other way which is equally uncertain. Some hope to become happy by acquiring wealth; others seek happiness in rank and titles of distinction, and in the various other objects which call forth the efforts of the ambitious; vainly hoping that their happiness will be complete and permanent when the object of their pursuit is obtained.

The industrial pursuits contribute greatly to the

happiness, not only of those who are thus usefully employed, but of those also who are in need of the product of their labors. There is a happiness in being usefully employed, a happiness which riches cannot supply. This is evinced in the disappointment which men feel, when by the profits of their labor they have acquired wealth enough to enable them to retire from business. They had vainly hoped that wealth would make them permanently happy, but to their sorrow they find that they were really more happy when cheered by the consciousness of being usefully employed, and gratified by the steady approach to that object which they wished to accomplish. A change of circumstances cannot bring the expected degree of happiness.

The laboring man who has accumulated sufficient wealth to enable him to retire from business, is surprised to learn that after he has ceased to labor and begun to enjoy life, as he would call it, the amount of happiness which he enjoys in his new mode of life falls far short of his expectations. He is apt to be much less happy than whilst engaged at his former business. Then all of his time was occupied, and whilst successful, he enjoyed the profits of his labor, the increase of business, and the satisfaction of earning a support by honest industry.

Whilst a man is thus engaged, he is not apt to

attend to any kind of pursuit by which he might amuse or instruct himself when business was stopped, and his time unemployed. He is too busy to attend to such pursuits, and when he has grown old with laborious habits, he has no taste for intellectual pursuits. He is not accustomed to society, not being willing to spare a portion of his time for social intercourse with his neighbors. Consequently, when he retires from business, his time hangs heavily upon him, and he knows not how to beguile the weary hours.

After all, he finds that there is more of happiness in being usefully employed, than he had before imagined. He also learns that *he* is sure to suffer the pangs of disappointment, who seeks to obtain some object in life by which he shall enjoy permanent happiness.

In the study of the sciences, a man lives, as it were, in a different world from that in which he lives who seeks happiness in the gratification of his appetites. He is withdrawn from the turmoil of life and strife with men for those preferments which are usually sought after, and his mind calmly pursues its search for truth in a peaceful and tranquil way; no moment of his life is a blank which he knows not how to fill up; and he is exceedingly happy, for a time at least, when, after having sought diligently for some hidden

truth, his labor is crowned with success; or having discovered something which will materially benefit mankind, his benevolent heart gives utterance to its feelings, in the joyful exclamation—Eureka—Eureka! His happiness, also, is transitory, yet it is complete; for he hopes not to obtain permanent happiness in any joy that earth can afford.

Ambition promises happiness to a great number of men; they strive, toil, and suffer in the hope of being happy at last, in the enjoyments of the high object of their pursuit. If they obtain the object for which they so earnestly strive, their happiness may be intense for a time, but it must also be short-lived. No matter how high the object may be considered by men, still it is subject to the same rule that governs human happiness from any other source; consequently it cannot last long.

The object being attained, the motive for ambition ceases; and the human mind cannot be continually recalling a joy which has passed, and enjoying it over and over again, without becoming tired and disgusted. It looks forward for some other and still greater work to accomplish, so that, if the highest hope of the most ambitious of men were realized, no great degree of happiness would result therefrom.

Alexander was such a man, and his ambition was gratified. He passed through the oriental nations,

conquering all that portion of the globe which was then believed to be the world, carrying death and destruction in his train, hurrying thousands of human beings off the stage of action, as if some dreadful pestilence had swept over the land. The object of his ambition was to conquer all the nations of the world. He gained that object. Was he then happy? Alas, no! He wept because there were no more worlds that he could conquer. Earth could gratify his lofty ambition no longer; he had no other source of enjoyment, so he became a wretched, depraved being, and died a most ignoble death.

It seems that some persons, owing either to the peculiarity of their mental or physical construction, or to both, are so constituted as to enjoy the same pleasures much more intensely than others; but it does not appear from this fact that they are so formed as to be happier than others of a different temperament; for he who feels pleasure thus intensely is just as liable to intense suffering. The chances for pleasure and pain being about equal, his condition would be no better than that of the man whose feelings are not excessive. He who enjoys the pleasures which are strewn along his path in moderation, generally takes grief calmly.

Human happiness is not a study of to-day, a new object just sprung into existence, which engages the attention of mankind from its novelty alone; it has



been an object of pursuit among all classes of men in every age of the world.

The ancient philosophers exhibited a knowledge of this subject so profound, that their instructions ought not to be passed over without some attention.

In those days, when philosophy began to flourish, many believed that wealth was the greatest source of happiness that lay in the reach of man. This belief has not yet passed entirely out of the minds of men, though perhaps more concealed and hidden deeper in the recesses of the heart, yet exhibited with sufficient distinctness by men in their daily transactions, to give evidence of its existence. Some of the philosophers, too, were believers in the omniscience of wealth in producing happiness: if we are to believe the story of the search for that alchemy, the philosopher's stone, which was to turn all it touched to gold. The wisest of the philosophers had, as we are told, a great contempt for riches. They knew full well that a man's happiness does not depend on the amount of property which he possesses.

An extreme case was furnished to mankind which exhibited in a most striking manner how inefficient wealth is in begetting happiness. Croesus, king of Lydia, was the richest man in the world; he had acquired an immense amount of treasure by gathering the gold which was mingled with the sands of the

river Paetolus, which river flowed through his kingdom. Judging, as was customary, that a man's wealth was the measure of his happiness, he thought himself the happiest man in the world. Wishing to know if Solon judged a man's happiness by the same rule, he asked him, Of all the men he had ever known, whom did he deem the happiest? Solon answered, Tellus—a peaceful and quiet Athenian. Cræsus was much surprised to learn that Solon could believe an obscure citizen to be happier than the richest king in the world. But, in the end, he learned that wealth could not shield him from wretchedness. He was, with all his wealth, very unhappy on account of the sad fate of his sons; and, finally, a powerful king came and stripped him of his wealth, and made him a prisoner the remainder of his life.

The lives of Diogenes and Soerates admonish us against a regard for sensual gratification, and prove that contentment is the first step to human happiness.

The visit paid to Diogenes by Alexander the Great, whose wants and whose ambition a world could not satisfy, contrasts most forcibly the pleasures of ambition with the happiness of contentment. Diogenes, though a dweller in a tub, was far happier than the monarch of the world. (Contentment seems to be the alchemy which will turn all that it touches, not to gold, but to something better, to happiness.)

But how is this contentment to be obtained? By doggedly commanding the impulses, and resolutely suppressing the emotions? This course would not result in happiness; for by doing so, you diminish the power of deriving pleasure from the sources of enjoyment with which nature has furnished you.

That contentment which is the result of a consciousness of irreproachable conduct, of a knowledge of having performed our obligations to our Creator, and to all mankind, is the contentment which constitutes happiness.

Every man's experience furnishes him with evidence that vice has no advantage over virtue, in producing happiness; on the contrary, we have abundant proof that the virtuous man is much happier than the vicious.

In addition to the evidence afforded by our own observation, we have the words of the distinguished preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem, teaching us that he is most happy who is most virtuous. King Solomon had wealth, power, and wisdom. He exhausted the stores of earthly pleasure. He expresses his opinion of the power of such pleasures to produce happiness, in the following comprehensive words: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Wisdom, power, riches, and all the gratification that either or all of these can afford, are but vanity and vexation of spirit; if we view them as well-springs

from whence a stream of uninterrupted happiness shall flow. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Be virtuous, and be happy. )

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## CHAPTER VI.

### MORAL OBLIGATION.

IT is sometimes said that man's impulses, his appetites, a combination of circumstances, and the influence of public opinion, oblige him occasionally to do wrong although he is aware of his fault, and wishes to do right; that man is so much a creature of circumstances that he can scarcely be said to have a will of his own; that he is driven to and fro like a wave of the sea, without even the power to resist; is so constituted that the influences which are thrown around him oblige him to err.

No doubt there are men who yield easily to every temptation, and claim to be led on by irresistible influences, but "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Let us see if there is any truth upon which this

specious excuse for doing wrong is founded. If it is true that certain influences by which we are surrounded *oblige* us to err, we are not, as I conceive, responsible for a failure to discharge our duties except so far as we have a share in creating the influences which beguile us. But I am not aware of any influence by which man is *obliged* to commit sin, or even to neglect his duty, which is the natural result of the laws under which we are created; neither can we be obliged to commit sin by any oppression or force which man can use. Man may, by force, prevent us from discharging some duty which we would like to perform, but he cannot oblige us to commit any kind of sin. We have the right and the power to suffer every species of affliction, and even death, rather than live with the guilt of sin upon our consciences.

There are many examples on record of holy men who have suffered the severest trials to which man can be subjected, rather than sin; examples of men who willingly suffered death rather than swerve from their determination to keep themselves unspotted from the world. How is it, then, that the trifling inducements which are thrown around us by luxury, profligacy, or the influence of public opinion, can oblige us to turn from the path of duty? It is not so; we may be induced by such things to neglect our duty, but we cannot excuse ourselves for such culpable negligence

by saying that we were obliged to err. We deceive ourselves if we trust in such unmanly excuses. If we are thus easily turned from the "strait gate and narrow way which leadeth unto life," we cannot truly say that we are obliged to do so. We have many examples of righteous men who have braved every danger with which their path was beset, and resolutely journeyed on in the narrow way until death has overtaken them and borne them triumphantly to the blissful abodes of the spirits of the saints.

But let us define the word "obliged;" we can then more readily determine what a man in this probationary life is obliged to do.

A man is obliged to perform an action when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another, and has no right to refuse.

First. "The motive must be violent." "If a person who has done me some little service, or has a small place in his disposal, asks me upon some occasion for my vote, I may possibly give it him from a motive of gratitude or expectation; but I should hardly say that I was *obliged* to give it him, because the inducement does not rise high enough. Whereas if a father or master, any great benefactor or one on whom my fortune depends, require my vote, I give it him of course; and my answer to all who ask me why I voted so and so is, that my father or my master *obliged* me;

that I had received so many favors from, or had so great a dependence upon, such a one, that I was obliged to vote as he directed me."

Secondly. "It must result from the command of another. Offer a man a gratuity for doing a thing, for seizing, for example, an offender; he is not obliged, by your offer, to do it; nor would he say he is; though he may be *induced, persuaded, prevailed upon, tempted*. If a magistrate, or the man's immediate superior, command it, he considers himself as *obliged* to comply, though possibly he would lose less by a refusal in this case, than in the former."—PALEY.

In this elucidation of the term by Paley, you observe that the examples which he has selected, are those in which the individual would have no right to disobey; examples in which there is no higher authority commanding the individual to act differently: in such cases, we would indeed say that the man was *obliged* to obey. But examples may arise in which there is a violent motive to perform a certain action, resulting from the command of another, and yet we not only would not be obliged to do what was commanded, but it would be wrong for us to do so.

For which reason we conclude—Thirdly. He is not obliged to perform an act, even if there is both a violent motive, and that motive is authorized by the command of another, unless he has no right to refuse.

If a father should command his son to conceal some valuable property of his, from a public officer who was coming, with authority to seize it for the payment of a debt which the father justly owed, there would be a violent motive for him to do so, authorized by the command of another, his father, yet it would not be right for him to conceal this property, because a higher authority than that of a father, commands him not to do so. The right to perform the command being wanting, he is not obliged to obey. Therefore these three things are necessary to constitute the obligation. A violent motive, that motive being authorized by the command of another, and not having a right to disobey the command. Which, after all, amounts to about the same as saying that we are obliged to do whatever is right. This obligation to do that which is right, certainly rests upon all of God's creatures; but since man has the *power* to violate his obligations, he does not always do that which he is obliged to do, if he would please God.

Having given a rule by which we can always determine whether we are obliged to perform an action or not, let us try the matter by this rule, and see if we are obliged to do wrong to gratify our appetites, or because public opinion demands it.

Man's appetites offer a violent motive to indulge in excesses which would be wicked and disgraceful. If



we regard no more of the rule than this, "A man is obliged to perform an act when he is urged by a violent motive, resulting from the command of another," we might conclude that he was obliged to gratify his appetite to excess.

But this would produce disease, and it is not right for us to do anything for a momentary gratification that will injure our health. Having once established a rule, we should, in morals as in mathematics, apply the whole rule to the solution of the questions which may be explained by it. With regard to the cravings of appetite, it may be urged that the motive is present, and the command is not wanting, for the demands of the appetite may be regarded as a command from our Creator to gratify it, so that the case would be a strong one in favor of excessive gratification, if the latter portion of the rule is excluded. But by applying the whole rule, the obligation is reversed, and we are instructed by it that we are obliged not to gratify a desire for excessive indulgence.

Public opinion sometimes offers a violent motive for men to do wrong. It exerts a powerful influence over the actions of men, as individuals, as members of a civil community, and as citizens of a state. Its influence is felt in no small circle, nor is it confined to a few of our acts; but it takes notice of every act which we perform, that is made known to others. It

is only our most secret thoughts that public opinion does not try and pass sentence upon. Our manners, our habits, our fashions, our language, the laws of honor, and the law of the land, are established and upheld by public opinion. Public opinion sustains virtue and morality in every civilized country; but in many instances it is influenced in its decisions by opinions which have long since been proven to be erroneous, so that it is not a safe rule in morals to do all acts in the performance of which public opinion will sustain you.

Since public opinion does not always require us to perform those acts which are by moral law decided to be right, we may justly conclude that we are not obliged to perform an act simply because public opinion decides that we ought, and condemns us as being infamous if we do not.

We would arrive at the same conclusion, if we should try some of the acts which public opinion requires men to perform, by the rule which we have given for deciding whether we are obliged to perform an act or not.

Suppose that the act which public opinion requires us to perform, is to fight a duel. We are urged by a violent motive, resulting from the command given by public opinion that under certain circumstances we

shall fight a duel or be considered base, infamous, and unworthy of being called men.

In this example we are urged by a violent motive, resulting from the command of another; but we are not obliged to perform the act, we have a right to refuse. We are commanded by a higher authority not to do so. Duelling is contrary to the law of the land; and we have a still higher authority against duelling, it is a command from God that "Thou shalt not kill."

It is surprising that civilization, enlightenment, and moral culture have not yet succeeded in changing public opinion with regard to this heathenish practice, which had its origin in the days of superstition and knight-errantry. The custom of permitting duelling arose no doubt from a superstitious belief which formerly prevailed among men, that the aggrieved party, or he who had justice on his side, would invariably be victorious. This superstitious idea has long since ceased to be believed; yet the unrighteous practice which was founded on this belief, unfortunately still prevails to some extent even in enlightened communities.

It may be asked, Does our rule furnish a satisfactory reason why we are obliged to obey the will of God? I think it does; God has commanded man to perform certain acts; the performance of these acts is obedience

to his will ; there is a violent motive for this obedience, arising from the command of God, for he has promised man that he should be rewarded with eternal life, if he obeyed, and punished if he did not ; and man has no right to disobey the commands of God, for there is no higher authority in Heaven or on earth, by which he might receive a command to disobey.

We would not have any one, either wilfully or inadvertently, to suppose that when we say we are obliged to obey the will of God, we mean that we have not the power to disobey. This would lead to a very great error ; for if man had not the power to disobey the will of God, he would be an irresponsible being ; he could not sin, for disobedience to God's will cannot be sinful, and if he could not disobey that will, he could not sin.

That man has power to sin, is too evident to need an argument. If we should attempt to decide, by the actions of men which daily occur within our view, whether or not man has the power to sin, we would be more likely to conclude that he can do no righteous act, than to believe that he can do nothing that is sinful.

The will of God is the limit of moral obligation, and all men are equally under obligation to perform his will. God has made no exceptions whatever, he is no respecter of persons, but holds all men bound to

perform his will. Being all creatures of God, and equally bound to perform the will of our Creator, we are, of course, equally bound to be pious and virtuous. No man has a right to violate any moral law. No man has a right to perform any act that a virtuous man may not perform. No man has a right to do that which a Christian may not do.

Some there are who seem to doubt this, and really believe the man who has not made a profession of religion, has a better right to act immorally, than he who has united with the church, and thereby intimated his intention faithfully to perform God's will.

No one claims that a church member has any right to act immorally. They have no right to do so, and they claim none. But the man who has not proclaimed his determination to obey the will of God, has no better right to act immorally than the church member. To act immorally is to disobey the commands of God, to violate his will. How can any man have a right to disobey God? Whence can he derive authority to violate God's will? A man may, with just as much propriety, say that he has a *right* to do *wrong*, as to say that he has a right to act immorally. Does the command, "Thou shalt not steal," apply to a particular class of men, or to all mankind? Are we to understand by it, that Christians only are forbidden to steal, or that all men are? The command

is evidently universal in its application. So are the commands, "Thou shalt do no murder;" "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" "Thou shalt not bear false witness." And the whole moral law is, without any exception, equally binding on all men.

It is true, that a man by uniting with the church, does, by this act, pledge himself to perform God's will, but this act does not constitute his obligation to live righteously and conformably to the will of his Creator, neither can it absolve any other human being from his obligation thus to live and act. It was his duty to act thus, before he proclaimed his intention.

Why do men blame a church member more severely for immoral conduct, than those who have never united with the church? Because by uniting with the church he proclaims his intention to perform God's will. He is not more blamed for immoral conduct than others, because others have a better right to act immorally than he, for they have no such right. In fact, there can be but little difference in the amount of blame to be attached to each, for it is just as much their duty to act morally as it is his.

If a member of the church should take the Lord's name in vain in the presence of his neighbor, who was daily in the habit of using immoral language, his neighbor would be disgusted, and think that such a man was not a suitable associate for him. But if he

uses immoral language every day, he still thinks himself worthy of the respect and esteem of all good men. How is this? How is it that a man, by continually acting contrary to the will of God, should acquire a right to be immoral? There is great inconsistency in this.

The truth is, every man's imperfection of character is in proportion to his want of virtue; and the man who would severely, and of course justly, condemn a church member for immoral conduct, ought to remember that he is daily placing himself in the same attitude with respect to his Creator, that the church member assumes when *he* acts immorally. He will know then how to estimate his own acts fairly, and give his immorality a just amount of condemnation.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE WILL OF GOD—NATURAL RELIGION CONSIDERED.

MORAL obligation depends upon the will of God. To say that a certain act is right, is equivalent to saying, it is the will of God that I should perform that act. To inquire what is our duty, or what we

are obliged to do in any instance, is the same as to inquire what is the will of God in that instance.

Some moralists inform us that there are two methods of learning the will of God on any point, viz.: 1st. "By his express declarations, when they are to be had, and which must be sought for in the Scriptures." 2d. "By what we can discover of his designs and dispositions from his works; or, as we usually call it, the light of nature."

I must confess that I know of but one medium through which God teaches man at the present day, to know what is his will; that medium is the Bible. By a careful study of that book we can learn the origin, duty or obligations, and final destiny of man. It is the text-book with which the Almighty has furnished man, for the purpose of enabling him to learn his will. From that source, and that alone, we can learn the whole will of God concerning man.

The opportunities and the means of discovering the will of God by the light of nature, are as numerous, and as fully within the reach of those nations which are not enlightened by revelation, as of those which have the Bible for their guide. But what heathen tribe is famed in the annals of history, for having discovered the will of God by the light of nature? Not one. What one of all the wise men who have lived in an age and in a nation where the Bible was un-



known, has been able to discover God's will by the light of nature and the power of reason? Not one.

At a certain age of the world when Socrates, Diogenes, and Plato, were living examples of men who were skilled in the secrets of philosophy; when the intricacies of mathematics were the delight of Archimedes; the human mind had, without doubt, attained to as high a state of reasoning and forming correct conclusions from the light of nature, as it has ever attained to since.

At that age of the world, among nations not enlightened concerning the will of God by that great light, the Holy Bible, there lived men whose eloquence and poetry still serve as models for the aspiring students of poetry and oratory. But not one of all these wise men had a correct knowledge of the will of God. The ethical systems of the wisest of the heathen philosophers had a tendency to make man worse, rather than to improve his morals, and exhibited only such knowledge of the attributes of Deity as they might have gathered from tradition.

The whole history of man, when not guided by the revealed will of God, has exhibited a constant tendency to moral deterioration. In the early ages of the world, God held frequent intercourse with men; they learned much concerning his will and his attributes; that was, with them, the period of the greatest moral

purity. They had an opportunity of becoming a most pious people. They received instructions from the omniscient Creator, and saw the many evidences of his omnipotence which vast creation contains.

They did not, however, continue long to worship the true God; they bowed themselves in solemn adoration to the works of their own hands, changing "The glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." For such unwarrantable wickedness, God ceased to have intercourse with men; "Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." After the Creator had ceased to be with, and instruct his irreverent creatures, they became a most degraded, abominable, and wretched class of beings; "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." "For this cause God gave them unto vile affections."

The most ancient nations of the earth were accustomed to consider the period of their earliest existence as a nation, the golden age, or the age of greatest moral purity. As they began to neglect, and, I may say, lose the knowledge of the true God, they began to worship the creations of a depraved imagination;

they began to adore the gods and goddesses of their absurd mythology; the purity of their morals became corrupt; they began to be more depraved, and, step by step, passed from the golden age to the ages of silver, of brass, and of iron. Becoming more degraded and wicked the more ignorant they were of the Great God, the Creator of the heavens and earth. Thus proving that man, when not guided by revelation, becomes continually more depraved.

It is true that some have offered these facts as proof that man can gain a knowledge of God by the light of nature; but they seem to prove most conclusively that he cannot.

If natural religion furnished the founders of those ancient nations with sufficient knowledge to enable them to establish their governments upon the firm principles of justice and morality, it seems strange and incomprehensible that they, guided by this efficient light, did not go on prospering, daily learning more of their obligations, becoming more virtuous, and more familiar with the knowledge of the Deity.

If they had acquired their knowledge of the true principles of morality from the light of nature or natural religion, this evidently would have been their tendency; but if their knowledge of the Deity was acquired by revelation, which, I think, is evidently the case, their tendency would be to moral deteriora-

tion as soon as they began to lose the knowledge which had been revealed to them, and as the nation grew older, and this knowledge was almost rooted out of the minds of the people, it is but reasonable to expect that they would be almost wholly ignorant of the will and the attributes of the Creator.

This we find was really their condition; they continually became less virtuous and more ignorant and depraved. Hence we conclude, from what has already been stated, that all the knowledge which they possessed of God and his will, was the very imperfect knowledge which they retained by tradition from the remote ages in which He had revealed Himself to man. Their mythology was, no doubt, a corruption of the revelation which God had, in bygone ages, made to man.

The systems of ethics which the philosophers taught, were about such productions as might be expected to arise from such imperfect information as the learned could obtain from tradition and mythology. The philosophers were wise men who reasoned very correctly. Had they been guided by natural religion in the formation of their systems, their productions would, without doubt, have been as correct as any treatise which the wisest moralist of the present day can produce. But this was not the case. Their teachings did not harmonize with the revealed will of

God; whilst the moralists of the present day teach a system of natural religion which so much resembles the revealed will of God, that, without careful examination, it would be difficult to distinguish the one from the other, were it not for a difference in names.

The religion which God has taught man is called *revealed religion*, whilst that which writers on moral philosophy now teach as something different, yet, in effect, the same as the revealed will of God, is called *natural religion*.

The argument, then, seems to be reduced to this: a learned man, who is well acquainted with the revealed will of God, can educe from the light which nature furnishes him, a system of natural religion which, in almost every respect, resembles the revealed will of God; but a learned man, who is very imperfectly acquainted with the revealed will of God, who knows nothing of it except what he has acquired from tradition or heathen mythology, will teach a very incorrect kind of religion, a religion which bears scarcely any resemblance to the revealed will of God. From these facts it appears to be quite evident that man never has received any correct information concerning the will of God, except by revelation.

Some authors, all, I believe, who contend that natural religion is a means which God has provided to enable man to distinguish between good and evil

and "hold fast that which is good," inform us that there are defects in natural religion; that it is not a sufficient guide; that there is, therefore, a necessity of some further guide; in a word, that man cannot correctly and fully comprehend the will of God without the aid of revelation. Thus teaching us that God formed a plan for instructing man concerning his will, which was not sufficient to accomplish the object for which he had designed it, and that, therefore, he had to try a better plan. I hope I shall teach no such irreverent doctrine.

"Much learning doth make him mad," who, thus theorizing, fails to bear in mind that any work which God has performed cannot fail to accomplish the design which he intended.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, chap. i. verse 8, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In the twelfth verse he tells them whence he received this gospel which alone they are to believe. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Man has acquired a knowledge of his duties not by the spontaneous productions of his own intellect, nor is it taught to him by the rules of natural religion; it is taught him by revelation.

Let us examine more minutely the principles upon which the system of natural religion is founded. The first rule which attracts our attention, and that upon which the whole theory of natural religion seems to rest, is the following:—Rule. It is God's will that we shall perform all such acts as will contribute most to our happiness, both as individuals and as members of society.

We wish to know from whence this rule derives its authority, and what is the penalty which will be inflicted if we neglect it, or refuse to obey the requirements of this law. We know from whence the moral laws of the Bible derive their authority, we know the penalty of a wanton violation of those laws, and we know that God, their Author, has the power to inflict the penalty that justice demands, no matter what that penalty may be.

I know of no law or precept in the Bible which teaches that it is our duty to live in that manner which will contribute most to our happiness on earth. Where is this rule written? Is it written in the great Book of nature, in God's autograph? Can we see it written upon the flowering meadow, the rippling stream, or on any of the works of our Creator? No; it is not written there; we find it alone, on the printed pages of Moral Philosophy. From whence, then, does

it derive its authority? From him who wrote the book, of course.

We are told that we learn this rule for determining the will of God, from what we see of the works of the Almighty; that this rule is an inevitable conclusion, derived from the knowledge which we acquire of "the divine benevolence" in examining and reflecting upon the works of nature; that the manner in which we are created, proves that God designed we should be happy on earth.

If this is all the authority that those who believe in the efficacy of natural religion have, for establishing such a rule, I consider that they have just no authority at all; for the manner in which man is created, does not prove what they affirm.

They affirm, and imagine they prove, that God so created us, that whatever contributes most to our happiness, it is his will for us to perform. I doubt not that our Heavenly Father desires the happiness of his creatures, but cannot discover anything in the manner in which man is created, which proves that God intended that he should perform only such acts as would contribute to his happiness on earth. There is nothing in the physical organization of man which proves God's design for him to be happy on earth. Man is so created, that through the same medium, he is equally liable to receive sensations that are pleasur-



able or disagreeable; sensations which will promote joy or sorrow, happiness or unhappiness.

The eye is so constructed that it can, with equal facility, see objects that are odious and disgusting, or those which are beautiful and delightful. The ear is so constructed that it can hear harsh discordant sounds with as much ease as it can those which are most melodious and tuneful. It is so with all the senses. So that, if we attempt to decide from the manner in which we are created, whether or not God wishes us to do those things only which will contribute most to our happiness on earth, we will be in doubt what to think; we will be as likely to believe that he intends us to be unhappy, as to determine that he wishes our happiness. As far as sensation is concerned, the chances are about equal.

Paley says it is evident, from the manner in which God created us, that He wished our happiness; for, "If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us." "He might have made, for example, everything we tasted, bitter; everything we saw, loathsome; every smell, a stench; and every sound, a discord." There is no proof in this, which will serve to establish it as truth, that God wishes his creatures to be happy on earth. The same reason, if it be a reason, will prove that God did not wish man

to be happy on earth. For, if he had wished our happiness, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses so that they would have been continual sources of enjoyment. He might have made, for example, everything that we tasted, sweet; everything we saw, beautiful; everything we touched, produce an agreeable sensation; every smell, a sweet odor; and every sound, delightful melody.

The belief that God designed our happiness is not derived from what we behold in nature. It is not a truth which is discovered by man through lessons which natural religion teaches. It is taught to us by revelation.

We learn from the Bible that God so loved the world, he gave his Son to die for us, that whosoever believed on him might not perish, but have eternal life. We know that God must have been very desirous of promoting our happiness, or he would not have given his Son to die for us. We cannot doubt that he who loved us so much desired our happiness. Revelation teaches us this; but we nowhere find it taught in the Bible, that God wishes man to be happy in sensual gratification, or in any of the joys of an earthly origin.

We derive the idea that God desires the happiness of man from revelation, and not, I believe, from any light which nature affords.

Upon the belief that it is God's will for us to do only such acts as will contribute to our happiness, is based the whole system of natural religion. This is the chief corner-stone of the building: take it away, and the whole edifice will come tumbling down upon the heads of those who framed it. And yet, it has no right to occupy a place in such a building. We have no right to take the principles of revealed religion for a foundation upon which to build our theories. That is taking stones from the house which God has built to lay the foundation of an edifice which we wish to erect.

If there truly exists a system of morality which was established by God, such as is commonly known by the name of natural religion, surely the basis of that system can be easily discerned by the light which nature affords. But the basis of natural religion cannot be easily discovered from what we behold in nature; it cannot be learned at all from this source. For nothing we behold in nature will teach us that God desires our eternal happiness; and this is the kind of happiness which the Scriptures teach us, our Father in heaven wishes us to enjoy.

Neither nature nor revelation teaches us that God designed us to be happy in the enjoyment of earthly pleasures; but we learn from the Bible that he wishes

us to be happy in the love of God and obedience to his will.

We learn from the Bible that God desires our eternal happiness. He wishes us to be happy in that future state of existence where we may, if worthy to be so blessed, enjoy perfect, uninterrupted happiness. The sacred Scriptures do not teach us that God wishes us to be happy in the enjoyment of the pleasures which earth affords. On the contrary, it is very plainly taught in that sacred volume, that man should disregard his pleasures, comfort, ease, and safety; if such sacrifice is necessary to enable him to discharge his duties as a pious Christian. You shall perform your moral obligations without respect to the pleasure or pain which may be the consequence of so doing, is the spirit of the instructions which the Bible contains. The search for happiness on earth is nowhere recommended in that holy volume; but happiness is the reward which is promised to those who hold out faithful in the discharge of their religious duties.

Continued happiness on earth is not promised, neither can it be reasonably expected; except that degree of happiness which the pious Christian enjoys in the confident hope of eternal happiness. The pleasures which this earth affords without this hope of a celestial existence, cannot bring lasting happiness.

I believe that we cannot truly say there is any

durable pleasure unalloyed with pain, which does not proceed from this hope of eternal bliss in life everlasting.

The Bible does not recommend the pleasures which man can enjoy in the gratification of his physical desires. It does not teach us to hope for happiness in the lusts of the flesh. Hear what Paul says on this subject. Gal. v. 24, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. (vi. 8.) He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Romans vii. 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

From these, and many such passages of the Scriptures, we learn that it is not the will of our Father in heaven for us to seek happiness in the enjoyment of the pleasures which this life affords. We are not forbidden the enjoyment of any pleasure to a reasonable extent, which is not wicked; which is not productive of harm to ourselves or others; but such enjoyment is not the source from whence we are to expect happiness.

What kind of happiness is it possible for man to enjoy, except such happiness as is the result of gratifications which do by no means direct his mind to, or

prepare it for the joys of eternity, if he is without the hope which the gospel inspires, and ignorant of its glorious promises? Every species of happiness which he could then enjoy would be confined to the temporal blessings of this life.

Natural religion cannot teach him to expect happiness in an eternal life; it cannot teach him to do those things only which will prepare him for the enjoyment of everlasting happiness; but if it teaches him to perform those acts which contribute most to his happiness, it must mean that he should make it his business through life to avail himself of every temporal blessing within his reach. Such a religion would just suit the most impious sensualist. It would not harmonize with the revealed will of God at all; for that teaches us to disregard temporal blessings for the sake of performing the will of God.

We will now examine the manner in which natural religion teaches men their duty; that is, the manner in which we are told it operates to teach men their duty; we will have an opportunity then of judging whether it gives any evidence of its divine origin in its mode of instructing men.

If anything concerning God's will can be learned by natural religion without the aid of revelation, it must be learned through experience; this, we are told, is the case by those who believe that natural religion

establishes principles in morals which God approves. We are told that when we wish to learn our duty by means of natural religion, "we can form no opinion respecting the result of two opposite courses of action, until they be both before us. Hence we cannot certainly know what the law is, except by breaking it."

Suppose a man wishes to learn from natural religion whether it is agreeable to God's will or not for him to become a drunkard, he must drink intoxicating liquors until he is thoroughly drunk. After he recovers from the effects of intoxication, he must study his case over, and endeavor to decide whether the pain which he suffered from drunkenness exceeded the pleasure which he derived from quaffing the pleasant but poisonous beverage. If he cannot satisfy himself by the first trial, if he is still in doubt whether he felt more pleasure or more pain in his first trial of inebriety, he must try it again and again, until he is satisfied whether God approves of drunkenness or not.

If he decides that the pleasure which he enjoys exceeds the degree of pain which he suffers by becoming intoxicated, natural religion would teach him that it is God's will for him to indulge to excess in drinking intoxicating liquors.

Revealed religion teaches differently; we are not required by it to sin, in order that we may learn whether it is right for us to perform a certain act.

We are plainly told what we must do, and what leave undone. With regard to drunkenness, we are told to avoid it as a sin of a gross and degrading nature. We are not permitted by revealed religion to form a habit of sinning before we can learn whether we are doing right or wrong.

It seems to me evident that any religion which might permit a man to become a confirmed drunkard before it taught him that drunkenness was contrary to the will of God, and by which he might never learn that truth, is not a religion which was established by our Heavenly Father, nor can it receive his sanction.

There are some sins which, if practiced in youth, seldom produce any evil effects which the sinner can discern, until manhood, or even old age, has come on. I do not think that God would sanction a religion, which will permit a person to practice a sin for years, before he can possibly discover, by means of it, that he is acting contrary to the will of God.

It is true of almost every species of sin that, at first, man derives pleasure from indulging in it. For the sake of this enjoyment he is tempted to sin again and again, until, as is often the case, a habit of sinning is formed which it is very difficult to overcome. Natural religion does not, as we are told, warn a man that any act is wicked or contrary to the will of God,



unless he experiences more pain than pleasure from indulging in it. Since it is natural for man to receive pleasure from indulging in sin, and since the pleasant emotions always precede whatever pain we may suffer from sinning, it is evident that the first impressions made on our minds by natural religion, with regard to every species of sin, would be, that every sin we commit is right.

This may be illustrated by a familiar example: an individual wishes to deceive another, he tells him that which is not true; if he believes it, the falsifier is pleased, because he has gained his object; he may regret it afterwards, if his falsehood is discovered; but the first emotion which he would feel would be that of pleasure. The first impression, then, which he would receive from natural religion, would be, that to bear false witness is according to the will of God. The case is the same with regard to drunkenness, stealing, and every other vice of which man is guilty.

There is another fact with regard to lying, and other vices, which serves to throw some light on the importance of natural religion. I think every one will agree with me in saying that there are some persons in the world who derive *more pleasure than pain from lying*. Natural religion would teach those persons it is absolutely certain that to tell lies is right. There are other species of vice from the partaking of

which some persons seem to derive more pleasure than pain. Natural religion would teach those persons that the sins which they delight in are no sins, but acts which God approves; whilst it would teach the pious Christian that such wickedness was an abomination in the sight of the Lord; that is, if he judged by its effects on others; for his piety would necessarily prevent him from partaking of anything that was wicked.

This leads us to observe that the pious are excluded from all the benefits of natural religion, since they cannot willingly partake of any sin without losing their claims to piety; and without partaking of a sin, a man cannot tell whether he would derive more pleasure or pain from indulging in it.

The first sensations on entering into almost any kind of vice are pleasant; were it not so, vice would not be alluring. If its loathsomeness and hideousness preceded the pleasure that it may afford, it would be disgusting to all men. The first impressions which we receive are generally the most lasting; therefore, if we were guided by natural religion, we would be inclined to do evil rather than good.

In Wayland's Moral Science, we are taught that natural religion is a means which God has provided to enable man to discover his will, without the aid of revelation. Perhaps we can learn something more

about natural religion by examining a few of Dr. Wayland's remarks concerning it.

On page 129, of his *Elements of Moral Science*, we find the following: "*The facts on which natural religion and the intellectual power to derive the moral laws from the facts, have been in the possession of man from the beginning. Yet the whole history of man has exhibited a constant tendency to moral deterioration. This is proved by the fact that every people, not enlightened by revelation, consider the earliest period of their history as the period of the greatest moral purity.*"

If every people not enlightened by revelation, show a constant tendency to moral deterioration, it is evident that natural religion was not established by God as a guide for his people. God surely never did establish a guide for his people by which they were led to degeneracy and moral deterioration; no—never.

On page 119, of "*Wayland's Moral Science*," we find the following: "We know that we are so made as to derive happiness from some courses of conduct, and to suffer unhappiness from others. Now, no one can doubt that the intention of our Creator in these cases was that we should pursue the one course and avoid the other. Or, again, we are so made that we are rendered unhappy, on the whole, by pursuing a course of conduct in some particular manner, or

beyond a certain degree. This is an intimation of our Creator respecting the manner and the degree in which he designs us to pursue that course of conduct."

In this there is much truth apparent to those who know the will of God and His manner of governing His creatures. It is evident to us if God punishes us that we have violated some one of his laws. Why is this evident to us? Because we know if we violate God's laws he will punish us. If we did not understand God's mode of ruling the universe, we would not be able to decide; from the fact that we suffer pain by performing certain acts, we have violated some of God's laws.

We readily acknowledge the truth of what is above quoted from Dr. Wayland, but cannot perceive how these facts give any evidence of the existence of natural religion. The truths of revealed religion are made evident by such facts, but another religion is not established by them.

The man who is wholly ignorant of the truths of revealed religion would no more perceive the finger of God in the punishment he received for violating some of the laws of nature than the boy would who, in his unguarded pursuit of a butterfly, ran too near the brink of a stream, lost his centre of gravity, and, as a consequence of having violated a law of nature, fell into the water. The boy would know that he had

fallen into the water, but would not have the most remote idea that this was in consequence of having violated a law which God has established. The man might avoid the act in the future, but he would be a Newton, greater than a Newton, if he learned the existence and attributes of God from the data before him.

All men are well aware of the fact that he who indulges in vice of any kind is sure to suffer according to the nature of the vice of which he is guilty. If he drinks too deeply of intoxicating liquors, he will feel the nausea and temporary insanity which are the natural effects of drunkenness. If he contends with his fellow man in angry combat, he expects to suffer the pain which will be produced by the blows of his antagonist. But I do not perceive how it is that philosophy can make a religion of such facts.

If I violate the laws by which the human system is kept in a healthful and vigorous condition, I expect to suffer the penalty of such transgression in the flesh. If I violate the obligations which I owe to myself and my neighbor, I will not be punished precisely in the same manner and to the same extent that I would were I to violate my obligations to my Creator. If a man violates his obligations to his Creator, he is not punished on earth and in the flesh; he is permitted to

pass on until the day of retribution has come. The punishment for such crimes will be inflicted on the spirit in eternity. But if he violates an obligation which he owes to himself, he suffers the penalty on earth.

It is a duty which every man owes to himself, to labor that he may gain a support honestly; for it is written, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." If a man neglects to discharge this obligation which he owes himself, he will be sure to suffer the penalty of his sin in the pangs of hunger and want.

If he violates his obligations to society, he will suffer the penalty which the laws of society affix to such transgression.

In all this we see but so many evidences of the truth of what is revealed to man in the Scriptures. We see no natural religion in it.

The following commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," was given to the children of Israel. If this commandment and others which were given them was violated, they were threatened with punishment on earth. They did violate the commandments, and suffered the punishment. Their lands were taken from them and given to strangers.

There is an obligation, which we at the present owe

to God, to fulfil this commandment. But no penalty to be inflicted on earth is attached to any violation of this commandment, of which we of the present age may be guilty. Then natural religion does not teach men to love God; it does not teach the necessity of piety, because men are not punished on earth for a want of piety; and if men are not punished on earth for a want of piety, how can we learn from natural religion that it is our duty to love God?

What kind of religion is that which does not teach its votaries to love God? to worship him, and him only? to believe that he will reward his faithful servants in a world to come, and punish those who do not obey him? "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James i. 27.)

If natural religion teaches any such doctrine as this, I am not able to discover it. As I understand the principles which are taught for natural religion, they would teach a man to avoid the widow and the orphan; for if he visits them and beholds their distress, he cannot help feeling grieved and unhappy; and natural religion tells him that it is contrary to the will of God for him to do those acts which will make him feel pain.

Natural religion would teach us to avoid those acts

only as sins, which would cause present pain; whilst those for which we might suffer eternally, are passed in silence.

We will compare the lives of the Christian martyrs with the doctrines of natural religion, and see how they harmonize. According to the teaching of natural religion, that course of conduct is contrary to the will of God which causes a man to suffer most pain; for which he is punished most in this life.

I know of no mode of life for which men have suffered more pain, endured more hardship; for which they have been beaten more with stripes, and tormented more in every way to produce the greatest amount of suffering, than they have for their fidelity to the Christian religion.

I do not think any sensible man can say that the Christian martyrs lived in that manner which was calculated to produce most happiness in this world; for it is well known that they endured the most excruciating torments; they suffered persecution, and were afflicted in various ways for many years; indeed, we may say of many of them, that they thus suffered, during the whole course of their lives as Christians.

Is there any Christian writer on moral philosophy who believes those holy men who suffered martyrdom for their fidelity to Christianity, were not obeying the will of God? Not one. But those men must have



been disobeying the will of God, if natural religion teaches his will.

See what natural religion teaches; the natural religion of authors. "We are so made, that we are rendered unhappy, on the whole, by pursuing a course of conduct in some particular manner, or beyond a certain degree. This is an intimation of our Creator, respecting the manner and the degree in which he designs us to pursue that course of conduct." The martyrs were pursuing a course of conduct, which, on the whole, rendered them very unhappy in life; their only hope of happiness was in the reward which they expected to receive hereafter. The same author whose natural religion teaches us that the martyrs lived in disobedience to the will of God, would, if asked the question, tell us that those holy men who suffered martyrdom for their zeal in religion, lived lives as obedient to the will of God, as it is possible for man to live.

No moral philosopher doubts that the exemplary life of the apostle Paul, after he became a Christian, was in strict obedience to the will of God. Yet he did not pursue that course of conduct by which he would have received most happiness in this life; but as soon as he knew his duty, he plunged into a career which caused him to pass through the hardest trials and greatest suffering that can be inflicted on a human

being. Hear what he says of himself. "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the brethren, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

The life of the apostle Paul is directly opposite to the teachings of natural religion. Natural religion teaches us that those acts from which we receive most pleasure and least pain, in this life, are the acts which it pleases God for us to perform. But the life of the apostle teaches us that if we love God, and wish to obey him, we must suffer every manner of hardship for the Lord's sake.

Paul had it in his power to live just such a life as natural religion teaches is in obedience to the will of God. If he had not become a Christian, he might have enjoyed every comfort and luxury which this world affords; he might have enjoyed as much pleasure as man can enjoy on earth; but he chose to suffer every manner of hardship for the Lord's sake.

The life of our Saviour is a contradiction to the

doctrines of natural religion. He did not seek to be happy on earth. He did not teach man to perform those acts only which will contribute most to his happiness on earth. He came into this world "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and left this world after having suffered the ignominious death of the cross.

Christ, in his sermon on the mount, says, Matt. v. 44, "But, I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." (V. 45,) "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It seems evident from what our Saviour has said in verse 45, and the subsequent verses of the chapter, that he wished to indicate to his followers that God makes no distinction in his manner of treating men on earth; that he is equally kind and beneficent both to the just and the unjust. He provides for the happiness of all alike, without making any distinction of persons. Such we are told, in the words of the Saviour himself, is the manner in which God treats his creatures on earth.

Since God makes no distinction in this world between the just and the unjust, but provides alike for the happiness of the good and the evil, how are we to

learn anything of his will by natural religion unaided by revelation? Natural religion cannot be a means which God has provided to enable us to learn his will. We learn God's will by revelation. We learn it from the Bible. Take that book away from man, and deprive him of all the information he has obtained from it—he is no longer a worshipper of the true God. He is only a barbarian, a worshipper of idols, a wanderer through a labyrinth of darkness and superstition.

We by no means affirm that the Bible is the only source through which man has acquired a knowledge of the will of God; for there was a time when no Bible existed, and, even then, man knew the will of God. He knew it by revelation, however, and not from what he saw before him in the world.

Since the Bible was published to the world, we know of no other means that mankind have possessed of acquiring a correct knowledge of the will of God. Before this means of disclosing the will of God was published, man was instructed concerning the divine will orally. First, God talked to man and told him his will. Afterwards, he instructed him by sending to him his angels, and by inspiring his holy prophets with a knowledge of the word of truth. God never left man to be guided by instinct in acquiring a knowledge of his will; neither did he require him to gain

such knowledge by an exertion of intellect alone, unaided by revelation. No man who has faith in the authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures can believe that God did not take especial care to instruct mankind orally concerning his will, before the Bible was furnished him as a guide.

The question may be asked, If the Bible is the only source from which man can derive a knowledge of the will of God, at the present day, how are the heathen, who have no Bible, to acquire a knowledge of God's will? I answer, only by sending missionaries to them, who have a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and who can impart their knowledge to those benighted people. Their horrid practices prove that they have no natural religion which can teach them correctly concerning the will of God; and that their instinctive impulses are not able to do this. The only resource is, to teach them what we have learned of God's will from the Bible.

Since all men are under obligation to obey the will of God, being, all of us, God's creatures, and since no man can rightly perform the will of his Creator, without knowing what that will is, it becomes, in an especial manner, the duty of those who have a knowledge of the will of God, to use their utmost efforts to instruct those who have not this knowledge.

If we believe that "as many as have sinned without

law, shall also perish without law," it is evidently our duty to exert ourselves in aiding those persons to obtain a knowledge of the law, who are now ignorant of it, and have not the necessary means of informing themselves.

## BOOK SECOND.

### THE BIBLE AND OUR DUTIES.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE BIBLE.

THE Holy Bible, pertinently called *the Book*, consists of two volumes, entitled the Old and the New Testament. The Old Testament comprises a history of man from the creation to the birth of our Saviour; consisting of two eras; from the creation of the world to the deluge, and from the deluge to the birth of Christ.

In the earliest period of man's existence, we learn from the Old Testament, that God taught him orally. He conversed with him as a parent would with his child, and told him what he must do. He also taught him the history of his creation; told him that He, God Almighty, had formed man of the dust of the earth; that He had all power in Heaven and on earth, and that man must worship Him, and Him only, for He

will punish His people severely for a want of veneration and obedience to His will.

Notwithstanding the care which this kind, wise, beneficent Father took of His little children, they were refractory and disobedient; they were a "stiff-necked" race. They became so vile and degraded, that He destroyed them. He caused a deluge of waters, which swept them all from the face of the earth, except one obedient man, Noah, and his family, whom He saved in an ark, which He had caused Noah to build.

Again the world was peopled by man, and God, the Father, continued to instruct His people concerning His will.

As man progressed in learning, God changed His mode of teaching, at every period, suiting His instructions to the capacity of those whom He taught. He not only instructed them with regard to His attributes, but gave them visible proofs of His goodness, mercy, justice, and power. He gave them water in the desert, and bread in the wilderness. He caused the waters of the Red Sea to open and allow the righteous to pass over on dry land; He caused the briny waves to flow back and overwhelm their wicked pursuers.

When man was sufficiently advanced in learning to be prepared for the reception of written laws, God wrote laws for him on tables of stone. But as man



advanced in learning, he did not proportionately progress in morality. God sent His Son into the world, who taught man the way of life eternal, and rekindled the spark of morality which seemed to be almost extinct.

Man was now so far advanced in intellectual culture and moral knowledge, that God saw fit to give him his final instruction with regard to His will. He sent the meek and lowly Saviour on earth, who proved to man that a pure spirit cannot be made to err, though it dwells in the midst of corruptible flesh.

The Saviour came into the world, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law. Every act of His exemplary life is a model of perfection. Every act will serve as an example to man in ages yet to come. Without any addition or correction, the guide will be sufficient till "The host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll." He taught man how to obey the will of God; told him what he must do to be saved.

From the Old Testament we learn that at first God taught man orally. He talked with him, told him who the Creator is, and what is his will for man to do.

After the deluge, he gave him a code of written laws, few and plain, containing his will with regard to man, and when our Saviour came on earth, he

showed man how to obey that will, and gave him an exposition of the will of God, which is sufficient in all future ages to enable him to serve God acceptably, without any further instruction from the great fountain of all knowledge. Those instructions are written in a book, so that man can read and acquire from that source, all the knowledge of God which has ever been revealed.

From that source he can always, hereafter, learn his duty. He can therein learn the history of his creation, his duties, and his final destiny. What more can he need? He is now fully prepared to discharge his duties, if he desires to do so, without further parental instruction. Yet, his Father in Heaven still watches over him with parental solicitude, and more than parental affection.

You perceive, by this hasty view of the Holy Bible, that God has from the beginning dealt with man as a good father treats his children. When our child is yet young, we can instruct it only by talking to it. We teach it the first lessons in morality, before it has yet learned to read. We tell it of the existence, and the attributes of the great God, the Creator of the world, and all things that are in it. When our child has learned to read, we instruct it more fully concerning the will of God, and our obligations to him. When the child has become a man, we have endeavored so

to store his mind with useful knowledge, that he will be able to go forth in the world, and discharge his duties faithfully without further parental care. In a manner similar to this, our Creator has dealt with man.

At the creation of the world, man, with regard to knowledge, was in his infancy. He is a progressive being by nature; as he grew older he became wiser, and during the whole of the time when the race of man was growing up from its infancy to maturity, God watched over it with parental solicitude, instructing him more, as his ability to receive more instruction was developed.

The Old Testament contains a history of the manner in which God instructed man, from his creation to the flood, and from the flood to the birth of Christ. It contains a number of prophecies; the writings of good and virtuous men; and the laws which God gave to the children of Israel. For a fulfilment of these laws, God promised them a rich inheritance on earth. He promised to give them the land beyond the Jordan, which was called a land flowing with milk and honey.

They were sufficiently virtuous and obedient to the will of the living God to receive the inheritance promised, and they became a powerful and wealthy nation of people; but in time, they became dis-

obedient and regardless of the will of God, who had given them abundant proof of his watchful care over them.

He warned them of the punishment which would surely fall upon them, if they continued in their disobedience. They turned a deaf ear to these warnings, and they suffered the penalty of their disobedience.

They were driven from the rich inheritance which God had given them; their lands were occupied by strangers, and they were taken into captivity and made to serve their conquerors. Thus God convinced incredulous man, by rewards which he bestowed on him when he was obedient and punishments inflicted for disobedience, that he is God omnipotent, just, and true. Thus he taught man to have faith in the promises of his Creator, and to believe that God cannot lie.

Concerning the treatment of the Israelites, the following is the absurd conclusion to which a belief in the reality and authoritativeness of natural religion has led writers on moral philosophy. "God, in various modes suited to their condition, made known his will to the whole human race. They all, with the exception of a single family, became so corrupt that he destroyed them by a general deluge. He then selected a single family, and gave them his written law, and, by peculiar enactments, secluded them from

all other nations, that the *experiment might be made under the most favorable circumstances*. At the same time, the effects of natural religion were tried among the heathen nations that surrounded them. The result was a clear demonstration that, under the conditions of being in which man was created, any reformation was hopeless, and that, unless some other conditions were revealed, the race would perish by its own vicious and anti-social tendencies, and enter the other world to reap the reward of its guilt for ever."—

WAYLAND. The italics are ours.

Such sentiments as Dr. Wayland has here expressed, place the omniscient God, whom we worship as being possessed of all knowledge, in a very unpleasant and doubting position. It would appear, that God did not know what was best for man; that man is a creature so perverse and ungovernable, even the Almighty God did not know how to rule over him; that He had to try various *experiments* with this indomitable creature man, to learn which was the best plan for governing him.

Why cannot men be contented with the plain teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, and not allow themselves to entertain notions which are so irreverent and incompatible with the character of the Deity? If philosophy teaches men such opinions, they had far better

burn their books and read the Bible. Such philosophy robs the Deity of His attributes.

If I mistake not, the sole object of the actions which God performed towards man, as recorded in the Old Testament, was to teach man to know the will of God, and to worship him and him only, the true and living God. To accomplish this object God, in his infinite wisdom, chose to pursue the plan which is recorded in the Old Testament.

What better plan can philosophers devise, or what objections can reason offer to this plan? If I may take the liberty of offering an opinion about it, I would say that the manner in which God led man on, step by step, from age to age, corresponds precisely with the manner in which all the creation around us approaches by degrees to perfection. And the bringing of man to that degree of knowledge which prepared him for the reception of a Saviour, was a portion of the plan which God had for preparing the human race to perform the great objects for which we are created. As for the manner in which the Jews were treated, this ought to be no stumbling block to any Christian, for the Jews occupied the same position with reference to God and mankind that the Christians now hold. They were God's chosen people, because they were the only people in the world who were endeavoring to perform His will. The Christians are His chosen

people now, because they endeavor to live according to His will. I think we may safely say that, at any age of the world, those people will be God's chosen people who are most faithful and obedient to His will.

I cannot, for a moment, believe that God was in the unpleasant dilemma in which Dr. Wayland seems to have imagined Him.

If we examine the objects of interest around us with which creation teems, we will perceive, even with the small amount of knowledge which we possess, that there is a beautiful and wonderful consistency in the manner of God's revealing himself to man, and the manner in which every part of His creation approaches the degree of perfection which he designed it should attain.

The majestic oak requires several hundred years to pass through the different changes which are necessary, from the small kernel enclosed within the shell of an acorn, to produce the towering tree which extends its guardian branches over the surrounding forest. The little rivulet issues from the foot of a mountain; it winds along through shaded and sequestered spots; it meets other rivulets in its course, and, finally, after traversing many weary miles, emerges in the broad, deep river.

In the animal and vegetable kingdoms the most heedless observer will perceive that this is a universal

rule, that nothing is at its highest perfection when first ushered into existence; and that the laws of creation are such that, step by step, in obedience to these laws, it arrives at the maximum degree of perfection which God designed it to attain. Similar to this is the plan revealed in the Old Testament, by which man was instructed and led on to a more thorough knowledge of the attributes and will of God.

In the Old Testament, we learn that God promised the Israelites rewards on earth for obedience to His will, and punishment for disobedience. By thus bringing the rewards and punishment before the people on earth, the evidence was irresistible even to the most incredulous of beings, that God had all the power, goodness, and justice which he had taught men to believe he possessed; that he was surely the great God, the Creator of the universe. The nations around would observe the prosperity of the Jews when they worshipped the living God, and their suffering when they were disobedient, and, by this means, all would acquire a knowledge of the Deity. The rest of mankind would have an opportunity of contrasting their condition with that of the Jews, and, by observing the miraculous favors which God bestowed on them, be induced to exclaim, Great is the God of the Jews!

The following appears to be the chief design of the Old Testament:—To instruct man concerning the will



of God; to give him a law by which he should govern his actions; and to prove to him that he who gave those laws is the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

The utility of the Old Testament to man, at the present age, seems chiefly to consist in furnishing proofs of the authenticity of the New, and in giving a history of the dealings of God with man from the creation of the world to the coming of Christ.

It is true that the moral precepts contained in the Old Testament are binding on all men in every age of the world, and the laws which were written by the finger of God amid the flames of Sinai's glowing summit are immutable. But the same laws and the same moral precepts are inculcated in the New Testament, with a full explanation of the manner in which man should practise and obey them during the remaining ages of the world.

There are many commands in the Old Testament which the present generation are not required to obey, simply because they were not designed for the present generation; whilst all the commands of the New Testament are binding on the present and future generations. This fact renders it necessary for us to use some discrimination and judgment in learning our duties from the Bible. We should not consider ourselves under obligation to perform a command which God required Abraham alone to perform, any more

than we should consider ourselves under obligation to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, because He commanded Moses to do so.

In learning our duty from the Sacred Scriptures we should observe whether the command is to mankind, or only to a particular nation or individual. If the command is general in its nature, we may be satisfied that it applies to ourselves as well as to others; but if it be addressed to a particular individual, it is not for us.

Much of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament, is merely historical; giving a history of the actions of men, and the connection of God with man. The Old Testament, besides being historical, contains the commands of God to certain individuals; it contains the moral law, and moral precepts.

Christ came on earth to fulfil the law. The spirit which animated the body of flesh that was called the Son of Man possessed the purity of God; his actions were directed by the wisdom of God, and in his deeds he exhibited the power of God; he was the Son of God. His life is a perfect model for all men in every age. He possessed the same feelings and passions that are common to, and inseparable from the flesh. He resisted every temptation to do evil, with which one possessed of fleshly propensities could be tried, and resolutely did the will of his Father in Heaven.

We should do so likewise. His example to man is perfect.

If an angel had come on earth and acted with the purity of motives and unshaken fidelity to the will of God that our Saviour exhibited, we might reasonably have said that it was nothing strange for a pure spirit to do right; but let that spirit be swayed to and fro by the fiery passions which appertain to the flesh, let it be teased continually by ungratified desires, and see if it will not sometimes err. In Christ we had an example of a being just so constituted. He came into the world a man acquainted with sorrow and with grief; he felt and shunned every temptation to do evil; he made the will of God the rule of his actions.

When his soul was suffering exceedingly great agony, in view of the bitter cup which he must drink to the very dregs, he prayed, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again he prayed, the second time, saying, "O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Such is the forcible manner in which he has taught us to practise obedience to the will of God. The teachings of Christ are of that general nature that they apply to all mankind; his sermon on the mount

breathes a spirit of holiness which is sublimely pure ; yet who is so stupid that he cannot comprehend the meaning of every precept, of every word which it contains? No one needs ask for the wisdom of Solomon to enable him to comprehend the actions and teachings of Christ, or to learn his duty from the New Testament. Our duty is not given there in mysterious and incomprehensible language. The way of holiness is such that "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

It is not the difficulty of acquiring a knowledge of our duty from the Sacred Scriptures which calls for a few hints with regard to the manner of proceeding to study the Bible with a view of learning our duty from it ; but the veil of mystery which has been thrown around the Bible by injudicious writers, is difficult to see through.

Men may take a sentence from the Scriptures and found an erroneous doctrine upon it. Detached portions may be read and construed in a manner very different from their true import. What book, or what printed page, is there in existence, which does not contain a single line which may not, if taken out from the connection in which it is placed, be construed in such a manner as to make it signify something quite different from what was intended?

Many false doctrines may have originated in the

culpable practice of taking a part of the will of God for your rule of action, and finishing the rule with a part of your own will. And no matter how false a theory may be, by taking some Scriptural phrase as an evidence of its correctness, a skilful sophist may make it appear very plausible, and cause many to believe that it is true.

If you would know the whole will of God, then, study the Bible. It contains all that He wishes man to do. And in studying the Bible with a view of learning our duty from it, it is evident that we should not read detached portions; a verse in one part of the book, a chapter in another, and so on. By so doing, we do not have a correct and comprehensive view of the Scriptures. We may learn many things that are contained in the Bible, but cannot arrange our learning so as to make it useful; we are apt to become confused, and not understand anything correctly and thoroughly.

If you wish to acquire a knowledge of the grammar of your language, you do not begin at the conjugation of the verb, and go from thence to the comparison of adjectives, and then to the declension of nouns; you do not endeavor to learn the abstruse portions of a science before you have acquired a knowledge of the rudiments; you would not attempt to calculate the distances of the stars from the earth, and determine

their magnitudes, or to predict the return of a comet, before you had learned the first principles of mathematics. Neither ought you to expect to fully comprehend the Bible by reading the epistles of Paul, or the Acts of the Apostles.

I think the best and most correct mode of learning our duty from the Bible, is to begin at the commencement of the Book, and read it regularly through, as we would read any other book; studying maturely every portion, and endeavoring to treasure up, in the storehouse of memory, all of its precepts. I think that no one of a sound mind, who will pursue this plan, will say, when he has finished the study of those sacred pages, that he is still ignorant of his duty to God.

Every one who goes to the Bible to learn his duty, ought to endeavor to divest himself of all preconceived notions which are the offspring of doctrinal lore, and believe that only to be his duty, which he finds taught in the Book before him. If our minds are pre-occupied with certain tenets, we are too apt to try to bend the Gospel truths, so as to cause them to harmonize with the ideas which already exist in our minds. This ought not to be done, and must not, if we wish to learn correctly what is our whole duty.

The instructions in the New Testament are evidently intended for the whole human race, in all future ages,

and in every nation of the world. It is a final revelation of the will of God to man, and contains all the moral precepts, and everything else that is important to our salvation. It furnishes to man, an example of perfection in morality. This perfection was exhibited in the person of Christ.

It contains the Acts of the Apostles, from which we can gain much useful information. But we should not consider ourselves under obligation to perform any act herein recorded, simply because the apostles or other righteous men did so; we should inquire whether it is commanded that we shall do likewise, before we determine that we are under obligation to do so.

Any act which the Apostles performed subsequent to receiving the Holy Spirit, may be allowable; but it is not obligatory on us, unless we are commanded to do likewise.

The example of inspired men proves the lawfulness of an act, unless exception be made, but does by no means establish the necessity to perform the act. For example, the Apostles kept the feast of Pentecost; Paul circumcised Timothy; and the congregation of Christians at Jerusalem, kept all their property in common, no one having anything he could call his own. We are not, at the present day, under obligation to do

any of these things. These are acts which Christians are not commanded to do.

Having made a few remarks concerning the Bible, and the manner of learning our duty from it, we will proceed to consider various requirements which are therein made of man, and which may be classed under the general head of *duties*.

When we speak of learning our duty from the Bible, we mean our whole duty; that is, all our obligations to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves. But every act which we are under obligation to perform, may, in itself considered, be properly called a duty.

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## CHAPTER II.

### LOVE TO GOD.

OF all the duties which man owes either to his fellow-man, or to his Creator, the first and greatest is love to God. He it is who has placed us in this beautiful world, and surrounded us with every means of enjoyment which we possess. He it is who has given us eyes, that we may behold the many beautiful things with which he has surrounded us; ears, that we may



hear the music which is wafted by his designing upon every breeze. He it is who has given us taste, that we may enjoy the sweets with which his creation teems. He it is who has given us the sense of smell, that we may enjoy the pleasant odors arising from the fragrant flowers, which he causes to blow. And above all this, it is he who has given us a soul which can enjoy and appreciate the loveliness, beauty, and sublimity of his creation; a mind, which is capable of acquiring knowledge, of comprehending his will, and directing our actions in obedience thereto.

It is to God that we are indebted for our daily bread; for the food which we eat; for the air we breathe; for every comfort which we enjoy, and for our very existence. He it is, who preserves our existence, who has provided the means of gratifying our wants, and to whom we are daily and hourly indebted for the accumulation of favors which we receive at his hands.

Ought we not to love a being who loves us so much? who has surrounded us with every blessing that the heart can desire? who watches over us with the tender care of a Father, and loves us with more than parental affection? Ought we not to love God who thus loves us, and extends to us the loving-kindness of an affectionate Father, without our having done anything to deserve this affection, and without

our being in any way able to return the kind favors which he is continually bestowing upon us? There is not the remotest possibility of our doing anything in return for the many good gifts which we receive from God. His love for us is purely disinterested; there can be no motive urging him to perform kind acts to his creatures, such as too often blemish the good deeds which men perform. Such love from him calls for a corresponding emotion in us.

To love those who love us, is a principle which seems to exist in the mind of every human being, in a greater or less degree, in proportion to each one's susceptibility of the influence of tender emotions. It is natural for us to love those who love us. We cannot regard that person with any other than feelings of kindness, who is willing and anxious to promote our welfare. We very naturally become devotedly attached to one who under all circumstances is invariable in his love for us, and who though he may be offended and grieved when we behave badly, never ceases to love us, and endeavor to promote our welfare. Love is the feeling which such unwavering devotion to our welfare excites in us, when a human being thus loves us. Upon this same principle we ought to love, yes, adore our God. He is universally kind to us, his creatures. His goodness and mercy are continually bringing us under renewed obligations

of gratitude, and in all his acts he shows to man, that love is an attribute of the Deity. We daily receive new evidences in proof of this truth, viz., "God is love." (1 John iv. 19.) "We love him because he first loved us."

God has given man a higher, a holier proof of his affection than that which we behold in those things which refer to temporal blessings only. He offers man happiness; happiness which shall last through vast, incomprehensible eternity. And his great love for us has induced him to do so. (John iii. 16.) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Love and fear seem to be ruling passions in the human mind, each has great force in causing obedience to authority; but that obedience which proceeds from love, is the kind of obedience which those in authority are most pleased to receive.

Man has much cause to fear the anger of God who is just; and he who loves not God has good reason to fear. But, in proportion as the goodness of God becomes more and more fixed in a man's belief, love predominates over fear in feelings towards his Creator.

The man who loves God fears not, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory," that the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire prepared for the devil and his angels," will be pronounced against him; but he rejoices in the hope that our Saviour will say unto him, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." 1 John iv. 18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

All the qualities which men admire most exist in their perfection in the Creator only. All those qualities, any one of which being exhibited in some degree of perfection in the life and actions of a human being, will elicit our admiration, honor, and love of the individual whose characters it makes lovely; all are attributes of God, all emanate from him, the fountain of all good, and to him we should be grateful for the manifestation of those admirable qualities which adorn the characters of good men. In him are united justice, mercy, a readiness to forgive offences, benevolence, truth, and holiness.

All men love justice; it is this quality that they seek for in their judges and rulers. An unjust ruler cannot gain the favor of his people; they cannot love him. Prov. xx. 7, "The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him." One of the most honorable titles that has ever been conferred on man by his fellow-creatures is the title which the

countrymen of Aristides conferred upon him. He gained the confidence and love of the people by his justice, and they, in attestation of their love for the man and confidence in his integrity, called him "The Just." But not the countrymen of Aristides only love and admire him for his justice; all men who have become acquainted with his history have admired his character, and so long as his name adorns the pages of history, the character of "The Just" will be admired and esteemed by men.

If justice, as it is imperfectly exhibited in the lives of men, excites our admiration and love of the individual, ought we not much more to love God who is perfectly just?

Men love truthfulness. They admire him who always tells the truth, but cannot respect him on whose word they cannot rely. God cannot lie. "God is not a man, that he should lie."

We love wisdom; we love those who possess it, and not only willingly obey the instructions of the wise, but seek information from them, how we shall govern our own actions. Behold the wisdom of God. It is in his works only that you see a display of perfected wisdom. In the bright orbs that deck the skies; in the vast worlds revolving through the immensity of space; in the perfect adaptation of the animal portion of creation, to the peculiar soil and climate in which

each species is found; in the grandest and most magnificent parts of creation; and even in the tenderest sprig of grass, we behold a display of the most consummate wisdom. Prov. iii. 19, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens."

In the works of God alone wisdom has its perfect work. To man the simplest portions of this vast creation appear wonderful. The vitality, conformation, and habits of the smallest insects; the growth of herbs, and every portion of creation, excites our wonder and admiration. Man seems to himself a work of exceeding wonder.

In obedience to that principle in the character of man, which causes him to love those who are wise, and seek to be guided by them, we ought to love God, for he alone has perfect wisdom; he alone is omniscient; and we ought also to seek to learn his will, that our actions may be guided by the wisest Being in existence.

We love mercy, we admire and esteem the man whose actions show that he possesses a merciful heart, and we love those who are disposed to be merciful to us. In our relation to God, we all need mercy, we must all ask for forgiveness of sins, for we all do err. It is a great comfort, then, to us to know that God is merciful and ready to forgive.

We are all under obligations to serve God. Our service to him is an essential right which he, as our Creator, demands of us, his creatures.

This right, and the corresponding obligation, have respect to two classes of duties. First, those which are comprised in our relations to God, and which we owe to him only; duties which each one of us ought to perform if there were no other creature in existence besides ourselves. Pre-eminent among these duties is love to God. Secondly, the duties which he requires of us towards our fellow-creatures. Every creature is a creature of God, and he has made the duties which we owe to each other a part of the duties we owe to him. He demands of us the performance of certain duties, in which the welfare and happiness of individuals is comprised. These are strictly duties which we owe to each other; but since it is the will of God that we should perform them, to do so is as much a duty to him as to our fellow-creatures. So that, if we love God, we will perform our duties, not only to him but to all his creatures. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

With feelings of pleasure we do the will of those whom we love. We seek to learn their will, to know what will please them, that we may be able to contribute to their happiness. It makes us happy to know

that they are pleased, especially if their pleasure arises from the acts which we perform. No labor is burdensome to us, if we derive happiness from the performance of it. No duty is onerous if we derive pleasure from discharging it. To love God, then, comprises our present and future happiness. For, unless we love God, we cannot be happy in eternity. He cannot welcome us to the mansion prepared for the righteous. If we do not love him, we can derive no pleasure from performing the many duties which we owe to him. But if we love him, it is a pleasure to perform the duties which we owe to him; it is a pleasure to learn his will, to know what he would be pleased to see us perform, and to do those things which he commands.

Man is a creature having a will of his own, and he can derive but little happiness in the performance of acts not in accordance with his own will. To be truly happy in obeying the will of God, it must be his will to perform the acts which God commands. He must love God, or he cannot be happy in obeying him; his will cannot accord with the will of his Creator.

The Scriptural precepts concerning our love to God are recorded in various passages. Our duty in this respect is thus expressed: Luke x. 27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all



thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

When we consider that all the qualities which we admire exist in our Creator in perfection, we behold in him a being who alone possesses the character that we should love with all our hearts, with all our strength, with all our minds. He alone possesses all the qualities that we admire, and none of those which men disapprove.

When the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," was given to the Israelites, the nations of the earth were ignorant of the true God; they worshipped idols, and various things, humbling and degrading themselves in the sight of God. He forbids idolatry; he requires that his creatures shall worship him only. The command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," excludes every species of idolatry. We cannot obey this command and at the same time gratify our desires, in opposition to God's. By it, his will becomes the rule of our actions. In the sixth verse of the second epistle of John, our obedience to the commandments of God, is said to be a test of our love to him: "This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

If we possess that desire to obey the will of God

which arises from a recognition of the universal right of the Creator over us, we will dedicate our affections to him; we shall not only do his will, but be happy in performing it. If we love God, we shall love to do his will.

There are three kinds of power which God exhibits to man, and which are exercised by him in the highest degree that the mind can imagine. These are physical power, mental power, and moral power.

God exhibits his physical power in the creation of the immense masses of the universe; in the launching of vast worlds into their appointed places in space, and causing them to revolve there through unnumbered ages, without ever wandering from the path which he designed they should follow. He exhibits mental power in all the beautiful and useful works of his creation; and especially does he exhibit this power in the fitness of every part of creation to perform the work which he has allotted it, and the unerring certainty with which every part of creation moves on in its appointed course. He exhibits moral power in a sublime degree, in his goodness and parental affection for all his creatures.

There is but one of those different kinds of power which is calculated to excite the feelings of love in our hearts; and that is moral power. A man may be strong, and able to bind, and force us to do his will.

But he could not, by any effort of physical power, compel us to love him. He might, by exercising physical force, excite in our mind a feeling of fear; but never that of love. Our fear would cause us to obey him, but that obedience would be unwillingly rendered; it would be of the nature of eye-service, such service as God will not receive from his creatures. God could, by an exercise of his physical power, compel every human being to perform his will with as much certainty as vegetation springs up at its appointed seasons. But he does not choose to exert this power for the purpose of causing man to obey him. It is his will that our *love* should impel us to obedience. He has not so created us that an exercise of physical power can excite the feeling of love in our hearts; therefore, he does not exercise that power to cause us to perform his will.

Mental power has great force in effecting the objects which we would accomplish by it; but it, like physical power, cannot cause love to spring up in the heart. Mental power can excite, in a high degree, a feeling of admiration; but admiration can exist in the mind without love. If we know that our neighbor is wiser than ourselves, we admire him for his knowledge, and may be willing to be directed by his counsel, because we think he knows better what is right than we do: but it is possible for us to be directed by one who is

wiser than we are, and at the same time entertain a feeling of dislike for him whom we obey. Our learning may be great, our mental powers unsurpassed; and still, the majority of those who are inferior to us in wisdom, may dislike us. Mental power alone cannot influence the heart. It is not the power which excites the feeling of love. It is moral power alone, that can arouse this feeling in the human breast.

We do not love our parents because they have power to compel us to obey them; we do not love them because they have more physical power than we, for we may grow up to be strong men, when they have become feeble and decrepit from old age; our physical power would then be greater than theirs, still our parental affection would be as great as ever. This change in physical force, would work no change in our feelings. Our love for our parents was not excited by physical force, consequently a loss of that power can produce no change in our affections. For a similar reason, it is evident that the love we feel for our parents, is not produced in us by their superior mental power. For although when we are young, they have much more mental power than we, yet, as we grow up under their care, it so happens, frequently, that our mental power is superior to theirs; this produces no abatement of our love for them; consequently that

feeling could not have been produced by an exertion of mental power.

It is the power of goodness and benevolence, that excites love in the human breast. We love our parents because they first loved us. We see that every exertion of their power is for our good, and although our frowardness may make it necessary for them at times to use severe means to compel us to discharge our duty, still this coercion to duty does not check our love for them, because we soon learn that it is their love for us, which prompts them to use some degree of severity. We know that they love us, and therefore we must love them. Upon this same principle our Father in Heaven claims our love. He first loved us. He has proved his love by so many unmistakable evidences, that we must be heartless children indeed if we do not love him.

We are told that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. What kind of power is this which God uses for our salvation? It is not physical power. He does not, with a strong arm, force us to obey his will. It is not the mental power which the Gospel displays, that captivates the affections of man, and induces him to avoid evil, and do that which is good; but it is the moral power which the Gospel exerts, that leads man to do those things which are required, that he may be saved.

## CHAPTER III.

## GRATITUDE.

GRATITUDE is a feeling of the heart, or an emotion of the mind, which can be cultivated most successfully by exercising it on every occasion which is presented.

It arises from a 'proper appreciation of the favors which others confer on us. It consists in real unaffected thankfulness for the benefits we receive.

We prove our gratitude to men, by being ready and willing to do favors for those who have befriended us, whenever an opportunity offers. We can almost always find some opportunity of displaying our gratitude to our benefactor, in deeds of kindness to him. If we are truly grateful, we will be almost sure to find an occasion on which our services will be of great advantage to our benefactor, if he is a *man*. But there is one Being from whom we are continually receiving benefits, for which we ought to be thankful, but on whom we can confer no favor. That Being is our Creator. An occasion never offers, during our existence, in which we can confer the least favor on him. Therefore we cannot directly prove our gratitude for the favors which he is continually bestowing on us.

We can express our thankfulness in prayer, but we cannot, by any act of ours, do a favor for our Creator. We can feel grateful, and can express our feeling in words, but how are we to prove by deeds that this feeling does really exist in our heart? A means of offering this proof has been furnished us by our Saviour. He has taught us, if we will be kind and benevolent to such of our own species as need our assistance, he will consider our kindness to this needy one as a favor done to him. This is taught in Matt. xxv. 34-40; "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? \* \* \* And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." It is by such deeds of kindness to our fellow-beings, that we are able to prove our gratitude to God. How beautiful is the arrangement! How pleasant it is to know that whenever we

perform a benevolent act, we discharge part of the debt of gratitude we owe to our Creator! How anxiously we should watch every opportunity to assist the needy, and with what regret should we allow a single opportunity to pass, of alleviating the distress of a suffering individual! For every occasion of this kind which offers, is an opportunity of discharging some part of the debt of gratitude which we owe to God.

We should all, like the benevolent Howard, be on the watch for an opportunity to alleviate the distress of our fellow-beings. I do not mean that we should pursue precisely the same course which Howard did, but that each individual should do all in his power, all that he can consistently with his means or ability, to alleviate the sufferings of others.

After we have done all that it is in the power of man to do in performing acts of benevolence, our debt of gratitude still remains unsettled. Even if it were possible for us, in this way, fully to discharge the debt of gratitude which we owe to our Creator; if, when we appeared before him, we were able truly to say that our debt of gratitude was fully paid—a new debt would immediately arise; for our Creator would reward us for the good deeds we had done.

Since our Creator is thus beneficent, it is evident we should love the Lord our God with all our heart.



He requires us to do this. The feeling of gratitude must exist in the heart of man, if love to God is there. Without gratitude, a man would become a degenerate being. His first step in morality cannot be taken without feeling grateful. He would not thank God for the many blessings he continually receives, if the feeling of gratitude did not exist in his heart.

In our dealing with our fellow-man, it often happens that all the return they expect for favors which they have conferred on us, is that we shall be grateful; that we shall have the kind feeling for them, which their acts would naturally excite in a grateful heart.

When this feeling is wanting, when a man treats his benefactor as does the viper which is warmed in your bosom, the growth of benevolence is suddenly checked. The benefactor feels no longer a desire to assist such a being; he feels that he has cast "pearls before swine." Frequent disappointments of this kind, in which the benefactor can discern no marks of gratitude in those whom he has befriended, will have a tendency to crush the feelings of benevolence in his heart, and lower the good opinion he has of his fellow-men.

There are men, in whose hearts true philanthropy glows as a genial flame which is ready to warm the frigid limbs of those who suffer from want and neglect.

It is lamentable to see this feeling crushed in the bosom of a generous man, by heartless ingratitude.

It is in the nature of man for us to love those who love us. When any one is uniformly kind to us, will bear with our infirmities, weep when we weep, and rejoice when we rejoice, we cannot help feeling grateful to that individual for the kindness he shows for us; and this feeling of gratitude soon begets in us a corresponding feeling of love.

Gratitude causes us to feel under obligation to those who have befriended us, and creates in us a desire to do any reasonable service for our benefactor. But it does not require us to do any act, to please our benefactor, which is morally wrong. We are under previous obligation not to do this; and no favor that an individual can perform for us, can discharge us from this obligation. That no obligation can arise which will make it our duty to do wrong, is self-evident.

## CHAPTER IV.

## PRAYER.

IN the earliest ages of the world God conversed with men; they enjoyed then the happy privilege of hearing the voice of God, of learning his will from his own mouth, and of expressing their thoughts and desires to him in person. God does not now present himself to us as a being to whom we can speak face to face. Still, we are not deprived of the happy privilege of laying our hearts open to him, and asking of him all things that we need.

We conceive him as an Intelligence, producing, upholding, pervading, seeing, knowing, and judging all things. He created and continually preserves us. "In him we live and move and have our being;" he is not far from every one of us. God hears our prayers; he knows the thoughts as they exist in our minds. In prayer alone can we approach near unto him, and commune with him as with our Father; in prayer we are taught to address him as our Father who is in heaven.

In prayer the spirit of man holds direct intercourse with the spiritual and unseen Creator. "God is a

spirit, and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

In prayer we express our adoration, we offer up our thanksgivings, we ask for favors both temporal and spiritual, we confess our sins, and ask forgiveness.

There are many forms of prayer recorded in the Scriptures; we find there many prayers of good men, in which temporal as well as spiritual blessings are asked of God. We also find recorded the promise of God to grant temporal blessings to his people, if they would ask it in prayer, and turn from their wicked ways. 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.”

There is but one form of prayer that Christians are taught to use; it appears that they are not required to repeat just the words of this prayer, and no other, but to receive it as a model for this species of worship. One of the disciples said unto our Saviour, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” He taught them to pray after the following manner:—Matt. vi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, “After this manner, there-

fore, pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

Such is the form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples to use; this is believed by all Christians to be a perfect model of a prayer which will be acceptable to God. If we consider it attentively we observe, 1st. It is proper in prayer to address God as our Father, to approach him with filial affection, and make our requests of him as of a kind parent who is both able and willing to grant our requests.

2d. It is proper to mention the sacredness with which we regard the name of God. Under which head I think we might very properly speak of the greatness, goodness, majesty, power, and glory of God.

3d. It is right in our prayers to ask for such temporal blessings as we need, being careful not to make request for such things as we ought not to expect; for things that God has not promised to grant us. We ought always to offer up our desires in entire subjection to the will of God; for, being wholly ignorant of the future, and not knowing what effect certain temporal blessings which we greatly desire, might have on our

future and eternal happiness, we are liable to make requests of our Creator for favors which, if granted, would, in the end, prove a curse rather than a blessing.

We cannot expect, then, that God will always grant every favor we may ask of a temporal nature, unless in his infinite wisdom and goodness, he thinks our requests, if granted, will be a blessing to us. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," ought to be a leading principle in every petition which we offer to our Creator.

4th. We ought to ask God to forgive our transgressions. We are all impure in the sight of God, and the best of us do many things which, if not forgiven and forgotten, will cause us, when "the heavens shall have departed as a scroll when it is rolled together," to cry "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

We ought always to forgive the trespasses of others against us. When we approach God in prayer, it is necessary that we should do so with a pure heart, not bearing malice, but forgiving those who may have injured us. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

He who extends no mercy to others, can expect

none from his Father in Heaven. Great is the inducement, then, not only to forgive others, but also to cultivate at all times a forgiving disposition.

When we pray, we should offer from a pure heart, the thankfulness which we feel, and humbly lay our petitions before our heavenly Father, regardless of the impression our actions or words may make on those around us. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

Vain repetitions are forbidden in prayer. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Our Father in Heaven knows what we need, and when we pray, he knows our petition. To repeat a certain set of words again and again, as if we feared that he might not have heard us, would be irreverent.

But this does not forbid us from repeatedly offering our petitions for the same or similar blessings. Read Luke xi. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Our Saviour thus recommends prayer, (Luke xi. 9.) "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "For every one that asketh,

receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

In speaking of prayer, our Saviour said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." Some persons argue from this fact that prayer must be altogether unnecessary. For, say they, God knows what we need, and if he chooses to confer such blessings as we need, he will do so without our asking him. This is taking entirely too much for granted. God knows what we need before we ask him; but he has never promised to grant it unless we *do* ask it of him. "Every one that asketh receiveth." He who righteously prays to God for those blessings which he needs, has the promise of Almighty God that his prayer shall be heard. But to him that asketh not, no reward is promised. God will know what he needs, but he has not promised to grant it. Besides, there is a manifest propriety, inasmuch as we are sinners, and have forfeited the blessings which we daily receive, in thanking our heavenly Father for his goodness and mercy, and asking his pardon for the many sins with which we are justly chargeable.

The feeling of humility, of gratitude to God for the favors which we receive, and of entire dependence on him, are necessary to our progress in virtue. The exercise of prayer presupposes such feelings; and when we reflect that we, and all that we seem to possess, are



his, we must be most ungrateful beings if we are not willing, in prayer, to thank him for the many favors which we enjoy, and, by our requests for other blessings, to acknowledge his right and our dependence.

All men who have any notion of a Supreme Being, are in some form accustomed to pray. It seems to be a duty which is acknowledged and known to be right, by all who have any notion of the Deity, with very few dissenting voices, and even they, when placed in circumstances of great danger, forget their philosophy and pray most fervently.

The Scriptures treat of prayer as a well known duty; an obligation which no one doubts who knows God. The disciples did not once ask our Saviour if it were right to pray; they only asked him to teach them *how* to pray. And on the occasion when the Saviour said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," he begins immediately to tell them how they should pray.

The remark above quoted by no means conveys the idea that prayer is not a duty. It was made by our Saviour in explaining the utter inutility of vain repetition in prayer.

Prayer is expressly commanded. 1 Thes. v. 17, 18, "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the *will of God* in Christ Jesus concerning you." The apostle Paul recommends the making

known our requests to God by prayer and supplication, accompanied with thanksgiving. Phil. iv. 6, "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." 1 Tim. ii. 1-3, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

The prayers of righteous men for various blessings are recorded in the Bible. And many prayers for different kinds of blessings are therein mentioned as being granted by God. Righteous men, who are held up in that sacred volume as examples to mankind, often engaged in prayer.

Our Saviour prayed earnestly to his Father. He set the example to his followers to pray to God, and he also, in his prayers, exemplified the propriety of leaving all such requests to be decided by the will of God. At the conclusion of his most earnest supplications, he said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

It seems evident, since those men who pleased God most in their actions, were accustomed frequently to pray; since our Saviour taught his disciples to pray; since he also prayed; since God has promised if we ask for his blessing we shall receive it; that prayer to God is a moral duty of no little importance.

Prayer is made a mark of distinction between the righteous and the wicked. In the book of Job it is said, the wicked say, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" And in the Psalms, the wicked are designated as those who do not seek after God. Psalms x. 4, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts."

I can conceive of nothing that is more humiliating to the mind of him who is so wicked as to revolt at the thought of humbling himself in prayer to his Maker, than for him to be constrained by the pangs of a guilty conscience, when some terrible danger is threatening him, to pray most vehemently. It often happens, when the wild tornado is sweeping over the land, levelling the giants of the forest with the earth, and desolating the habitations of men, that such proud hearts devoutly acknowledge the supremacy of the Creator, and the duty which they owe to him.

If we neglect our duty until some such awful exhibition of his power shall terrify us into the acknowledgment of our obligation, we are doubly culpable. For we not only neglect to perform a well known duty, but when we do humble ourselves in prayer under such circumstances, we show *fear* rather than *love* of God. Whilst he, who is habitually

accustomed to pray, does so, from the love he has for God, and the confidence he feels in his goodness and mercy. This is a far more praiseworthy motive, urging us to seek communion with our Creator, than to be urged by fear. We seldom think that we deserve any credit for the performance of those acts to which we are urged by fear.

In our prayers we ought never to ask for anything, that we do not expect to receive. It would be irreverent for us thus to tamper with the goodness of God. We are taught in the Bible, that we must have faith; we must firmly believe that we will receive as the gift of our Father in heaven, the blessings which we ask, or we need not expect our prayers to be answered. James i. 5, 6, 7, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men, liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For, *let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.*" Mark xii. 24, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mat. xxi. 22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Prayer aids greatly in promoting our moral per-

fection. It is founded on love to God, and an abiding confidence in his goodness and willingness to grant the blessings that we need. In the practice of it, we exercise our faith, a forgiving disposition, and a desire to do right; so that the very means by which God has taught us to seek blessings, is itself a blessing.

By prayer we progress in virtue, and also receive from our Father in heaven the blessings we desire. The Apostle James speaks thus concerning the utility of prayer: "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." By way of argument, he adds (chap. v. 17, 18), "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

## CHAPTER V.

## THE LORD'S DAY.

EXPERIENCE has proven that men can perform more labor, that they enjoy better health, and live to a greater age, if they rest from their usual labor one day in seven, than if they devote no time to rest except the few hours of the night during which they sleep. The same is equally true of beasts of burden; they are more serviceable, more healthy, and attain to greater longevity, if they are allowed to rest from their labors one day in seven, than if allowed no rest except that which the recurrence of night affords them.

In this we observe how beautifully the works of our Creator harmonize. This harmony of the laws of our physical being with the Divine will, as expressed in the Holy Bible, is an additional proof to us, that the laws therein contained for our government as moral beings, are an expression of the will of the same omniscient Being by whose power and wisdom man was created.

He has not left the faithful followers of our Saviour with no proof of the authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures, except the Scriptures themselves; though in-

deed it seems that the evidence which the Scriptures furnish of their own authenticity, ought to satisfy the mind of the most incredulous. He who will not believe such an array of evidence, would not be persuaded "though one rose from the dead." We observe in all our relations, that the true philosophy of our being harmonizes with the will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures; thereby proving to us beyond a reasonable doubt, that the same omniscient Being who established the laws of nature, also enacted the moral laws which are revealed in the Holy Bible.

The observance of the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy, is a duty which men were under obligation to perform, previous to the giving of the law from Mount Sinai. It was made obligatory on the Jews by positive enactment, being required in the ten commandments.

With regard to the Sabbath Day, we find the following important considerations to be attended to :

1st. The example of God to all mankind, in resting on the seventh day; an account of which is found in Genesis.

2d. The account given in Exodus xvi., of the feeding of the children of Israel with manna.

3d. The command given in the law, to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

4th. The observance of the Lord's Day by Chris-

tians. In all of these we find it to be an established principle, observed by the worshippers of God in every age of the world, to observe a hebdomadal division of time in their worship; devoting every seventh day to the worship of God.

(Genesis ii. 1, 2, 3.) "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them; and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

This is the first mention that is made in the Scriptures, of distinguishing the seventh day in a peculiar manner, from all other days.

We are told that God blessed the seventh day, and he sanctified it.

The seventh day was a peculiar blessing to the pious, who devoted that day especially to the cultivation of moral excellence, and preparing for the happiness of heaven.

God sanctified the seventh day; that is, he set it apart for sacred uses.

The reason for blessing and sanctifying the seventh day is, "Because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made."



This reason has no reference to any particular people, but seems to be an example from God for all mankind.

The observance of this day would naturally preserve the memory of the creation of the world, and lead the mind back to a reverential recollection of God the omnipotent Creator.

In the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, we have an account of God's supplying the children of Israel with food, and his requiring them to gather enough manna on the sixth day, to supply their wants during the sixth and seventh days; and they were not permitted to gather manna on the seventh; there was none to be gathered on the morning of the seventh day, as there had been on the previous days. (Verses 25 & 26). And Moses said, "Eat that to-day, for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none."

Some learned men believe that the first actual institution of the Sabbath took place in the wilderness in the manner described in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus. Others offer very good reason for believing that the observance of the Sabbath, though mentioned particularly on this occasion, was no new thing to the Israelites. But all agree in the important fact

that it was the duty of the obedient to devote one day in seven, to a cessation from their usual occupation, that thus they might celebrate the creation of the world, and keep in their minds a vivid remembrance of the great Creator.

The proof which certain authors, Whewell and Wayland for example, offer to confirm the opinion that the rest of the seventh day had an origin earlier than the laws delivered to the Israelites through Moses, seems to be adduced more for the sake of correcting an error; for the love of truth, than for the purpose of deducing any particular argument therefrom. The important fact in morals, connected with the portions of Scripture referred to, is the same, whether we believe with Paley, that the Sabbath was first actually instituted in the wilderness, or whether we believe that it had its origin from the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day, as recorded in Genesis; which latter opinion appears to me to be better founded.

The Jewish Sabbath was an ordinance of Divine authority. The command was given (Exodus xx. 8-11), "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within

thy gates; for in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."

With regard to this commandment, the reasons given for observing it, are the same as those given at the time of its first institution, viz.: "For in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."

Some Christian writers have identified the Lord's Day with the Jewish Sabbath, and claimed that the commandment, as above quoted, is binding on Christians as well as Jews. In this case the seventh day of the week should be kept holy by Christians; then they would have no Lord's Day, but should keep the Sabbath Day holy. But the reason given for the keeping of the Sabbath holy is very different from that which led the Christians to observe the Lord's Day. The Jewish Sabbath was a celebration of the completion of the creation of the world. The keeping of the Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of our Saviour from the dead; the fulfilment of the law, and the establishment of Christianity.

The first day of the week appears to have received its name, the Lord's Day, from the occurrences, so important to Christians, which took place on that day.

On this day the Christians were, in the early ages of Christianity, accustomed to cease from their daily labors for the purpose of performing their religious duties. It was called the Lord's Day. Rev. i. 10, "I was in the spirit on the *Lord's Day*. . . ." The day had already obtained a particular name, by which it has continued to be designated.

The sabbath days are mentioned in the enumeration of things in respect to which Christians are not to be judged. Consequently we suppose that Christians are under no obligation to observe the seventh day of the week.

We are either under the Old Constitution or the New; we cannot be under both. Being under the new order established by our Saviour, it is right for us to observe the customs which were established by his disciples.

Moses, as a servant, faithfully delivered laws to the people over whom he reigned; but Jesus Christ, as a son, gives laws to those over whom he reigns as our prophet and king.

We have the following reasons for observing the Lord's Day as a Christian ordinance:—On this day our Saviour arose from the dead, having accomplished the work of man's redemption. On this day he appeared to his apostles, a week from the day of his resurrection. On this day, also, occurred the feast of

Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given in so remarkable a manner; and on this day Peter first began at Jerusalem to preach the Gospel.

Beside these reasons, it was the custom of the primitive Christians, when they were under the immediate supervision of the apostles, to observe this day as a day of weekly worship. We presume that the apostles must have known what it was becoming in Christians to do; and, as it was a practice among Christians in those days to meet together on the Lord's Day for religious purposes, a practice which the apostles recognised as being right, we must conclude that the Lord's Day is a day peculiarly appropriate for Christian worship.

We learn from Acts xx. 6, 7, that in Troas the Christians met on the first day of the week to break bread and receive religious instruction. The verses to which we allude are as follows:—"And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them at Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

We learn, also, from 1 Cor. xi. and xvi., that it was customary for the Christians to meet together on the

Lord's Day to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to engage in religious devotion.

If we consider the custom of the primitive Christians, their meeting together on the Lord's Day to eat of the bread and drink of the wine in remembrance of our Saviour, we perceive that the reason for Christians observing the Lord's Day is entirely different from that given for the Jews keeping the Sabbath holy.

The Jews were commanded to keep the Sabbath Day holy: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." The keeping of the Sabbath Day by the Jews evidently alluded to the creation of the world. But observing the Lord's Day alludes to a very different occasion. It is kept as a memorial of the resurrection of our Saviour; and the custom of the Christians in breaking the loaf and drinking the wine on the Lord's Day, is a memorial of the death of our Saviour. 1 Cor. xi. 26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

It has been a custom among Christians, since the earliest days of Christianity, to meet on the Lord's Day to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and listen to religious instruction. This is one of the most convincing

proofs outside of the Bible that can be offered of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Saviour. It is altogether unreasonable to suppose that all the most civilized nations of the world have united in celebrating, for more than eighteen hundred years, an occurrence which never did take place.

The duties of Christians, in observing the Lord's Day, are shown in the example of the primitive Christians. From their example we learn that, to acquire religious information, to listen to religious discourses, to participate in the Lord's Supper, and finally, to engage in any religious duty, are suitable ways of employing ourselves on the Lord's Day.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### POLYGAMY.

It is evident, from the teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, that polygamy is contrary to the will of God, and therefore not right.

In the beginning God created man, and gave him one woman as a companion; with the injunction to multiply and replenish the earth. It is but reasonable to suppose, if our Creator had intended a man should have more than one wife, he would have given

Adam more than one companion, especially as by so doing the world would have been more rapidly peopled by the progeny of one man.

The number of males and females born in the world, have been about equal, during every period of history. If it is right for one man to have more than one wife, say half-a-dozen, then it is also right for five other men not to marry at all, that this one may have an opportunity to indulge "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and pride of life;" all of which "is not of the Father, but is of the world."

It is evidently absurd, reasoning from the order of creation itself, to suppose that one man should have a right to a plurality of wives.

We find that all the precepts in the Bible, concerning marriage, teach that one man shall have one wife; and whenever this rule was violated, we learn from the history of the family, that this violation of God's will was productive of great trouble and unhappiness. The single instance of King David with his many wives and the troubles he had in his family, is sufficient to show that many evils are incident to polygamy, which do not follow from the marriage of one man with one woman.

It may be said, that the example of the Jewish patriarchs proves that polygamy is not contrary to the will of God. Their example cannot be admitted



as proof, in a case like this, in which we have many evidences that they were not obeying God's will. The tradition of the elders is by no means a safe rule to be governed by in morals.

Our Saviour more than once condemned the tradition of the elders. An example from Matt. xv. 1, 2, 3, will show how little regard should be paid to the tradition of the elders in establishing a rule in morals. "Then came to Jesus, Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" He then proceeded to give them an example, in which their tradition did transgress the commandment of God. Matt. xix. 8, Christ says, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so." It is altogether probable, that this custom of having many wives was similar to their custom of divorce. It certainly was not so from the beginning.

It is probable that the custom of having more than one wife, was abolished by the Jews before the time of Christ's appearing on earth. In the New Testament, we meet with no direct precept against it. But the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 9) amount to a prohi-

bition of polygamy: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." The adultery does not consist in repudiating his former wife, but in marrying another whilst the former wife yet lives. Since this is adultery, polygamy cannot be considered otherwise than adulterous.

St. Paul, in speaking of the marriage state, always alludes to it as the union of one man with one woman. Rom. vii. 1, 2, 3, "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath a husband, is bound by the law of her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man."

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, restrains the right of marriage to the union of one man with one woman: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman; nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own *wife*, and let every woman have her own *husband*."

It is evident, from the precepts contained in the

Sacred Scriptures, that polygamy is not right. It is a custom which prevails mostly, at the present day, among heathens; and is not allowed by the laws of any Christian nation.

There is, however, a class of people in the United States of America, called Mormons, who practise polygamy, and yet they pretend that theirs is a society of Christians. None of the old states would allow them to remain in their borders, and continue to pursue their evil and heathenish practices. They retreated to the wilds of Utah, where they might, for a time, be heathens among the heathen.

It seems strange that it seldom enters the mind of man to say that each woman has a right to a plurality of husbands. This would certainly be true, if each man had a right to a plurality of wives. For, since the number of males and females are about equal in the world, and one man has the same right to marry that another has, it becomes evident, if one man takes a number of wives, that one woman ought to have a corresponding number of husbands; so that the equality which God has established, may be maintained. I am sure that most men, especially those who have some predilection in favor of polygamy, would consider this reasoning absurd. If it is absurd to say that one woman may, under certain circumstances, be entitled to more than one husband, it is

equally absurd to say that one man should have more than one wife.

The evil consequences of polygamy are numerous. Such is the case with all violations of God's will.

Polygamy produces contests and jealousies among wives of the same husband. It has a tendency to destroy admiration of character, and cause love, which should be an ennobling feeling, to degenerate into a mere animal passion.

The children of the man who has many wives are necessarily deprived, to a great extent, of the care of the father. Almost the whole care of the family devolves on the mothers, who are, by no means, able to discharge the duties of both parents. The men have many wives, the unfortunate women do not any of them have a husband. There would, of course, be much jealousy and distrust among members of the same family; quarrelling, wrangling, and all sorts of confusion would be the necessary consequence of such a state of society.

Polygamy must, to a great extent, destroy family pride of character, which is a great incentive to most persons to do right.

The children of a parent who has many wives, cannot receive the same attention in their education that those can who are the offspring of a man who has but one wife. These have a father and mother both to

care for them. There is another advantage to the children; the man who has but five sons can certainly provide for them more easily than he can for twenty. It is also plain that four fathers can provide better for twenty boys than one can.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MARRIAGE.

THE marriage vow is a solemn obligation in which both man and wife promise to perform certain duties which are incumbent on each by virtue of the promise which they reciprocally make.

Marriage subserves most noble purposes: it binds societies and communities together by the ties of relationship; it encourages men and women to live virtuously, that they may gain the esteem and admiration of others; it nerves parents to industry and frugality, that they may acquire a competency for the support and education of their offspring; it is the parent of many virtues, and it was instituted by God for wise and beneficent purposes.

The duties arising from the marriage state are plainly and repeatedly spoken of in the Bible. Chas-

tity is recommended as an adorning virtue, whilst a want of it is denounced as a base sin which will be followed by fearful punishment.

Although polygamy was practised by some of the chief men among the Israelites, still it is contrary to the Scriptural precepts. God gave Adam but one wife, and we nowhere find, in any part of the Bible, a command to a man how he shall treat his wives, but we find many precepts concerning a man and his wife. Some of which are the following:—Genesis xxiv. 4, “But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take *a wife* unto my son Isaac.” Matt. xix. 5, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.” 1 Cor. vii. 3, “Let the husband render unto *the wife* due benevolence, and likewise also the wife unto the husband.” (V. 10,) “Let not *the wife* depart from her husband,” &c.

Nature, as well as the Sacred Scriptures, forbids polygamy. In most instances recorded in the Bible of a man who had more than one wife, we also find a record of the scenes of trouble and strife which were the result of this unlawful conduct.

The case of David the king, is a remarkable example of the evils arising from this violation of God's will. He had many troubles in his family. One of his sons rebelled against his authority, and was slain

in the battle which David was forced to fight against him, to preserve his command over the children of Israel. The pathetic lamentation of David for the loss of his beautiful son, is a specimen of the sorrows of the man who had many wives. "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom! my son, my son!"

In Christian countries polygamy is almost universally abhorred. In most countries it is punishable by law.

The apostle Paul, in speaking of the close relationship existing between Christ and the church, compares this relationship to that connecting husband and wife. The figure is very beautiful and expressive, and it also contains a useful moral lesson to husband and wife which, if each will faithfully practise, peace and happiness will cheer their lives. St. Paul Eph. v. 22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (23,) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Saviour of the body. (24,) Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (25,) Husbands, love your wives even as Christ, also, loved the church, and gave himself for it. (26,) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. (27,) That he might

present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28,) So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

The duties which the husband and wife owe to each other, are herein plainly expressed. It is the right and duty of the husband to govern the family, and it is the duty of the wife and children to submit to his authority. The act of submission on the part of the wife to the authority of her husband, is every way as dignified and respectable, as is the act of authority on his part. If he should abuse his authority, and the wife should still submit, his act of authority in which he might feel proud, would only be disgraceful, whilst her submission under the circumstances would be doubly honorable.

I believe that no wife, except she be one of the woman's right school, has any desire to assume the responsible position of directing and governing the family, the husband included, unless he neglects to perform his duty. If the wife sees that there is no head to the family, she very naturally places herself at the head of affairs.

She knows that every family must be governed by one or the other parent; and if the husband will not discharge his duty, she feels that she is violating no



obligation to assume a part of his cares. But since "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church," she ought to be very cautious how she assumes authority which was never intrusted to her.

"As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The object of the wife in submitting to her husband should be, to make him happy; by so doing, she increases her own happiness. If she should not seek to render her husband happy, she could not retain his affection for her; and without love, union in marriage affords no happiness for either party.

The duty of the wife is to obey her husband; but there is at the same time, an obligation resting on the husband not to command, or request his wife to do anything which is wrong, irreligious, or unlawful.

The husband has no right to abuse the authority which is vested in him. He ought to *love* his wife; if he can conform to this portion of the precept, he will not be inclined to use his authority unlawfully.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Such love as this is not the result of a momentary feeling of admiration; it is deep, abiding affection. A man should so love his wife that he would be willing to lose his own life to protect her. "Greater love hath

no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." You may say that this is no great mark of a man's love for his wife, for a sense of honor would urge him to risk his life to save hers, if it should be necessary. I grant this; but if he should do so, and his motive were love, you will agree with me in saying that such is the degree of affection which will cause a man to treat his wife as the apostle requires.

The apostle Peter speaks of the duties of husband and wife, as follows, (1 Peter iii. 1-7): "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation united with respect. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel; but let it be the inward disposition of the mind, which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, as with the weaker party; rendering respect to them, as heirs with you of the grace of life."

A meek and quiet disposition in a wife will cause her to appear more beautiful in the eyes of her husband, than all the costly ornaments with which she can adorn herself.

It appears to have been a question among the early

Christians, whether religious belief in Christ annulled the marriage bonds, if this belief existed in the husband or wife only, and not in both. There seems to have been a doubt in their minds, whether the believing husband ought to live in the marriage state with an unbelieving wife; or a believing wife with an unbelieving husband. St. Paul gives his opinion as follows, (1 Cor. 7, 12): "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord; If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (13,) And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (14,) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. (16,) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"

It appears from verse 15, that St. Paul held that the believer was under no obligation to follow the unbelieving wife or husband, if deserted on this account, and also in such case, the believer was morally free from the marriage bonds. Verse 15, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DUTIES OF PARENTS.

ONE of the first, most evident, and most generally acknowledged duties of parents, is the maintenance of their offspring. Nature has made this a duty of imperative necessity, whilst children are young.

The child could not exist in this world without the care of parents, or some one to discharge the duties of a parent to it. No one can be under greater obligation to discharge these duties, than the parents themselves. The utter helplessness of the child evinces the necessity of its being supported by some one; if its parents are alive and able to do anything at all, it is their duty to support it; but if they should die or become helpless during the infancy of their offspring, it becomes the duty of some one else to provide for the child and to assist its parents.

Children need the care, counsel, and support of some one from their earliest infancy until their minority has terminated. They must be cared for, that their feeble frames may grow strong and healthful; that they may increase in stature and natural vigor; that the child may become the full-grown man or woman: that the physical organization of children may be

properly developed, and their bodies may be healthful, properly proportioned, and vigorous. All this requires care—such care as no one who does not possess the affection of a parent for the child can properly bestow.

It is evident that the maintenance of the child is a duty which by nature devolves upon its parents. It is the duty of the parents to furnish it with healthful food and comfortable clothing; and to allow it opportunities for taking that degree of exercise which is necessary to induce a healthful condition and proper expansion of its physical organization.

It is the duty of parents to provide healthful food for their children, and it is as much a duty to see that they are furnished with a proper quantity to support life and promote health.

If we permit them to indulge their appetites to excess, even if they do have food which would be healthful if taken in proper quantities, this excess will produce disease as certainly as if their food were not of a wholesome nature. The object being to secure the existence and promote the health of the child, it surely is as much a duty of the parents to prevent their child from indulging his appetite to excess, as it is to furnish him with wholesome food; for gormandizing will not only destroy the health, but if persisted in, will destroy life as surely as will starvation.

With regard to providing comfortable clothing and allowing a sufficient degree of healthful exercise, parents seldom err. They usually provide for these necessary comforts, as bountifully as their means will allow.

A parent who through penuriousness alone would allow his child to suffer from the inclemencies of the weather, is a cruel, heartless being. Parents are far more apt to err by indulging their children too much, than by providing for them too parsimoniously. They are more apt to fail of performing their duty to their children, by allowing them too much food and clothing them too warmly, than by being too sparing of such comforts.

St. Paul teaches, that it is the duty of parents to provide for the bodily need of their families. (1 Tim. 5, 8.) "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." It is evident that St. Paul here has reference to providing for bodily need.

In the expression, If any provide not for his own, &c., he is worse than an infidel; if the apostle had been speaking of providing for the moral training of children, he could not have said that the man is *worse* than an infidel who does not provide for those of his

own house, since the infidel does not provide for the moral training of his children. The Christian who does not provide for the moral training of his family, is like the infidel, but not, as I conceive, worse. But infidels, and even heathens, inculcate it as a duty to provide for the bodily need of their own families, and generally perform this duty with becoming care. If the Christian does not perform this duty, of course he is worse in this particular than the infidel.

2 Cor. xii. 14, "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." This, though said by way of illustration, conveys the idea that it is the duty of parents to provide for the temporal wants of their children; and from the fact that it is used as an illustration, it is evident that the principle was familiar, and no one doubted its propriety.

Next in importance to maintenance, is the duty of educating our children. No parent can value too highly the importance of educating his children. Yet, how often this duty is culpably neglected by the parents!

It too frequently is the case that parents allow themselves more latitude in providing for the bodily need of their children than the injunction of the apostle justifies.

The duty of providing for his children does not

justify a man in devoting all the energies of his body and mind to the acquiring of wealth. It seems to have been alluded to by the apostle for the purpose of arousing the slothful and negligent to a sense of their duty, but by no means for the purpose of encouraging a guilty striving to "lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

A parent ought not to neglect the education of his child for the purpose of acquiring wealth. If he has the means actually necessary for the sustenance of his family, his next care ought to be to educate his children. The first step in the education of children devolves upon the mother; she is intrusted with the care of them, both male and female, until they are old enough to attend school. Up to this time, by far the greater portion of the instruction which they receive is from the mother. The earliest and most lasting impressions which they receive is from the mother. She it is who teaches them to speak their vernacular language. How important it is that she should be educated; that she should be able to teach her child to speak correctly! There is but little for that child to unlearn that it has learned amiss, whose mother is educated. It is spared much labor and much perplexity by being taught in its infancy by an educated mother.



It is the mother who first teaches her child that there is a God, the Creator of all things, whom we all ought to love and adore. How much pure morality that mother can instil into the minds of her innocent babes who is herself educated and pious!

Since so much depends upon the education of the mother, it becomes the especial duty of parents to attend to the education of their daughters.

Since it is the duty of the child to obey his parents, it is necessarily the duty of the parents to enforce obedience, when not voluntary on the part of the child. To learn obedience should be a part of the child's education whilst yet young. Obedience is almost the first lesson which every child should learn. No parent should think of sending a child to school until this lesson is thoroughly learned. No child is prepared to enter school until he has learned to obey. This knowledge should be acquired at home; not at school. Lessons in the different sciences are to be taught there, though obedience must, of necessity, be practised, or confusion, and not progression, will be the result.

When the child is sent to school, it is the father's duty to watch over his progress, though, if the mother is educated, she can assist greatly in advancing her child in those intellectual pursuits which engage his attention at school.

It is the duty of parents to cultivate in their children a desire to acquire knowledge. This desire should grow in the child as he grows older and becomes able to acquire more knowledge.

If the child dislikes books, and feels that to learn his lessons is a task greatly to be dreaded; if he has no ambition to excel in learning; the parents ought to scrutinize their own conduct, and endeavor to discover any error which they may have made in the previous management of their child. In most cases, such want of pride and energy on the part of the child is owing to some previous bad management on the part of the parents. The error ought to be detected and remedied as soon as possible.

In order that the parents may be able to inspire their sons and daughters with a thirst for knowledge, it is not necessary that they should be educated. The illiterate man can point out to his child, with much energy and feeling, the necessity of a good education. He can tell him of the misfortunes, the trouble, and the suffering through which it has been his lot to pass, because he had not a good education. There are none who know so well the value of a good education, and feel its importance so keenly, as those who have suffered from a want of it.

It is the duty of parents to visit the school where their children are being educated, if it is possible for

them to do so; this is especially necessary with young children; it does more to excite an ambition in them to excel in learning, than many lectures on the importance of acquiring a good education.

It matters not, whether the parents have a knowledge of the branches which their children are studying; the interest which the child sees the parent is taking in his advancement, has a favorable effect. Besides, there are but few parents who have not intelligence enough to discover, in a very few visits, what progress their child is making.

Whenever a child thinks he has discharged his duty at school in a commendable manner, and is desirous of telling his parents how successful he has been, they ought not to turn a deaf ear to his story. They ought to listen to him with patience, and express their satisfaction. If they do not listen, with some marks of pleasure, to his story of success, their neglect will have a tendency to destroy his ambition, and he will shortly cease to have any success of which to boast.

Parents sometimes teach their children to view learning as a punishment, by requiring them to learn a certain lesson as a punishment for some fault they have committed. In doing so, the parent is guilty of a great fault; perhaps greater than that for which he is punishing the child. If it is our duty to cultivate in our child a desire for learning, it surely is a fault

on our part, to do anything which will cause the child to hate books, and consider study a punishment.

We ought to carefully avoid doing anything which will cause our child to have a distaste for learning; none of us are so fond of affliction as to become lovers of learning, if we view it as a punishment.

Teachers are sometimes guilty of this error. They will require their pupils to write a certain number of lines, or commit a certain lesson to memory, as an atonement for some fault. This ought not to be done; by doing so, they contradict their daily assertions. By using learning as a means of punishment, they refute the object for which the punishment is imposed.

In educating a child, the teacher is the representative of the parent, and he should feel the same care for the welfare and advancement of his pupil, that is felt by the parents. Although to some extent the representative of the parent, yet I think he has no natural right to inflict corporal punishment on his pupils. Very few parents willingly yield this natural right of theirs to the teacher. It seems that they do so because they think there is no other alternative, and not because it is right.

I do not see why they should grant this right to the teacher; there is no necessity for it at all, if they will discharge their own duties as parents. If they will prepare their children for entering school before they

send them there, they will know how to obey, and then the teachers will not wish them to transfer their natural right of inflicting corporal punishment. It is the difficulty of governing a school that makes it an onerous task, it is not the labor of teaching.

Parents can encourage their children greatly by manifesting an interest in their studies. It increases their diligence and industry; and they soon learn, because they derive pleasure from learning.

At first, they learn from the love they have for their parents; but most children will very soon acquire a love of learning if they are taught properly, and study will become a source of enjoyment to them.

Parents would do well, to follow their children through the various steps of their education. By so doing, both parent and child will be greatly benefited. In order to explain to the child the various difficulties with which his young mind will meet in the course of acquiring an education, it will be necessary to analyze and simplify, so that the mind of the child can grasp the subject.

In doing this, the parent makes his own knowledge more thorough, and he maintains an intellectual superiority over his child, which is a great advantage to both parent and child. It is far better, however, for the parent to encourage his child to go on, if he has not industry himself to set his child the example in

learning, than to allow him to grow up in ignorance to prevent him from becoming wiser than himself. The importance of the parent's maintaining an intellectual superiority, is not sufficient to justify such conduct.

Almost any parent who is industrious can, if he will begin with his child and study the same lessons that the child has to study, continue to maintain an intellectual superiority over his child, and at the same time acquire an education.

A parent who has acquired a good education, and fails to cultivate his mind that he may have more time to acquire wealth, is sadly deficient in the discharge of his duty to his children. No matter how negligent he has been previous to the time of sending his children to school, he can, with very little extra labor in reviewing their studies, render them great assistance, and stimulate them to industry and diligence in the prosecution of their studies.

The eternal destiny of the child is placed, to a great extent, in the hands of its parents. If the child is educated to be a thief, when he is grown he is apt to be an expert one. If he is taught in childhood to lie, in old age he will find the desire to bear false witness very strong in his bosom. If he is brought up familiar with vicious indulgences, he will be inclined to become a wicked man. But if he is taught from

earliest infancy to preserve inviolate his moral purity, he will love morality and piety; and when he has arrived at that age when men are thought to be alone responsible for their own acts, he will prove that his parents have faithfully performed their trust.

Every parent should regard his child as an immortal soul which God has intrusted to his care, and for the loss of which he will hold him fearfully responsible.

Each parent should educate his child with a view of preparing him to dwell in the celestial abode of the spirits of the blessed: to become an inmate of the house not made with hands; to dwell at the right hand of the throne on high. In a word, he should endeavor to keep that soul pure, as he received it from the hands of his Maker; so that, when called upon to return it, it should be in a fit condition to be received again by God, the bestower of all good gifts.

I would say, then, to parents, teach your child its moral obligations; not the peculiar tenets of any particular denomination of Christians, but those moral obligations which every denomination of Christians agree in practising; the morality which the Bible teaches. Teach him to practise those duties faithfully, and you will find that the surest way of succeeding is to make your own actions an example in virtuous conduct. But by no means should parents be hypocrit-

ical with their children. If they pretend to be pious, they must be so indeed, or all their efforts for their children will be wholly unavailing.

Children must believe that their parents are honest, and they cannot believe that unless they *are* honest. You cannot dupe them in matters pertaining to the heart.

Very wicked men, who do not profess Christianity, sometimes rear families that are distinguished for their piety. The reason is, they do not deceive their children, they tell them what is right, but they do not pretend as their parents to practise it. They confess their faults, and advise their children not to follow their example except in honesty. The children learn what is right, and also learn to shun evil.

A very pious father and mother might rear a family of children who are not inclined to follow in the footsteps of their parents. The reason seems to be that too great zeal for public worship and other religious duties which call the father away from home, cause him to neglect his duty to his children; and all the care of the family devolving on the mother, she is unequal to the task of performing the duty of both parents. A zeal for public worship is a commendable zeal; but, at the same time, a man should not neglect private worship, and the duties which he owes to his children as their father. If he neglects the moral



culture of his children, no matter how laudably he may otherwise be occupied, he is not making a proper effort to return those souls pure to their Creator which are intrusted to his especial care.

The social worship of God is a very important moral duty ; it ought, by all means, to be attended to in its proper season ; but he who neglects the moral training of his own children in offices of public worship, is mistaken with regard to the extent of his obligations. The time occupied in public worship ought not to interfere too frequently with the duties which a man owes to his own family ; neither morality nor religion requires it of him.

Example exerts a powerful influence on the actions of men, and it nowhere exhibits its power more conspicuously than in the family circle. If the father wishes his children to be industrious, prudent, and virtuous, the easiest way to gain his desire, is to be industrious, prudent, and virtuous himself. No virtue appears so attractive to a child as one for which his parents are distinguished.

Parents should be careful not to couple their acts of piety and virtue, with austere and forbidding manners. If their piety renders them happy, why should they not appear mild and benignant in the discharge of their religious duties ? This would make piety and virtue attractive to the young ; but an austere

and forbidding manner will render even virtue repulsive to the young, whose spirits are naturally buoyant and joyful.

The child's character is greatly influenced by its associates and companions; therefore it becomes the parent's duty and interest to be careful to select suitable companions and playmates for his child. It is his duty to do so, because, if the child is allowed to associate with wicked and vicious persons, he will be tempted to become wicked and vicious also, and the parent ought not to permit his child to be led into temptation, if he can avoid it. By associating with wicked persons, his child will learn to regard many wicked acts as pleasures, of which he might have remained ignorant if he had associated with better companions.

It is the parent's duty to shield his child from the debasing influence of evil associations. It will be much easier for his child to avoid those evils of which he is ignorant, than it will be for the parent to eradicate evil habits which his child has already formed. No considerations should induce him to permit his child to form associations which he thinks will be injurious. The desires of his child, and the remarks of his less prudent neighbors, should not influence his conduct in this case. He ought to regard his duty only, and discharge it faithfully.

The rights of parents, as parents, arise from their duties. It being the duty of parents to educate their children, to train them up so that they may live lives of usefulness and virtue, of course the parent must have the right to use such discipline as is necessary for the accomplishment of these ends.

Since every family forms a little society, bound together by a common interest, the parent, if his circumstances are such as to need help, has a right to require the assistance of his children in laboring to acquire the means necessary for their maintenance and education; but no parent, I think, has the right to require the labor of his child farther than necessity requires, merely to gratify a culpable desire of gain. He ought not, for such a cause, to require the labor of his child when the child ought to be in school. By so doing, he defrauds his child of that education which the child has a natural right to expect at his hands.

## CHAPTER IX.

## DUTIES OF CHILDREN.

A PRINCIPLE which pervades all animal nature is, that the young of every species of animals, if not provided for by the parents, must shortly die. I believe there are but few exceptions to this rule, perhaps none, unless among the lowest order of animals.

Of all that portion of creation which is invigorated by animal life, there is none which is more helpless in its infancy, than man; and none which requires so much care from its parents. The unceasing attention of the parents is required from its earliest infancy, until, having arrived at the age of maturity, the man is no longer a child.

During the tender years of infancy, we find it necessary to keep a constant watch over our child, to protect it from harm, to ward off the blows which are incident to childhood, and to prevent that destruction which would almost inevitably be the consequence of its mental and physical inability to protect itself.

When we consider the great care which our parents must have, and the anxiety which they must endure whilst we are yet infants; when we consider

the tears of the mother and the groans of the father, when their helpless infant is attacked by remorseless disease, the locality of which it has not the utterance to describe, the nature of which can only be conjectured by the contortions of the tender victim, we must conclude that nature itself has placed the child under such obligations to its parents, that a whole life of affection and obedience cannot more than compensate them.

Obedience to parents is necessary in order that the child may be able to avail himself of the knowledge and experience of the parents. Without this obedience to parental authority until the child has acquired that age and experience which are necessary to enable him to direct him in the path of virtue, he will be apt to form a detestable character, and become a reckless, unhappy man.

He who is not obedient to his parents is apt, when he becomes a man, to be a violater of the laws of his country, a degraded outcast, and it may be, an executed criminal.

Disobedience to parents is a grievous sin, which is followed by the most terrible consequences. St. Paul classes the disobedient to parents, among backbiters, haters of God, inventors of evil things, and covenant breakers.

That it is the duty of children to obey their parents

is taught in many portions of the Bible. (Proverbs i. 8, 9.) "My son, keep the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. They shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck."

It is not only the duty, but the interest of children to obey their parents; it being the best way to promote their own happiness. If the child is obedient to his parents, they will direct him in the way which will crown him with honor. If he is obedient to his parents, he will become a respectable, intelligent, and happy man. His intelligence will be as an ornament of grace to his head; and the respect, affection, and esteem of his neighbors and friends will be as a chain of precious metal about his neck.

Prov. xiii. 1, "A wise son heareth his father's instructions, but a scorner heareth not rebuke." Prov. xv. 5, "A fool despiseth his father's instructions." Obedience to parents is a mark of wisdom in a child; yet how few youths appreciate this truth! It is too frequently the case that young persons think nothing distinguishes them so much for talent and wisdom, as to follow their own judgment in preference to the counsel of their parents. "Obedience to parents is no indication of meanness and servility; on the contrary, it is the most honorable and delightful exhibition of character that can be manifested by the young."

He is a wise son who avails himself of the advantages to be derived from obedience to his parents; but the son who is disobedient to his parents, though he may think himself wise, which he is almost sure to do, being puffed up by the yeast of ignorance, actually does those things which contribute most to render him unhappy. He despises instruction, and is denominated by the wise king, "A fool."

Prov. xxx. 17, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

The consequences of disobedience to parents are terrible. The disobedient child blindly follows the impulses of passion, and plunges headlong into a career of profligacy, which leads him to sure and certain destruction. In youth, he is proud, boastful, and ignorant; in manhood, he is wicked and debased.

We find the following injunction to children, in Ephesians vi. 1, 2, 3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; Which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Obedience to parents is not only due from their children on account of natural obligations, but it is

also commanded by God, and he promises to reward those who are dutiful.

Obedient children do not assume unnatural airs, and claim privileges which are awarded by society to those persons only who are of a more advanced age.

Disobedience to parents will evidently have a tendency to make mankind retrograde; to destroy the decency and respectability of society; to subvert the just and beneficial laws which are enacted by wise and good men; to revolutionize governments, and produce a state of anarchy which nothing but a military despotism can regulate. When disobedience to parents is observed to be general in a state, this may be taken as a portentous sign of manifold troubles. It is one of the signs of perilous times mentioned by the apostle Paul, which he says shall come in the last days. (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.) "This know, also, that, in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, *disobedient to parents*, unthankful, unholy; without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

There is a limit to the obligation of obedience to



parents; this limit is fixed in most countries by statute; but whether fixed by statute or by custom, whenever one's minority terminates, he becomes a man; and, if he chooses to leave his parents, he is no longer under obligation to obey them. But, as long as he remains with his parents, even if his minority has ceased, it is his duty to obey all the regulations which they may choose to establish in their household; for, without such obedience, good order, which is indispensable in every family, cannot be maintained.

After obedience to the commands of their parents has ceased to be obligatory, still it is right, and a mark of good sense in the child, to listen to the advice of his parents in preference to the counsel of any other person.

Of this fact every child may be certain, viz., there is no individual, among all his friends and acquaintances, who feels as much disinterested affection for him as is felt by his own parents. Therefore he may be sure that the advice of his parents proceeds from a desire to promote his welfare, whilst the advice of one who seems to be his friend, and who may be wiser than his parents, may be urged upon him for the purpose of ensnaring him to promote his own interest, or the interest of some one else upon whom he really wishes to confer a benefit. The advice of the parent should be preferred then; for, though he may not be

as wise as others, you are sure that his advice is intended for your good.

It is always the duty of children to reverence their parents; that is, to feel those sentiments of respect and esteem for their parents which are due from an inferior to a superior. Every child should thus respect his parents. No matter how learned and distinguished the child may be, he should never think of his parents as being his inferiors; indeed, those men who are wisest and most distinguished are generally noted for filial reverence.

It is related of Napoleon Bonaparte, that when he was at the summit of his glory, having reached the dizzy height of human greatness, he one day met his mother, and, playfully holding out his hand, told her to kiss the hand of her prince; she answered, "Not so, my son, do you kiss the hand of your mother;" which command he very reverently obeyed.

Thus, to reverence our parents is by no means a mark of an ignoble character; on the contrary, no matter how great may be our knowledge and how little that of our parents, no matter how honorable a rank we may hold among men, it is an evidence of true greatness of soul to show marked respect for our parents on all occasions.

There is no more ennobling trait of character than that of profound filial respect, and nothing will sooner

gain for a young man the respect of others, than for him to be always polite and attentive to aged persons.

The feeling which prompts a person to be watchful of the comfort and convenience of all old persons is so nearly allied to filial reverence, that it cannot fail to gain the approbation of every one who witnesses an exhibition of it.

There is a peculiar affection which is due from a child to a parent, simply because he is a parent. Filial affection does not spring up in the heart from any idea that our parents are better, wiser, or superior in any respect to other individuals, but it is a part of our nature to feel this species of affection; yet, every child who is tenderly cared for by its parents does feel that its own parents are better, wiser, and superior in every respect to other individuals. This feeling is peculiar to childhood; but something akin to it glows in the bosom of the full-grown man, though the feeling is modified by mature judgment.

Under the influence of this feeling we scarcely perceive the faults of our parents; we minister to their necessities, shield them from misfortune, support them in old age, and, in every way possible, exhibit the same care for them which they felt for us during our childhood.

There is one instance in which obedience to parents is not a duty. It sometimes happens that a parent is

so wicked as to require his child to perform an act which is not right. It may be an act which is highly criminal; of course, in such a case, disobedience to parents would be right.

There is another case in which the children usually think it right to disobey their parents. I may say two others. The one is, when a young man does not desire to pursue the profession which his parents have chosen for him; the other, when two young persons form an attachment for each other, and desire to form a matrimonial union contrary to the wishes of their parents.

In the case of selecting a profession, the child ought to remember that his parents have more experience, and, in most cases, better judgment than he, and he ought to yield his fanciful predilection for a particular pursuit to the better judgment of his parents. If, however, his choice is made from sound judgment and a proper appreciation of his own abilities, he will not find it difficult to offer reasons which will both convince his parents and gain their approbation of his choice.

In the case of marrying contrary to the wishes of our parents, we ought to be cautious how we take a step which will be apt to prove destructive to our happiness.

In most cases, when parents object to the union for

life, of their child, with the person he or she has chosen, their solicitude for the happiness of their child has caused them to discern, with almost prophetic vision, that *misery*, and not *happiness*, will be the consequence of such a union.

Some may think that it is cruelty and a want of feeling on the part of the parents to object to the marriage of their son or daughter with the person with whom he or she may think that life will be a pleasant ramble through a garden of roses; but in most cases, the refusal proceeds from a very different motive. It is a deep affection of the parents, a harassing dread, and even a terrible certainty, that the affections of their child are misplaced, and that joy cannot crown such a union.

The parent sits quietly, in some sequestered corner, watching and penetrating, with the philosophic scrutiny of a sage, into the secrets of the heart of that individual whom his child has selected as a companion for life; his mind is not disturbed by the glowing passions of youth; he calculates, with the utmost precision, what will be the consequence of such a union; if he peremptorily refuse to give his consent, the young gentleman and lady had better, far better, yield to the judgment of mature age and parental affection.

There are, it is true, some parents who seem to think that nothing but wealth is necessary to insure

the happiness of their children in the married state. If the parties know that such mercenary views constitute the only ground of objection by which their parents are influenced, I see no reason why they should not refuse obedience to such parents; being themselves of a proper age to make a choice.

If the parent should urge his child to marry contrary to his inclination, he would be transcending the bounds of his privilege as a parent, and his child has a right not to obey. The parent may, with propriety, say whom his child shall not marry with his consent; but he has no right to say whom he shall marry.

In all differences between the parent and child, it is the duty of the parent to represent to the child, with fidelity, the consequences of the course which he has chosen, and he ought also to listen to his child with a mind open to conviction. This treatment secures the confidence of the child, and heightens his esteem for his parent.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS—SLAVERY.

THE Apostle Paul, in the sixth chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, writes as follows. Verse 5. "Servants (*οἱ δούλοι*, slaves), be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

The apostle has thus given the duties of servants, those duties which they owe to their masters, in few words, but in very plain and expressive language. He has required just such duties as will be sure to gain for every servant who performs them, the approbation of his master.

Every master would like for his slaves to be such servants as obedience to the requirements of the apostle would make them. Every master would be pleased to have his slaves serve him with "*singleness of heart*;" "Not with *eye-service*, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

The servants of Christ who do the will of God from the heart, always perform their duties as though they were in the immediate presence of God; they bear in mind that the eye of God is always beholding them; they know that he sees every action they perform; then of course they endeavor to make every action agreeable to his will.

Such service as this, the apostle Paul requires slaves to render to their masters on earth. He wishes them not to serve their masters with eye-service, as men-pleasers.

We can deceive men by doing as they desire when they are present, and when they are away we can immediately shape our conduct so as to thwart their wishes. But the servant of God cannot deceive him; he knows the secrets of their hearts. They must serve him faithfully, or it is equivalent to no service at all.

No master can desire a better servant than the one who serves him with singleness of heart; who endeavors to obey his will whether absent or present. Such a servant will be sure to receive reward, and not punishment, from his master.

1 Tim. vi. 1. "Let as many servants (*δοῦλοι*, slaves) as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 2. And they that have



believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." One of the first and greatest difficulties with which a slave meets in becoming a Christian, is the difficulty of showing a proper respect and obedience to his master. Because they are brethren, he imagines himself his master's peer.

The reason of this seems to be, that ministers of the gospel do not explain to slaves their duties as such. They preach the same doctrine and same duties to all, not discriminating between the duties of servants and the duties of masters, as does the apostle, and the slave very naturally concludes that he is not only his master's brother, but his equal also. But the apostle teaches no such doctrine; and I think that slaves would entertain no such ideas, if the gospel were preached to them as it *is*, and not as some men *wish it to be*.

Some men who are not professing Christians, dislike for their servants to unite with the church. Whose fault is this? Would any man be opposed to his slaves uniting with the church, if he knew that as soon as they did so, they would cease to serve him with eye-service as men-pleasers, and be faithful as the servants of Christ? There is not one who would object. Every man would be pleased to have his

slaves unite with the church, for they would be more serviceable to him.

The condition of the master and slave would be every way improved. There would no longer be a necessity of employing men to watch over them to see that they discharge their duty; and the slave would hold a much higher position among men than he now maintains, or could possibly attain to by any other means.

This desirable end would long since have been reached, had it not been for a certain class of fanatics who pervert the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures, and affect to hold up their hands in holy horror of an institution which God himself did establish.

They speak in execration of the *sin of slavery*. In what part of the Bible do they find the expression, the *sin of slavery*? There is no such sin mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures. On the contrary, in many parts of both the Old and the New Testament, we are taught that slavery is not contrary to the will of God.

In the Old Testament, the law which God delivered to Moses, authorizing his chosen people to buy slaves, and hold them as an inheritance for their children after them, does not give us the least hint of the existence of any such sin as the sin of slavery; on the contrary, there can be no better proof that anything is right, than the fact that God authorizes it to be done.

Abraham was obedient to the will of God, and his beneficent Creator bestowed many blessings upon him. He became the owner of many male and female slaves; some of whom were *born in his house*, and some *bought with his money*. Is it not passing strange that God did not frown upon Abraham, and did not warn him in any way, to avoid the *heinous sin of slavery*, if it be a sin? Of course our heavenly Father would not have blessed Abraham, and dealt with him as though he were a righteous man, if the owning of slaves were sinful. God would not have treated him as a righteous man, if he had been acting in violation of his will.

In the New Testament, we find the apostles giving directions about the treatment of slaves, and recounting their duties; but we never see a line there concerning the *sin* of slavery.

Our Saviour did not say one word to his followers concerning the sin of slavery. If slavery were sinful, or, in other words, if it were sinful to own slaves, what Christian man can doubt that Christ and his apostles would have told the people that it was not right; that it was sinful?

Can any man who truly has faith in Christ as the Saviour of mankind believe that he, the Son of God, would pass by a crime of this nature unnoticed? Can any man who believes that Christ publicly reproached the Jews for the wrongs which they made legal by

their traditions, who believes that the words contained in the sermon on the mount were really uttered by our Saviour, also believe that slavery is a sin and Christ passed it by without a single remark?

Can any one who believes that John the Baptist lost his head for reproving Herod because he had married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, also believe that he would refuse to speak of the sin of slavery, or fear to do so, if to own slaves had been sinful?

Can any one of sound mind believe that the apostle Paul, who suffered all manner of hardship and persecution for the Lord's sake, would fear to mention this sin only, of all the sins which man may commit?

Our Saviour and his apostles did not fail freely to reprove various sins on occasions when, by doing so, it was evident that they would call down upon their devoted heads the vengeance of an enraged populace; why should they pass by this sin only? And is it not blasphemy to say that is a sin which God authorized his chosen people to do?

But these pious Christians who have discovered a sin which God himself authorized, which Christ did not reprove, and of which the apostles must have been ignorant, excuse the conduct of our Saviour and his apostles in not making mention of this sin, by saying that "Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as it behooved it, from inter-

meddling with the civil institutions of any." If Christianity did not intermeddle with civil institutions, but only corrected *moral evils*, the position of our Saviour and his apostles is just the same after the above apology is made for them as before; writers of Moral Philosophy do not oppose slavery on the ground that it is an injury to the civil institutions of a government, but because, say they, it is a *moral evil*; because it is sinful. Then, make what excuses you may, if you assert that slavery is sinful, you do virtually accuse Christ and his apostles of a criminal neglect of duty.

Paley goes a little farther in his apology for this culpable negligence of which Christ and his apostles have hitherto stood accused at the judgment seat of Moral Philosophy. He says, "Besides this, the discharging of slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing slavery to be unlawful, would have had no better effect than to let loose one-half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion which asserted their right to freedom; masters would hardly have been persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority; the most calamitous of all contests, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction, of the Christian name." If for these considerations our

Saviour and the apostles thought it better to say nothing about the sin of slavery, and kept the matter a profound secret, was it not very unwise? was it not presumption? was it not a bold and reckless act for Mr. Paley and others to reveal a secret of a nature so dangerous and deadly? When they are called to an account before high Heaven for the deeds done in the body, what excuse can they offer for dragging to light a secret fraught with so much mischief to mankind?

Can the son intercede for them in this case, when they have already published to the world, that, although they believe the Saviour and his apostles kept this matter a secret for fear of the mischief it might do among men, they have boldly, recklessly, and regardless of the consequences, dragged it to light? Can he say, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do? If I mistake not, this is the very excuse our Saviour will offer for them; they teach falsely, but they know not what they do.

It has been said that the *relation* of master and slave is of itself a sin. This cannot be true; for a *relation* cannot be either a sin or a virtue. Relation signifies the connection between things; as the relation of husband and wife; of master and servant. This is the sense in which the term relation is used, when they say that the relation of master and slave is a sin. How can the connection between things be of itself a sin?

We are told that the relation of master and slave is wrong, because some masters abuse their slaves in a very wicked manner. This is no proof at all that the relation is wrong, or that slavery is wrong. We might offer the same as a proof that the relation of husband and wife is wicked; for some husbands do treat their wives most wickedly, but no one gives this as a reason for believing marriage to be wrong. Of course it is no evidence that marriage is wrong, and it is no proof at all that slavery is not right.

I have made mention of the duties of slaves, without first showing that slavery is right. I have not given my opinion only, but have told you what the apostle Paul says about it, and I think he is much better authority than Messrs. Wayland, Paley, Whewell, or any of that class of writers.

In treating of slavery, I have begun with the duties of slaves. Some may think I should have proved that slavery is right, or at least have given my reasons for believing that it is not contrary to the will of God, before I spoke of the duties which slaves owe to their masters. I shall give my reasons at length, in the latter portion of my remarks on this subject.

I have the authority of the apostle Paul for saying that servants ought to be obedient to their masters, that they ought to count their masters worthy of all honor, and serve them faithfully. If this is not suffi-

cient, I have the authority of Peter, for saying, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." If this is not satisfactory, I have—wonderful to be told—the authority of Professor Wayland in confirmation of the truthfulness of what I have written concerning the duties of slaves. I do not consider Wayland near so good authority as the apostles, but refer to him in this case because, if there was any chance for doubting the duties of slaves, as mentioned in the New Testament, he certainly would not have acknowledged a belief in the obligatoriness of those duties.

Professor Wayland, concerning the duties of slaves, gives the following as his opinion: "The duty of slaves is also explicitly made known in the Bible. They are bound to obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect to their masters, not only to the good and kind, but also to the unkind and froward." How can Professor Wayland believe that the slave is morally bound to render such service to his master, and yet believe that slavery is unjust and sinful? These ideas are wholly irreconcilable. If slavery is not right, the slave owes no such service to his master. If the slave is morally bound to serve his master as above stated, slavery must be right, and in accordance with the Sacred Scriptures.



Wayland is not the only author who in one breath tells us that it is the moral duty of slaves to be respectful, obedient, and faithful to their masters, and in the next asserts that slavery is wrong.

I will quote a few passages from Whewell's *Elements of Morality*, touching this subject. "A family contains servants, as well as children; and Christian teaching enjoins, between them and the masters, the duties of obedience on one side, and good government on the other. Eph. vi. 5, Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. \* \* \* And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him. Nearly the same precepts and reasons are given (Col. iii. 22; iv. 1); so Tit. ii. 9: Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, nor purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Also 1 Pet. ii. 18: Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but

also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man, for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

In this passage of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 18), the word translated servants is *οἰκέται*, which signifies those living in one's house; as here used, I suppose it means a household slave, since St. Peter enjoins the same duties on these that the apostle Paul requires of slaves; St. Paul using the word *δοῦλος*, slave.

I shall now endeavor to show how futile are the efforts of Abolitionists and all who are opposed to the continuation of the institution of slavery, to pervert the meaning of these portions of the Sacred Scriptures, and substitute their own fanatical notions for the truth as revealed in the Bible.

The plan which they rely on mostly, to accomplish their design of laying aside those portions of the Sacred Scriptures relating to slavery, is this: they take some portions of the Sacred Scriptures which do not refer to slavery, and endeavor to show that slavery is inconsistent with the part of the Bible which is before them. They neglect the passages which do refer to slavery, and endeavor to set them aside by means of other portions of the Bible which do not have any direct

reference to slavery. Being led on by an inordinate desire to prove that slavery is wrong, it would seem they fail to perceive that, instead of attaining their object by thus arraying one portion of the Bible against another, and endeavoring to make contradictions where there are none, either real or apparent, they are only furnishing food for infidelity. Every one who reads the Bible at all, must see that slavery is recognised by it as being right; if certain portions of the Scriptures are so construed as to signify that slavery is wrong, you array one portion of the Scriptures against another. As our object is to find the truth, and since we believe that the Bible teaches truth, we shall, in the course of our remarks on this subject, endeavor to show that abolition authors have utterly failed in their efforts to pervert portions of Sacred Scripture, so as to make them condemn the relation of master and slave.

There are many passages of the Sacred Scripture which refer to slavery in so direct a manner that no one can doubt its being right, unless his mind is stultified by prejudice.

If the position which the Abolitionists take were true, the Bible would not prove anything with regard to slavery; inasmuch as every portion is equally authoritative. But their position is not true; the Bible does not teach that slavery is wrong, and

slavery is right. The Sacred Scriptures contain no contradictory teaching on the subject. Wherever slavery is referred to in the Sacred Scriptures, we are taught that masters have a right to the services of their slaves, and that the slaves owe obedience and faithful service to their masters.

Dr. Francis Wayland, in his *Elements of Moral Science*, published in Boston, by Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, in the year 1841, tells us on page 215: "The fact, under these circumstances, that the gospel does not forbid slavery, affords no reason to suppose that it does not mean to prohibit it; much less does it afford ground for belief, that Jesus Christ intended to authorize it." On page 218, we find the following contradiction of what he has told us on page 215: "Thus we see that the Christian religion not only forbids slavery, but that it also provides the only method in which, after it has been once established, it may be abolished, and with entire safety and benefit to both parties." On page 211, he tells us, that "The moral precepts of the Bible are diametrically opposed to slavery." In these passages, it is very evident that the Dr. has said nothing to convince any reasonable person that slavery is forbidden in the Bible. What he has said amounts to this; he once asserts that slavery is not forbidden in the Sacred Scriptures, and twice affirms that it is. If the Dr.

goes on in this way, he will furnish a good text-book for infidels; whilst at the same time, he fails to accomplish his object of proving that slavery is wrong.

He tells us that the moral precepts of the Bible are diametrically opposed to slavery; that the Christian religion forbids it, but the gospel *does not* forbid it. What does the learned Dr. mean?

In opposition to slavery, Dr. Wayland offers the following as an argument (page 209): "And, moreover, inasmuch as the acquisition of the knowledge of his duty to God, could not be freely made without the acquisition of other knowledge, which might, if universally diffused, endanger the control of the master, slavery supposes the master to have the right to determine how much knowledge of his duty a slave shall obtain, the manner in which he shall obtain it, and the manner in which he shall discharge that duty after he shall have obtained a knowledge of it. It thus subjects the duty of man to God, entirely to the will of man; and this for the sake of pecuniary profit. It renders the eternal happiness of the one party subservient to the temporal happiness of the other. . . . Its effects must be disastrous upon the morals of both parties."

From these remarks of Dr. Wayland, if we admit that they are true, we are forced to conclude that the slave has a very poor chance of performing his duties

as a Christian; that his chances for eternal happiness are altogether unequal to those of his master. We do not, however, arrive at this conclusion, for we do not admit the premises to be true; and we desire no better argument to prove that the Dr. is wrong on this subject, than that which he has furnished us, on page 218. "The duty of slaves is also explicitly made known in the Bible. They are bound to obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect, to their masters, not only to the good and kind, but also to the unkind and froward; not, however, on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God. This obligation extends to everything but matters of conscience."

He seems to have forgotten, that on page 209, he said, slavery subjects the duty of man to God, entirely to the will of man. But let us continue to the end of the paragraph. "When a master commands a slave to do wrong, the slave ought not to obey. The Bible does not, as I suppose, authorize resistance to injury; but commands us to refuse obedience in such a case, and suffer the consequences, looking to God alone, to whom vengeance belongeth. Acting upon these principles, the slave may attain to the highest grade of virtue, and may exhibit a sublimity and purity of moral character, which in the condition of the master is absolutely unattainable."

It is strange, indeed, that he should tell us the slave

can attain to a degree of moral virtue which is absolutely unattainable by the master, after trying to convince us that slavery is contrary to the will of God; contrary to the principles of the Christian religion, because it does not allow the slave an equal chance with the master in attaining eternal happiness.

I fail to perceive the reason why he should believe the slave has an opportunity of attaining to a higher degree of virtue than the master, or that the master has a fairer chance of gaining eternal happiness than the slave, or how he can believe both of his assertions to be true. As for myself, since he contradicts himself, I shall not believe either of his assertions. I have, however, a better reason than this for not believing either assertion. One of his assertions might contradict the other, and still both of them not be false. I do not think God is a respecter of persons, and therefore I cannot believe that the good actions of one will please him any more than those of another. All that is required of us is to do his will, and if we do that our actions are well pleasing to him, no matter whether we be bond or free.

In the paragraph just quoted, Dr. Wayland says that slaves are bound to obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect to their masters, not on the ground of *duty to man*, but on the ground of *duty to God*. I wonder if this is the reason he wishes us to believe

that "the moral precepts of the Bible are diametrically opposed to slavery." We cannot think so if we believe that slaves owe obedience to their masters on the ground of duty to God.

They are bound to obedience, fidelity, &c., to their masters, not on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God. Obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect are duties which they owe to their masters; he says they owe these duties to their masters, not on the ground of duty to man. Their masters are men, and he says they owe these duties to these men, not on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God. Can it be that he means to say they owe certain duties to man, not because they owe any duty at all to man, but because they owe duty to God? I must confess that I cannot comprehend the expression sufficiently to perceive that it conveys an intelligible meaning. But if Dr. Wayland says slaves *do* owe obedience, fidelity, and other duties to their masters on the ground of duty to God, we will not object, for the obligations cannot possibly be placed on any higher ground.

Dr. Wayland has, by attempting an evasion of the plain teaching of the gospel, furnished us a sound argument in favor of the belief that slavery is right; for whatever must be done on the ground of duty to God *must* be right. If we say slaves owe certain



duties to their masters, not on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God, of course we cannot mean to say that they do not owe those duties to their masters, for we first assert that they do. We must mean that slaves owe certain duties to man because it is God's will for them to perform those duties. Whatever is God's will is right.

I begin to wonder why Dr. Wayland did not convince himself that slavery is not contrary to the will of God. If his expression concerning the obligations of slaves to their masters, means anything at all, it must mean that they owe these duties to their masters, because it is God's will for them to perform such service. If it is God's will that slaves should be obedient, faithful, and submissive to their masters, how can it be said that slavery is not agreeable to his will?

Dr. Wayland offers the following as an argument against slavery. "It (slavery) supposes that the Creator intended one human being to govern the physical, intellectual, and moral actions of as many other human beings as, by purchase, he can bring within his physical power, and that one human being may thus acquire a right to sacrifice the happiness of any number of other human beings, for the purpose of promoting his own." Dr. Wayland has made his description of what slavery supposes, entirely too

comprehensive, since it includes more than the truth. He does not give the true reason for the master's having the right to control the actions of the slave. This right of the master is designed to contribute to the happiness, moral culture, and intellectual improvement of the slave. Mr. Fletcher tells us more correctly what slavery supposes. "Slavery supposes the Creator intended that the interest of the master in the slave, who, by becoming his slave, becomes his property, should secure the slave that protection and government which the slave is too degenerate to supply to himself; and that such protection and government are necessary to the happiness and well-being of the slave, without which he either remains stationary, or degenerates in his moral, mental, and physical condition."

Dr. Paley defines slavery, "An obligation to labor for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant." He tells us, "This obligation may arise, consistently with the law of nature, from three causes: From crimes, from captivity, from debt." He should have added that slavery is consistent with the law of nature, and agreeable to the will of God when it is necessary for the preservation of the life, happiness, moral culture, and intellectual improvement of the individual.

If the defence of negro slavery as it exists in the

United States, were based upon this ground alone, and no other arguments should be adduced in favor of the institution, except that it is necessary for the preservation of the life, for the happiness, for the moral culture, and for the intellectual improvement of the negro, it seems to me this would satisfactorily prove that the institution of slavery as it exists here, is both right and expedient.

That slavery is necessary for each of the reasons above mentioned, can be easily shown in few words.

It is necessary for the preservation of the life of the negro. Historical facts which are perfectly familiar to the minds of all our readers, establish this assertion beyond a doubt.

Three distinct races of human beings now exist in the United States: the white man, the Indian, and the negro. The Indian was once, by far, the most numerous race. They would not submit to the white man, and be governed according to his will; in a word, they had rather die than become our slaves. The consequence was, they had to die. Who would have the temerity to affirm that the negro race would not share the fate of the poor Indian, if they should refuse to serve us as slaves? It is a fact too well known, for any man to deny, that wherever two races of human beings exist in the same nation, the superior race will either rule the inferior, or destroy it.

That the happiness of the negro is promoted by slavery, will appear evident, if we compare the condition of the slaves in the South with that of the Indians of America. It will appear still more evident if we compare their condition with that of the negro inhabitants of Africa. Behold a squad of Indians; search for a happy countenance in the group. Alas! you search in vain. You behold an expression of deep melancholy depicted on every countenance. It is not so with our negro slaves. If a group of them should be passing along the public road, you would be apt to hear merry laughter issuing from the throats of half-a-dozen of God's happiest creatures, even before you are in view of them. You will see no melancholy countenances in that group. Are they who reside in Africa happier?

As for the moral culture of the negro, I suppose all men know that our slaves are better informed as to their moral obligations than the negroes of Africa. Some of our negro slaves are preachers of the gospel.

It is also well known that the negroes of the Southern States are far more intelligent than those of the same race who inhabit Africa.

Dr. Paley perhaps conceived the idea that slavery is not right, because the slave is under obligation to serve his master, without being consulted in the contract, and without giving his consent. In answer to

this, we would simply remark, that to contract and consent are no part of the rights of slaves. We would also add, that God did not, at any time, require the Israelites to get the consent of the slaves before purchasing them. Why should we deem that obligatory which God has never required?

Dr. Wayland says, "It (slavery) renders the eternal happiness of the one party subservient to the temporal happiness of the other." That this is not true, may be easily shown by a certain paragraph which we have previously quoted from his *Elements of Moral Science*, wherein he tells us, "The slave may attain to the highest grade of virtue, and may exhibit a sublimity and purity of moral character, which, in the condition of the master, is absolutely unattainable."

If the slave may exhibit a purity of moral character which is absolutely unattainable by the master, was it not very thoughtless and unjust, as well as untrue, for Dr. Wayland to say that slavery renders the eternal happiness of the slave subservient to the temporal happiness of the master? Slavery subjects one party to the command of another, whose interest, as well as duty, is to teach, or have him taught, the will of God, and encourage him in obeying that will.

Is it possible that Dr. Wayland is so ignorant of slavery, as to suppose that planters of the Southern

States allow their slaves to remain heathen idolaters? Does he suppose that it is possible for an intelligent Christian master to cause his slave to be more ignorant of the Christian religion than is the gross worshipper of a *Fetish*, or the human being who bows down in humble adoration of a snake, a cat, or some other of God's creatures? Does he not know that *any* southern planter would punish his slave severely, if he were guilty of a sin so abominable?

It is in a state of slavery *only* that the African race can be successfully taught Christianity. There is a large number of negroes united with every denomination of Christians, in the Southern States. I defy any man to point to a single spot on the globe, where the gospel is better understood or more faithfully practised by the negro race, than it is in the southern part of the United States. You surely would not point to heathen Africa, where the blood of human victims still stains the foul altars erected for the worship of idols. Would you point to the Northern States, where the free negro is considered a burthen to society, where no sympathy is felt for any of the negro race except the runaway slave? I fear you will find but little care taken of the morals of the negroes in those states, except such provision as the law makes for confining malefactors in the state prisons and penitentiaries.

Another of Dr. Wayland's arguments against slavery, is the following: "Inasmuch as the slave can be held in this condition only while he remains in a state of comparative mental imbecility, it supposes the master to have the right to control his intellectual development, just as far as may be necessary to secure entire submission." That the master has the right to control the intellectual development of his slave, cannot be doubted. It is equally certain, that the more intelligent the slave, the more valuable he is to his master.

What does Dr. Wayland wish us to infer from the remark, Inasmuch as the slave can be held in this condition only while he remains in a state of comparative mental imbecility? Does he mean to compare the mental acquirements of southern slaves, with the mental condition of the African negro? He surely knows that those slaves are far more intelligent than the African negro. Comparatively speaking, that is, comparing them with the Africans, the slaves of the Southern States would rank as an intelligent and refined people.

In speaking of their acquirements, we have no right to say that they are "in a state of comparative mental imbecility," unless they are so, when compared with the free portion of the race to which they belong. Compare them—I challenge you to the com-

parison. Every candid man will decide that the mental condition of the slaves in the Southern States is far better than the mental condition of the free Africans.

To say that the master keeps his slave in a state of comparative mental imbecility, is not true, if the negro slave is compared with the negro inhabitants of their mother country. But if Dr. Wayland meant to compare the mental condition of the master and slave, the mind of the slave certainly is comparatively imbecile. But who blames the master for a decree of the Creator?

The negro race is by nature mentally imbecile. Does any one doubt this, let him look at the condition of the Africans at the present time. What progress have they made in civilization during the long time which has elapsed since we were acquainted with the existence of the race? They have made no advance in civilization since the Europeans were acquainted with their existence, except, perhaps, some slight changes in the habits of those who were most associated with Europeans. In mental acquirements as a nation, they have not advanced a single step during the long lapse of years since their existence on the earth; whilst the Caucasian race has been continually making rapid strides in civilization and enlightenment. Does any one blame masters for this comparative mental imbe-



cility? It is no fault of theirs; it is the work of the Grand Master of the universe. Whatever God does is right.

One of Dr. Wayland's arguments against slavery is, that it diminishes the amount of national wealth. This can be no objection to it in a *moral* view, but it might be a reason why the *state* should object to it if it were true. If the diminishing of national wealth is taken as a proof that anything is contrary to the ordinances of God, we might with the same propriety say that whatever increases national wealth is in conformity to his ordinances. No one will attempt to defend such a position.

But is it true that slavery diminishes the amount of national wealth? If so, why do southern planters continue to use slave labor, and prefer it to any other? If slave labor were to cease suddenly in the Southern States, the loss of this labor would be felt throughout every portion of the civilized countries of the world. The effect upon national wealth would be far more serious than if the whole of Africa were at once submerged beneath the briny waves of the Atlantic.

The reasons offered to prove that slave labor diminishes national wealth may be ever so skilfully contrived and artfully arranged, and yet they cannot convince any one who knows that slave labor enriches individuals. The nation is composed of the indi-

viduals who inhabit a state; consequently, if you increase the wealth of the individuals who inhabit a country, you increase the wealth of *the nation*. I believe the fallacy, that slave labor diminishes national wealth, is the most foolish thing that has yet been said against the institution of slavery.

Dr. Wayland says: "The moral precepts of the Bible are diametrically opposed to slavery. They are, 'Thou shalt love thy *neighbor* as *thyself*, and *all things whatsoever* ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.'" Dr. Wayland very confidently asserts that these precepts—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, &c.—are diametrically opposed to slavery. Did he ever read the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second chapter of Exodus? "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his *man-servant*, nor his *maid-servant*, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." If he has read this passage of the Sacred Scriptures, it seems strange that his confidence was not somewhat shaken; for near by the moral precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he also finds this commandment recognising the right of his neighbor to his slaves. Again, God commanded Moses to say unto the children of Israel: (Leviticus, xxv. 44,) "Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that

are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. (45,) Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. (46,) And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever; but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor." This is very explicit concerning slavery. The heathens were to be the slaves of the Israelites; and this, too, by the direct command of God.

Now, surely, Dr. Wayland did not reflect that God as certainly said, "Ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen for ever," as did he say, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Now, is it possible that Dr. Wayland believed that God commanded his chosen people to do an act which is diametrically opposed to the moral principles of the Bible? I cannot think he did. Yet it is plain—every one can see that God gave both commands. It is a little strange that the Dr. did not suspect, from this

fact, that the commands were not diametrically opposed to each other.

The abolitionists seem to think they are on perfectly safe ground, when they quote the golden rule. They think that slave owners must be struck dumb whenever they hear this moral precept. They ought to reflect that this moral precept cannot be incompatible with slavery, from the fact that God would not command two things that are incompatible. If they cannot reconcile their idea of slavery with the moral precepts of the Bible, they ought rather to suspect that the fault is in their own ignorance, than to question the wisdom and justice of God.

The golden rule, so far from being diametrically opposed to slavery, inculcates it as a duty. This can be easily shown from a statement of facts. That you may be fully satisfied on this subject, read the following from Fletcher's *Studies on Slavery*:—"The 28th chapter of Deuteronomy contains the revelations of blessings and curses promised the Jews, and, we may add, all mankind, for obedience to the laws of God, and for disobedience to the same. At the 68th verse, they were told that they should again be sent to Egypt; or that they should be exposed for sale; or that they should expose themselves for sale, as the passage may be read, and that no man should buy them; or that there should not be buyers enough to

give them the benefit of being slaves, whereby they could be assured of protection and sustenance. This was most signally verified at the time Jerusalem was sacked by Titus; and not only in Egypt, but in many other places, thousands of the Hebrew captives were exposed for sale as slaves. But thousands of them, thus exposed, died of starvation, because purchasers could not be found for them. The Romans considered them too stubborn, too degraded, to be worthy of being slaves to them, refusing to buy them. Their numbers, compared to the numbers of their purchasers, were so great that the price became merely nominal; and thousands were suffered to die, because purchasers could not be had at any price."

Now, let us apply the golden rule, or precept, relied upon by Dr. Wayland, in support of abolitionism. Would it teach to buy these slaves, or not?

The same incident happened once again to all the Jews, who were freemen in Spain, during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, when 800,000 Jews were driven from that kingdom in one day; vast multitudes of whom famished to death, because, although anxious to do so, they could not find for themselves even a master! Let us ask, what would the precept teach in this case?

Nor has such a peculiar relation of facts been confined to the Jews alone. In 1376, the Florentines,

then a travelling, trading, commercial people, but in many instances quite forgetful of the rules of Christian honesty, became exceedingly obnoxious to their neighbors, especially to the subjects of the Church of Rome. To many of them murder and robbery became a mere pastime. From individuals the moral poison was communicated to their government. The Church was despoiled of her patrimony, her subjects of their homes. The Church remonstrated until patience was exhausted, when Gregory XI. issued his papal bull, delivering each individual of that nation, in all parts of the earth, who did not instantly make reparation, up to pillage, slavery, or death.

Let us notice how Walsingham witnessed this matter in England, where a large portion of the traders were of that people, all liable, if free men, to be put to death by any one who might choose to inflict the punishment; and their effects were legally escheated to whomsoever might seize them. Slavery was their only remedy. The Anglo-Saxon Normans, the natives of the realm, had not yet as a people sufficiently emerged from the poverty and darkness of the times to give them protection. This, to us so strange a relation between the church and civil government, in regard to the Florentines, produced an action on the part of the king, by which he became their personal master. Thus they became slaves, not of the crown,

but of the individual who sat on the throne. Did he act in conformity to this precept or not?

John and Richard Lander were sent by the "London African Association" to explore some parts of Africa. On the 24th of March, 1830, they were only a half-day's travel from the sea-coast, at which point they say, (vol. I., p. 58):—

"Meantime, the rainy season is fast approaching, as is sufficiently announced by repeated showers and occasional tornadoes; and, what makes us still more desirous to leave this abominable place, is the fact, as we have been told, that a sacrifice of no less than three hundred human beings, of both sexes and all ages, is about to take place. We often hear the cries of these poor creatures; and the heart sickens with horror at the bare contemplation of such a scene as awaits us, should we remain here much longer."

It is to be regretted that since the abolition of the slave trade in Africa, slaves have become of little value in that country. That the Africans, in many places, have returned to sacrifice and cannibalism, is also true, and cause of deep sorrow to the philanthropist; but, considering the state and condition of these savages, there is no alternative; the slave there, if he cannot be sold, is at all times liable to be put to death.

Suppose you buy, and then turn them loose there;

they will again and instantly be the subjects of slavery; and even there, slavery is some protection, for, so long as the savage master chooses or is able to keep his slave alive, he is more sure of the usual means of living. But let us present this state of facts to the Christian, and ask him to apply the golden rule; and, in case the slave trade with Africa had not now been abolished, what would he deem it his duty to do for the practical and lasting benefit of these poor victims, whom the sympathy of the world has thus consigned to sacrifice and death?

“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.” This precept certainly is susceptible of being explained in a definite manner; so that no one need be at a loss to apply it correctly. It is, as I conceive, the province of the moralist to explain it, especially since, by a perverted use of it, very wicked deeds may be justified, and that which is strictly right may be condemned.

Formerly it was not thought necessary to explain a precept, the signification of which is so plain, the moral application of which is so pure and simple. But since this simple and admirable precept has been used by the abolitionists to stir up wrath against that which is as truly right in the sight of God as is the practice of this precept, it becomes necessary, as much as is possible, to define the precept, or at least in no



way to countenance the use of it either to justify any act which is wrong, or to condemn an act which is right. That such unwarrantable use is made of this precept by the abolitionists, is, I think, undeniable.

Does any one conscientiously believe that this precept means anything else than that we should always do *right*? That we should do justice to our fellow-man, and temper our justice with mercy? Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you, signifies nothing more nor anything less than that *in all your acts towards other men you should be both just and merciful*. This is the way God acts towards us, and this is the way he wishes us to act towards each other.

There is nothing at all in this that is inconsistent with the institution of slavery. I think it a great piece of effrontery in the abolitionist to insult the slave owner with the assertion that he is not just and merciful to his slaves. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." Be thou just and truthful in your uncalled-for philippics against owners of slaves. In your treatment of them, shrink not from the practice of the moral precept contained in the golden rule. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do *ye* even so unto them.

The abolitionists seem to think, from the pertinacity

with which they continue to utter this moral precept with a loud voice, when applied to slave owners, it means that whatsoever we might desire for ourselves in any relation in life, we should be willing to grant to others in the like relation or condition. That we ought to do unto others as we would wish others do unto us, if we could immediately change places with them.

This interpretation might do if all men were *perfectly* virtuous, which is utterly impossible, in our present imperfect state. As society now exists, a universal application of the precept, with this interpretation, would entirely destroy the administration of justice by the laws of a state, and the laws of society would be perfectly nugatory. No criminal could be punished for any offence he might commit. Robbery, theft, murder, or any crime which it is possible for man to commit, would find a ready excuse; for the judge and the jurors would at once say, If I had done this deed, I should like to be acquitted. Then do unto others as you would that they should do unto you, and you would acquit them, of course, according to the above interpretation. Is there any man who, if he were arraigned as a guilty criminal at the bar of justice, would not wish the judge and jury to acquit him? Is this a reason why he, as judge or juror, ought to pronounce every criminal not guilty? Every judge

before whom a man is tried for committing murder, would be very desirous, if he were in the situation of the criminal, that the judge should not pronounce sentence against him; does the moral precept, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you, require, for this reason, that the judge shall not pronounce sentence against any criminal? It certainly would require this at his hands, if it meant that we ought to do for others, those acts which we would like them to do for us, were we in their situation, and they in ours. The true question, the one which the precept does really demand, is for the judge to ask himself what *ought* I to do? The answer would be, decide *justly*; at the same time remembering to be merciful.

It is believed by many, if the slave holders should act in obedience to the precept, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," they would immediately free their slaves, and leave them to protect and support themselves. This would neither be just nor merciful. The negroes would soon become miserable outcasts and pests to society; and their condition would be wretched in the extreme. Whereas, now, they are provided with all the necessaries of life, cared for and protected by their masters, and happy in the certainty of being provided for in the future, and supported in old age.

If they were freed from the control of their masters, many of them would wander over the land, a set of houseless thieves and destitute vagabonds. Knowing this, we do not intend to abandon them. Liberty would not be a blessing to them, but a curse. What! you ask, Can liberty be a curse? I answer, it is the worst of all curses, to a people who are incapable of self-government. The anarchy, the destruction of life and property, and the bloody guillotine of the French revolution, sufficiently attest this fact. The French people needed a king. The negroes need a master to rule over them, that they may be peaceful, quiet, and happy; and make some progress in civilization.

No matter what degree of civilization and usefulness the negro may attain to, under the care of good masters, if you throw him upon his own resources he immediately begins to relapse into a state of barbarism.

The negroes of Guiana and of the West India islands, which were once held in slavery by British masters, were, at that time, as useful a class of laboring people as any in the world. They now retain scarcely any traces of civilization, and are already but little superior to the untutored savages of Africa.

Did the British people obey the moral precept in question when they abandoned those beautiful and fertile islands, the products of which once furnished food for millions, to an enervate, slothful race, which

is fast relapsing into a savage state? It seems to me not to have been an act of justice and mercy, but one of great injustice and cruelty to both master and slave.

We will notice another portion of the Sacred Scriptures in which slavery is mentioned, and concerning which there is some diversity of opinion, at the present day; whereas, formerly, it seems that there was none.

It appears that among other subjects concerning which there was a difference of opinion in the church at Corinth, slavery also was discussed. In the first chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, we find the apostle beseeching them, as brethren, to be of one mind, to speak the same thing, to have no divisions among them. "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."

It appears that slaves who were owned by Christian masters at Corinth, thought that being received into the church as the brethren of their masters, virtually absolved them from all obligation to serve their masters. The apostle does not assent to this opinion. He tells them: (1 Cor. vii. 20,) "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called. (21,) Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (22,) For he that is in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free-

man; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. (23,) Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." Lest any one should suppose by this verse that he meant to deny what he had already said in verse 20, he again says: (24,) "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." The question is, did the apostle mean to approve or condemn slavery? Did he mean to tell the Corinthian slave to abide in the same calling wherein he was called, or not? If not, why did he tell him so? Did he mean to tell the slave that he ought to hate slavery and endeavor to be free from it? If so, why does he say, "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it"?

It seems that the apostle had not learned to view slavery as a sin. He did not consider that being a slave or not being a slave, being circumcised or not, made any difference in religion. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God."

If a man keep the commandments of God, it matters not whether he is circumcised or uncircumcised, bond or free, his deeds are acceptable to God.

Concerning verse 21, it appears that some writers have caused great confusion by not knowing what the pronoun *it* stands for in the sentence "but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." They suppose

that it stands for freedom. Put this noun in the place of the pronoun *it* in that sentence, and read verses 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24, and what the apostle says in one verse will be a contradiction of what he says in the others. *It*, in the sentence alluded to, evidently stands for servitude. Supply *servitude* in the place of *it*, and the continuity of logic will be maintained; whereas if you supply the noun *freedom*, it will be destroyed.

We will supply the noun. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called. Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use *servitude* rather; for he that is in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's *freeman*; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's *servant*. Mark the reason which the apostle gives for telling them to use *servitude* rather; "for he that is in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's *freeman*; likewise, also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. This reason would not apply at all to what he had just said, if the noun *freedom* were placed for the pronoun *it*.

Concerning this subject, I will quote some passages from Professor Bledsoe's work on liberty and slavery. "Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." "The Greek runs thus: ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δοῦναι ἐλευθερὸς γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι,—literally, but, even if thou canst become

free, rather make use of. Make use of what? The Greek verb is left without a cause. How then shall this be supplied? To what does the ambiguous *it* of our translation refer? One and all of the native Greek commentators in the early ages, says Stuart, and many expositors in modern times, say that the word to be supplied is *δουλεία*, *i.e.* slavery, bondage. The reason which they give for it is, that this is the only construction which can support the proposition the apostle is laboring to establish, *viz.*, Let every man abide in *statu quo*. Even De Wette (who, for his high liberty notions, was banished from Germany), in his commentary on this passage, seems plainly to accede to the force of this reasoning; and with him many others have agreed. No man can look at the simple continuity of logic in the passage, without feeling that there is force in the appeal. Yet the fact should not be concealed that Stuart himself is not satisfied with the exegesis of the passage; which, according to his own statement, was the universal interpretation from the early ages down to the sixteenth century. This change, says he, seems to have been the spontaneous prompting of the spirit of liberty that beat high in the bosom of its author."

Professor Bledsoe asks, "Have we not some reason to distrust an interpretation which comes not exactly from heaven, but from a spirit beating high in the



human breast? *That* is certainly not an unerring spirit." A spirit which beats so high as to hammer St. Paul's epistle into an incompatible mass, must indeed be a dangerous spirit.

We find the following very satisfactory reasons for believing that it is according to the will of God, that any race of people who are incapable of self-government, who would not in course of time become civilized under the government of princes or rulers of their own blood, shall be held in bondage by a superior race.

1st. Because God gave laws to his chosen people, authorizing them to buy slaves of the heathen that were round about them.

2d. Because there is no precept in either the Old or the New Testament forbidding slavery.

3d. Because we find the duties of both master and slave recorded in the Sacred Scriptures.

4th. Because, whenever two distinct races inhabit the same land, the inferior race must act as slaves to the superior, or they will be put to death; or else driven out of the country.

5th. Because, for the inferior race to serve the superior is greatly conducive to the happiness and welfare of both races, so long as they both inhabit the same territory.

I believe that sufficient proof to satisfy the mind of

every one who is willing to know the truth, will be found in the pages preceding the above reasons, so that there is no necessity of giving further proof of the fact that slavery is conformable to the will of God. We will only add a few remarks concerning our fourth reason.

Examine the history of every nation, and you will find abundant proof in all ages of the world, from the time of Abraham, up to the present day, that it is the universal practice among men, for the inferior race either to live in subjection to the superior, to be driven out of the country, or to be put to death.

The history of our own country furnishes a memorable proof of this principle. The illustration of it is even now going on.

When the independence of the United States was declared, there were three distinct races of men inhabiting the same land; two inferior, and one superior. One of these inferior races, the black man, submitted to the dominion of the white man and became his slave. This race has rapidly increased in numbers, has enjoyed many blessings to which the other inferior race is a stranger, and has attained in half a century to a degree of civilization, which the same race in their native wilds of Africa has not reached in four thousand years; and to which they never will attain, if left to their own government.

The other race, the North American Indian, has not yet been brought into subjection to the white man. But where now are the countless numbers of Indians, who once frequented the delightful hunting-grounds of America? They have fallen; and been scattered by the white man, like the leaves of the forest when blasted by autumn winds.

All this is in accordance with a general principle, recognised and acted upon by all mankind. The inferior race must serve the superior, must be banished, or must die. Such is the universal decision of mankind.

There is one objection which has been urged against the institution of slavery, to which I have made no answer. It is the argument, as they call it, derived from the Declaration of Independence. We cannot receive assertions which were made in the Declaration of Independence as being authoritative in morals. As we do not wish to discuss the argument, we will simply refer those who believe that all men are born free and equal, to what Professor Bledsoe has said of the subject, in his work entitled *Liberty and Slavery*, where they will find the abolition fallacy derived from the Declaration of Independence fully exposed.

## CHAPTER XI.

## OF PROPERTY.

IN the beginning God created the earth and all things in it, and he gave to man dominion over the earth, the sea, and all the animate and inanimate portions of creation.

The earth, therefore, and all things therein, are the general property of all mankind, from the immediate gift of the Creator. Thus we find it an easy matter to establish the right of mankind to property in the earth, and all its varied products.

Man has a right to such property, for the right was given to him by the Creator; whose right to dispose of the things he has created, in whatever manner he sees fit, is altogether indisputable. But this establishes the common right of all mankind to the earth and its products; and when, at this distant period of time, we behold the community of right entirely destroyed in all things in which individuals may acquire an exclusive right, it becomes a matter of some importance to inquire how this universality of right could be justly abrogated, and entirely merged in the right of individuals.

In order to comprehend this condition of things, it

will be necessary to take a view of the history of property.

Pleased as we are with the possession of property, as a general thing, we feel but little desire to inquire into the true cause upon which our right is based. If our title from a previous owner is legal, and we feel no dread of being molested in our possession, we are contented, and rather avoid the inquiry into the justice of annulling the right which all mankind had to the earth and its products.

We need not dread the inquiry; we need not attempt to avoid the discussion, by agreeing with the poet, in asserting that "whatever is, is right;" for the exclusive right of property, as now vested in individuals, can be easily shown to be morally right. That it is right, according to the civil institutions of governments, is well known, but whether those civil institutions are based upon moral principles might be doubted.

The history of the right of property begins almost as early as the creation. Gen. ix. 2, 3, "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I given you all things."

Upon this portion of the Bible we may rest the general right of mankind to property in the earth and its products.

Each man had a right to appropriate to his own use, whatever product of the earth he thought would contribute to his own gratification. Each man had a right to the use of any fruit he should pluck, to the sustenance which any of the beasts of the field or birds of the air might afford him, any of which he had a right to take and use.

Out of this community of right, very soon there arose an exclusive right—the right of the individual to whatever he had by his own labor appropriated to his own use. Without this right being acknowledged by men, there could have been no peace or safety in any community. The good gifts which God bestowed upon man, instead of contributing to his enjoyment, would have been the cause of continual quarrelling and fighting. Those things which were intended as blessings would have been changed to curses.

Suppose, for instance, a certain individual had gone into the forest and slain a deer for his own use; when he was returning to his habitation another man who also wants a deer should meet him, he might demand this one which was already slain. He could say, We all have an equal right to the beasts of the field; you have taken this deer to which I had as good a right

as yourself. He who had captured the deer would of course refuse to give it up, alleging that he had a right to the use of the beasts of the field; he had taken this, and would keep it. The labor which he performed in taking the deer, must be acknowledged by the rest of mankind, as conferring on him the exclusive right to that which he had thus appropriated to his own use. The welfare, peace, and happiness of mankind demanded the acknowledgment of such right. In this way individuals would very soon acquire the exclusive right to certain species of property.

As a matter of course, this right which one individual had to certain property, to the exclusion of all others, must have existed at a very early period of the world; for individuals would of necessity be appropriating certain things to their own use, and thereby gaining a right of property in the things which they had by their own act set apart from the common stock.

The first objects of property would naturally be the fruits of the earth which a man had gathered, the animals which he had caught; and next to these his habitation—the cave, tent, or house in which he dwelt.

We read in the Bible that Abel, the son of Adam, was a keeper of sheep; and Cain was a tiller of the land. Gen. iv. 4, “And Abel, he also brought of the

firstlings of his flock. . . ." Thus early had the right to certain property vested in individuals.

In the early ages of the world, the right of property in many things consisted in the use of the thing appropriated, without extending to the substance. The continuous right of individuals to certain tracts of land, was not acknowledged until societies and even states were formed.

When the earth became more densely inhabited, and man could not leave a house which he had built, a field which he had tilled, or a flock which he had tamed, without danger of some one else taking possession of the property which he had left, it became necessary to establish a more durable and permanent right in the individual to whatever property he had acquired.

A man would hardly build a house, tame a flock, or perform much labor of any kind for contributing to comfort and convenience, if, as soon as he had walked away from his possession, was not actually using it, any other person might appropriate it to his own use, to the exclusion of the former owner. Hence, custom established a permanent right in the individual to his flocks, his tent, and all movables which he possessed.

In the early ages of the world, flocks and herds afforded to man almost his only food and clothing.



It very soon became necessary to establish the right of the individual to such property, so as to encourage men to take care of cattle and raise a sufficiency of food for all. It being necessary to have water for their flocks, the first discoverer of a fountain, or the man who dug a well, was by common consent acknowledged to be the rightful owner of it. The right of property in wells was established, whilst the land around them still remained common. We find Abraham exacting an oath of Abimelech that his right to a certain well which he had dug should be permanent, even before the convenience and welfare of mankind made it necessary to establish a permanent right to land.

During the patriarchal age, the majority of men were shepherds; the shepherds supplied food to mankind then, as farmers do now. It was more convenient for shepherds to drive their flocks about and pasture them on unoccupied ground, than it would have been for each one to confine himself to a certain spot of ground.

In case each one had occupied a certain spot as a pasture for his flocks, the natural products of the soil would soon have failed to afford sustenance for them, and the men would have been forced to till the ground.

We infer, from the account of the dispute which arose between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, that

the land was still held in common for pasturage. Genesis xiii. 8-11, "And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves, the one from the other."

So long as the welfare of mankind demanded that any species of property should remain common to all, there was no right accorded to individuals to the permanent use of it; the habits of man made it necessary that the right to the use of land should be withheld from individuals longer than the right to other species of property; but when the earth became more densely populated, when families increased to tribes, and tribes became nations, it was necessary for a more determinate right in land to be established, than had hitherto been recognised.

It became necessary to till the soil, that it might

yield more abundant products for the sustenance of man. It was deemed expedient to acknowledge each man's right to his farm and its products, as well as to his dwelling; for he would not labor to till the land, if not protected in the right to dispose of its products.

So that the right of individuals to that which once belonged of right to all, originated in a desire to promote the general good, and not, as might seem, from any species of injustice or selfishness.

It became necessary, for the benefit of mankind, for governments to establish such right by law. This law being recognised by the Sacred Scriptures, the right of individuals to property in lands and other things which had once been common property, was as just and as strictly in accordance with moral law, as had been the common right arising from the immediate gift of God.

By the gift of God, mankind acquired a right to the use of the earth and its products. This gift was evidently intended for the benefit of mankind in general; so that it became the duty of man to use it in that manner which would be most beneficial. In accordance with this duty, as soon as the population of the earth became so dense that it was necessary to cultivate the land in order to supply their wants, it was made lawful to grant to individuals the exclusive right to certain lands.

God, in bestowing the gift, did not require that mankind should hold it in common, or retain the right according to any established rule. He gave them the right to use the benefit which he had conferred, in that manner which they believed would be most advantageous. In the disposal of the gift, they acted in harmony with the will of their Creator; the object being to dispose of it in such a manner as would be most beneficial to mankind.

There is no right which men claim that is better established by scriptural teaching than the right of property; and a violation of this right is a gross sin.

The mode of acquiring the right of property is left principally to the *law of the land*; and by this law our rights, as citizens of the state, are protected. But men may, in some instances, unjustly obtain a title to property, even when their right is acknowledged by the law of the land.

In such cases the moral law does not recognise the right which the law of the land allows, and the individual cannot retain such ill-gotten gain without feeling some pangs of conscience. Yet the moral law does not justify the injured party in any violation of the law of the land to obtain his just rights. It appeals to the conscience of the aggressor, and demands of him restitution.

If one man should loan another a certain amount of

money without taking his note, or having some other satisfactory evidence to offer in proof of his having loaned this amount, the borrower could refuse to pay, and the law of the land could not reach the case for want of proof. The moral law, however, most emphatically appeals to the conscience of the man; for he knows the justice of the claim urged against him.

Another case in which the law of the land may be made to justify wrong, is when a minor contracts a debt for things not necessary, with the design of not paying the debt. The law of the land, having for its object the protecting of young persons from the frauds which might be imposed upon them by others, puts it in the power of the minor to take unjust advantage of the tradesman in some instances. If the youth should take advantage of the law of the land, his act would be criminal by the moral law.

The commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," amounts to a recognition of the exclusive right of individuals to the property which they possess. If the right to certain property were not vested in individuals, but all men had an equal right to every species of property, there could be no stealing. Whatever a man took would be his own.

There are various means of acquiring property which are recognised by the laws of the land. These modes are similar in all civilized nations, and being

in no way a violation of the moral law, they are, in the strictest sense, right.

We may acquire a right to property in the following ways: By the labor of our hands; by exchange; by gift; by will; by inheritance, and by occupancy.

A man has an exclusive right to whatever he separates from the common stock by means of his own labor. A tree may produce fruit which any one has a right to enjoy who will gather it. He who takes the trouble to do so, has the exclusive right to the fruit; for, by his own act, which he had a right to perform, he has separated this fruit from the common stock, and no one else can acquire a right to this fruit, after it has been thus gathered, without the consent of the individual who performed the labor. On the same principle we may acquire the right to any property.

The right of property includes the right to exchange that which I possess for the property of another individual. The right of possession includes the right of barter and trade; the right to exchange the commodities which I possess for those which another individual has; the right to give or receive money for property.

If I cultivate cotton, and my neighbor raises hogs, we have a right to exchange with each other, to suit our convenience; so that, whilst I supply him with

clothing, he furnishes me with food. We can, with equal propriety, receive money as an equivalent for what we have produced. Property acquired in either way, is rightfully held if the transaction is not performed in violation of the laws of our country, or, when trading with foreigners, in violation of the laws of either nation.

The government has a right to enact laws regulating commerce, and, of course, we cannot rightfully acquire property in violation of those laws. The transaction may be otherwise honest, yet, if contrary to the laws of the land, the property thus acquired cannot be rightfully held. We have no right to purchase contraband goods; and, although we might pay the possessor a full compensation for the trouble he had taken to obtain those goods, still our possession of such property would not be right; because the property would not be legally acquired.

Inasmuch as we have the right to convey our property to another for an equivalent, we must have a right to bestow it upon him, if we choose, without an equivalent. We may, if we choose, voluntarily confer on another the right of ownership, to gratify feelings of benevolence, affection, or gratitude, and he may rightfully receive and enjoy such property.

The right to certain property may be acquired by will. Each individual has a right to dispose of his

property as he chooses, provided he does not thereby interfere with the rights of others; and since he may give it to another to enjoy whilst he is yet living, he may, with equal propriety, give it to him on condition that he shall enter in possession after his death. If such gift be not made in violation of the laws of the land, the property thus acquired may be rightfully held. The right of acquiring property by will is allowed in most countries, and, in case no will is made, provision is made in the laws for acquiring the right of property by inheritance.

If we could not acquire the right of property by will or inheritance, much confusion would arise on the death of an individual possessed of a large fortune. The property, if not disposed of by society in accordance with some established rule, would become common property, and belong to the first person who should occupy it after the death of the owner. To prevent the confusion which might thus arise, and to dispose of the property in that manner which is most natural and just, society has decreed that a man's widow and children shall acquire the right to the property which he leaves at his death by inheritance if he has not disposed of it by will, and, in failure of wife and children, that it shall descend to his nearest relations by blood.

The affection of parents for their children is a uni-



versal and predominant feeling of human nature; it is therefore presumable that every parent would prefer that his children should succeed him in the ownership of his property. The rule of inheritance is in accordance with this principle. We have an example for the earliest ages which shows that it is according to God's will for children to inherit the property of their parents. Genesis xv. 3, 4, "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and lo! one born in my house is my heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

It sometimes happens that a man gains a right to certain property simply by having it in his possession. That is, he has the right to the use of it to the exclusion of others, and, if no one can show a better title than he, he has a right to retain it as his property.

Although the present holder of certain property may have no title, strictly speaking, yet, if it were taken from him and held by another, the second possessor would have no better right to it than the first, so that a third person might come along and dispossess the second, and so on in endless confusion. To prevent such a condition of things, the laws of society have determined that the man who thus possesses property shall be the acknowledged owner; and

no one else shall have a right to disturb him in the possession.

We conclude, from what has been said, that it is the duty and privilege of society to establish laws concerning the right of property, and that this right is in harmony with the principles of morality. So that, whatever property a man may acquire in honest conformity to the laws of society, he has a moral as well as civil right to enjoy.

The Christian precepts concerning property acknowledge the right of individuals to the property which they have honestly acquired, and, at the same time, warn men against too great a love of wealth. Because individuals have a just right to their property, this is no reason why they should love money so much as to become covetous. When the love of wealth is so nurtured in the human breast, it renders a man more a worshipper of wealth than of God. The covetous man seems to forget that he and all he possesses belong to God. So great a love of money is no better than gross idolatry, and it is denounced in the New Testament. In Eph. v. 5, and Colos. iii. 5, we are told that a covetous man is an idolater, and that covetousness is idolatry. And why should it not be considered idolatry? Is it not as truly idolatry to worship wealth or plenty as it would be to bend the knee to the goddess Ceres?

We are frequently warned, in the New Testament, not to set our hearts on riches. Matt. vi. 19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Mark x. 24, "And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" 1 Tim. vi. 8-10, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content; but they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Covetousness is immoral; and we are taught not only to avoid covetousness, but also to be liberal to those who need our assistance. We ought not to let our confidence in the justness of our title to that which we possess exclude all feelings and acts of benevolence. If that which we possess is ours of right, we have the greater praise for using it liberally in the performance of benevolent acts. Matt. v. 42, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Acts xx. 35,

“I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

He who trusts in riches has but a poor and uncertain foundation for happiness, but he who trusts in God has a sure foundation for his faith. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Such acts of benevolence are evidences of our love for our fellow-man, and the charitable feeling which prompts us to perform them is the result of our love to God. It is this feeling of love to God and man which makes the act of bestowing our goods to feed the poor well-pleasing in the sight of God. It is for this feeling that we may expect God to reward us hereafter, and not the mere act of giving away a part of our property.

The blessings of God cannot be purchased with money, but he who uses a portion of his wealth in gratifying a benevolent feeling, acts in accordance with

the will of God. St. Paul teaches that acts of benevolence are valueless if they proceed from any other than a charitable motive. 1 Cor. xiii. 3, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

There is an example recorded in the New Testament, of Christians having their property in common; but there is nothing connected with this act to prove that Christians are under obligation to make common fund of their property, neither is the right of individuals to the property which they possess, denied, but it is confirmed. Acts iv. 32, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." We should not infer from this verse that Christians are under obligation to give up their right to the property which is theirs; for although this was done by some of the Christian congregations in the days of the apostles, still we are not told that they were under obligation to do so. We are told that they could do so or not, just as they thought best. Acts v. 4, Peter said to Ananias, respecting his property, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?"

It seems that some congregations of Christians had their property all in one common fund, not because they were under obligation to do so, but because they thought it would be more conducive to the general good. Individuals were being persecuted and stripped of their property almost daily. If they disposed of their goods and made a common stock, then no one could have anything he called his own; and if any one should be persecuted and put to death, his property could not be confiscated, for he had none. What he had possessed, would thus be kept for the benefit of his brethren and sisters.

This community of property did not extend so far as to put an end to difference of wealth among all the congregations of Christians. Acts xi. 29, "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea." This was written concerning the disciples at Antioch. We infer from the phrase, "every man according to his ability," that their ability must have been various, and that therefore they did not have all things common. In St. Paul's first letter to Timothy the expression, "Charge them that are rich in this world," implies that some of the Christians were rich.

Although the rich are frequently guarded against too great a love of money, and a benevolent disposi-

tion is recommended, still it is evident that St. Paul did not approve of the poor living at the expense of the rich. Such a practice would be productive of no good in the end, for it would induce slothfulness and idleness; and the idle are not apt to remain true to their other moral obligations. 1 Thess. ii. 9, . . . . "Laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." 2 Thess. iii. 8-10, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail, night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY

IF the Christian precepts concerning property were practised by all men, such a thing as the violation of the right of property would be unknown among men. There would be no advantage derived from specifying

certain modes in which the right of property may be violated, nor would there be much advantage derived from a lecture on the importance of keeping our promises; for we would be very careful not to promise to do anything except what we ought to do.

The right of property being vested in an individual, he has the exclusive privilege of using it, and no one else has any right to disturb him in his possession, or in any way to violate his rights. Whatever he lawfully possesses is his, to the exclusion of all the rest of mankind.

Theft is a mode of violating the right of property, by which the peace, quiet, and happiness of mankind is too frequently disturbed. It is a gross sin; one which is mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures as being very wicked. "Thou shalt not steal," is a commandment which must be obeyed by all who wish to please God. Stealing is not only a great sin in the sight of God, but it is very destructive to men's happiness on earth. It destroys our confidence in each other; it lowers our respect for man, and causes us to occupy much time and labor for preventing this mode of violating property, which might be otherwise employed more usefully for the benefit of ourselves and our fellow-man.

All that a man possesses is exclusively his; it is therefore as much a violation of the right of property



to take a small amount without the knowledge or consent of the owner, as to steal from him the greater part of his property.

Highway robbery is a more dreadful manner of violating the right of property than stealing. This sin is one which makes its perpetrator horrible in the eyes of all good men. The robber is very justly punished on earth with great severity. But even when such criminal is deprived of the possibility of committing further acts of wickedness on earth, it is by no means probable that the punishment for his sins will there cease. His spirit will yet have to appear before another and more fearful tribunal than any on earth. It is useless to say more on this topic, for it is hardly possible for any one to read a treatise on moral philosophy whose soul is so base, so given to sin, that he can perform a deed so horrible as to cause him to be numbered among highway robbers.

Whenever the property of an individual is obtained by any fraudulent means—by lying, cheating, or in any way deceiving the owner to get possession of it—the right of property is violated.

The temptation to violate the right of property frequently occurs among tradesmen. If the parties in any trade are not governed in their actions by strict moral principles, they are liable frequently to be led astray by the love of money.

With respect to the merchant, we would say, that he is as much entitled to increase his property by lawfully pursuing his business as is any one else, no matter what his business may be. He devotes his time, capital, and skill to providing articles for the use of his customers, or those who trade with him; and he is entitled to an advance on the price of his goods sufficient to remunerate him for his time, risk, and the interest of his money.

It is necessary for the merchant to possess skill in selecting such goods as will readily sell to his customers. He must know what articles can be most readily sold at their market value to those with whom he trades, or he cannot honestly realize the profit on the cost of his goods which he would have a right to expect. If he purchases articles which do not suit the market for which they are designed, he cannot sell them for the amount which he expected, unless he can, by exciting the vanity of his customers, or by deceiving them with regard to the nature and utility of those articles, induce them to purchase. He who thus supplies by deception a want of skill in selecting articles, gains unjustly the money of those who trade with him.

It is acknowledged by all, that to utter a direct falsehood in recommendation of our wares, by ascribing to them some quality which we know they do not possess, and then selling them to one who purchases

under this false impression, is a violation of the right of property. It is equally wrong for the seller to conceal faults which he knows his articles have, and sell them for the market value of a good article of the same kind. He has no right, by any such trickery, to make amends for his want of skill in purchasing.

I can conceive of no reason why a tradesman should think it necessary for him to make use of any unjust means to dispose of his articles of trade, except a want of skill in purchasing. If he has not that skill, he ought either to quit the business, or serve under some one who has skill, until he is prepared to succeed as an honest tradesman. It is certainly true that a man who possesses skill in selecting and purchasing articles for trade, can readily realize a profit sufficient to remunerate him for his time, risk, and the interest of his money.

If the seller should purchase a bad article, being deceived with regard to its value, he would have no right to deceive those who buy of him. He should sell it for no more than its real value; consequently, he must realize less profit than he expected. The error of judgment is his, and being in his profession, he ought to bear the loss, or return the article to the firm from which he made the purchase.

If a merchant, tailor, or tradesman of any kind ask of you more for an article than it is worth, you at

once say he wishes to impose upon you, you think that he is dishonest. In what does the dishonesty consist? The articles are his; why, then, has he not the right to say upon what terms he will part with them? Why has he not the right, if he choose, to demand an exorbitant price for his wares or merchandise? The reason is this: Every tradesman virtually engages to sell at the market price, when he opens a store; for he well knows that it is on the faith of his selling goods for their market value, that persons come to his shop to trade with him; and he would not only be highly offended, but would be likely to complain of slander, if any one should proclaim to the world that he was asking more for his goods than their market value.

Since he engages to sell at the market price, and is very anxious to have men believe that he does so, if he does not, those who trade with him may very truly affirm that he has deceived them and dealt unjustly. But in the sale of an article where no warranty is either expressed or implied, as is the case in the sale of a horse at public auction, the salesman is under no obligation to the public, either with regard to the value of the article offered for sale or the amount of money it brings.

A merchant would be under no obligation to sell his house for its real value, it not being a part of his business to sell houses; he has not engaged, expressly

or impliedly, to sell houses for their market value. If I wish to buy his house, he has a right to demand any price he chooses, if he does not endeavor to persuade me and make me believe that the price he demands is a fair valuation.

As the seller is entitled to a fair remuneration for his time, capital, and risk, it is disgraceful in the buyer to wish to obtain articles from him for less than a fair valuation. The buyer is not guiltless, if he by any of the artifices of trade induces the seller to part with his property for less than he has a right to demand.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### PROMISES.

THE obligation to perform promises is acknowledged by every conscientious individual; and every one should strictly perform what he has promised to do, unless he has promised to do something which he has no right to perform.

We cannot violate a promise without being guilty of falsehood; in this consists the sin of violating a promise. Levit. xix. 11, "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." Colos. iii. 9,

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” Unless confidence in the performance of our promises exists, our intercourse in life will be very materially impeded. A universal distrust would ensue, and the standard of human respectability would be vastly lowered. If men should act universally upon the principle that we are under no obligation to perform our promises, the whole race of man would become savages, and even worse than savages, for they do have some confidence in the promises of others. Each individual would have to provide all the necessaries of life for himself; he would have to collect material for his own food and raiment, and prepare this material with his own hands. Such avocations would occupy his whole time, and therefore he could make no advancement in the cultivation of his intellect.

But men are not under obligation to perform every promise which it is possible for them to make. They may be induced to make promises which are unlawful, and which are for other reasons not binding. We will endeavor to show in what sense promises are to be considered binding, and in what cases we are not bound to do the thing promised.

The obligation to perform a promise, requires that the promiser shall fulfil the expectation which he voluntarily excites. It does not require that the in-

tention of the promiser at the time he makes the promise shall be fulfilled, for he might intend to do something very different from the expectation which he knew his language would excite in the mind of the promisee. In such a case, he would, if he performed his intention, be virtually lying to the promisee. If that were the rule governing promises, they would be useless in the transactions of life. Neither is the promiser under obligation to perform the promise, in the manner in which the promisee apprehended his meaning; for, owing to some ambiguity of the terms in which the promise is expressed, the promisee might interpret it to mean something which the promiser did not either intend to perform, or desire him to believe that he did. The sense in which the promiser believed that the promisee accepted his promise, is the rule by which the interpretation of it should be governed.

Whatever expectations we knowingly and voluntarily excite in the minds of others, we are under obligation to gratify. If we do not, we stand convicted of duplicity.

Persons ought to be very guarded in making promises, and never promise without first being satisfied that it is right to do so. After the promise is made, it matters not how inconvenient the performance may be, you cannot retract without some injury to your reputation, and it sometimes happens that men cannot

perform their promises without acting immorally. Having promised, in such a case, you are very unpleasantly situated, being neither able to perform your promise nor retract, without some degree of blame.

Generally, those who are most ready to make promises, perform them most reluctantly. The reason is, their desire to please the individual to whom the promise<sup>\*</sup> is made, is so great at the moment of making the promise, that they do not think of the propriety or impropriety of such a promise. They know that by promising, they excite expectation in the mind of the promisee, and he, believing that the promise will be performed, is pleased and gratified. This feeling, the promiser wishes to excite; it is no doubt from a benevolent motive, but when he reflects concerning the nature of the promise which he has made, he may discover many reasons why he would not like to perform what he had promised; and it may be, he will discover reasons why he ought not to perform it. The consequence is, he either performs reluctantly, or altogether refuses to perform his promises. It would be much better, seriously to consider the matter before making the promise. There would be but little danger, then, of exciting expectations which we could not gratify consistently with our duty. But having made a promise, that promise is not binding if the performance is impossible.



If the promiser is aware, at the time of his making the promise, that it will be impossible for him to perform it, he is guilty of a violation of the law of veracity; but still, not under obligation to perform the promise, that being impossible; yet, if the promisee sustains any loss by his deception, he is under obligation to compensate him for the loss. But if the promiser was not aware, at the time of making the promise, that it would be impossible for him to perform it, if he really intended to perform what he promised, he is not guilty of fraud. He cannot be held responsible for an unforeseen event which places it out of his power to perform his promises.

Promises are not binding when the performance is unlawful.

When the performance of what we have promised is unlawful, we are under a prior obligation not to do that which we have promised. A man's obligations to God and to society precede any obligation which may arise from his promise. He has no right to make a promise which it is not lawful for him to perform. Having done so, it becomes his duty to refuse to comply with the promise.

If he is aware of the unlawfulness of his promise at the time of making it, he will be blamable for having made such promise, but not for refusing to comply with what he has promised. If he is not aware of its

unlawfulness at the time, but learns that it is so after the promise is made, it becomes his duty to inform the promisee immediately, that to comply with his promise would be unlawful, and that he considers himself thereby released from any further obligation.

Promises are not binding, if the performance would be a violation of a former promise.

In this case, the promiser is under obligation to perform the prior promise, and blamable for making a second which conflicts with it.

The intention of an individual to do a favor for another, cannot be considered binding as a promise, although he may express this intention to some individual, who, without his permission, informs the one for whom the favor is designed, of this intention. In other words, if I intend to do a service for a friend, and tell some one else of my intention, without requesting him to inform my friend of it, I am not bound by promise to do so, if he should voluntarily tell my friend of my intention. But if I do not perform an intention as thus expressed, I stand convicted of falsehood, unless I have some just cause for changing my intention.

Promises are not binding when known by both parties to depend on certain conditions, which conditions are subsequently found by the promiser not to exist.

One who needs your services, agrees with you upon certain conditions, and you promise to perform the work on those conditions; if, when you begin the work, he changes the conditions, or has not represented circumstances affecting the work as they really exist, you are not under obligation to comply with his wishes; your promise is all that he has a right to expect. If you should promise to give a beggar something to relieve his distress, in consequence of his having related a fabricated story to excite your sympathy, and you should afterwards learn that the story is false, the conditions on which you promised being found not to exist, you are not bound, by promise, to give him anything.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## CONTRACTS.

A CONTRACT is similar to a promise; the rule of interpreting and the reasons for not violating it, being about the same as those given concerning promises.

A contract is a promise from each party to the other; the one party promising to do certain things,

on condition that the other party does something else. Each party to a contract is bound by promise to do what he has obligated himself to perform.

There is a difference to be observed between a simple contract, or a contract by which each party obligates himself to do a specified act, and a contract by which we enter upon a relation established by our Creator.

Of the first kind are mercantile contracts. If a merchant agrees to deliver certain goods to me on a day specified, for a certain amount of money to be paid on or before that day; if I fail to pay the money, he is under no obligation to deliver the goods. If the merchant contracts to have, say one hundred barrels of pork, at a certain place, ready to deliver to me for an amount which we have agreed upon, if I am there, ready to receive it, and he cannot deliver it to me on the day and at the place specified, the contract is violated on his part, and I am not bound to receive the pork at some other time and place.

From these remarks, it appears that in a simple contract between one individual and another, whilst either party performs his part of the contract, the other is also bound. But if one fails to comply with his part of the contract, the other is no longer bound, because, by this one's failing to perform a condition which is essential to the contract, the contract is vio

lated, and the condition on which the other was to perform his part does not exist.

The one who holds himself in readiness to comply with his portion of the contract, but is prevented by the failure of the other, has a right to damages from him, to the full amount of the injury sustained.

In a contract by which we enter into a relation established by our Creator, the rule is different. In this case, we are bound to discharge our portion of the contract, even if the other party should fail in many things. And we continue to be thus bound to act, until the contract is annulled; which cannot be rightfully done, except in the manner which God has appointed.

Of this sort, the marriage contract is an example. The husband and wife are each under obligation to discharge his or her respective duties, independently of the failures of the other, so long as this relation exists between them; and this relation cannot rightfully be destroyed, except for the reason given in the New Testament, with which I suppose all are familiar.

Another example of this kind of contract, is membership in the Christian church. If one brother violates his obligations as a Christian, that does not by any means release others from their obligations. Each member of the church knows what he has

promised to do, and his obligation to perform this promise to the very best of his ability, remains unchanged, even though every other member should fail to perform his part of the contract.

A treaty between two nations is a very important kind of contract, and one which should be very strictly observed. The infamous violation of treaties has often been the source of wars. Often have men, because a treaty was violated, excused themselves for hurling the hissing bomb-shells and destructive cannon-balls into the dwellings of unoffending babes and weeping mothers. Such conduct must be atoned for; there is a bar of justice before which we must all appear, and those who are really culpable for the violation of treaties will then be confronted by a Judge who knows the secrets of all hearts; from the light of whose countenance the wicked will flee.

There is no better reason why a state should claim the right to violate its contracts, than that an individual should claim the right to violate his; if there is any difference, the obligation of a state to perform its contracts is greater than that of the individual; for if the individual violates his contracts, only a few persons are likely to be injured; whereas, if a state violates its contracts, many individuals have to suffer. When a state violates its contracts, more persons are injured, and a greater amount of suffering

produced, than when an individual fails to comply with his promises. Most of the wars which deluged Europe with human blood during the astonishing career of Napoleon Bonaparte, are terrible examples of the evils which are incident to the violation of treaties. Though neither France nor England has a soul to suffer for the crimes which were perpetrated during those bloody wars, still, the rulers and chief men of those nations each possessed a soul, and a judgment to discriminate between right and wrong. A fearful punishment must await the guilty ones who cause so much wickedness to be perpetrated.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### LIES.

THIS subject, I think, may very properly be discussed in connection with a violation of promises. A very great portion of the bad effects of a breach of promise, results from the lying which it necessarily includes; and we may say that every lie is a breach of promise.

On the same principle that a merchant is under obligation to sell his goods for their market value,

viz., because he takes especial care to make men believe that he does, every man is under obligation to speak the truth. Every one, when he speaks seriously, wishes to be believed; and if a man discovers a doubting expression in the countenance of his auditors, he feels offended. He thinks that due regard is not paid to the words which he utters. But why should any one doubt the truthfulness of what another utters? Why should we not always believe what our fellow-man says? Simply because men do frequently utter that which is false, when they wish us to believe every word which they speak is strictly true.

I think that incredulity is not a natural condition of the human mind, but that it is the effect of education. The child, unschooled in the wisdom and wickedness of this world's ways, strictly confides in all it hears, if it understands, and does not doubt your truthfulness, even if it comprehends not. But, be it said, to the shame and confusion of our race, that very few children remain long in this innocent condition. Ere long they discover that some things which were told them are not true. Too soon they learn the nature of falsehood. Too soon they learn that all we speak is not true. Alas! that they should ever acquire this knowledge! Alas! that such knowledge should exist for them to acquire!

To lie, is contrary to our nature, but it is a habit



which can be very soon formed, and once formed it is very difficult to overcome; and although the unhappy individual who is given to so vile a practice, is continually bringing down disgrace and merited reproach upon himself, still he parries the blows which one falsehood brings upon him, by another more vile, and entangles himself more and more in the vile net which falsehood weaves around him.

The importance of veracity is felt in all the relations of life. Without some degree of veracity, some respect for truthfulness, men could make no appreciable progress in knowledge. Without this confidence, teachers would be useless, and all that any man could learn would consist in what he had himself seen and discovered.

Without confidence in the veracity of others, this American Continent would not yet have been peopled by Europeans. If the story of the discovery of a new world had been dashed aside as an idle, truthless tale, no one would have risked the perilous voyage across the broad Atlantic in search of a home. How is this confidence in what men say to be felt, unless men will tell the truth?

Fortunately for the happiness, prosperity, and advancement of the human race, there are a great many persons who have, from their youth upward, practised speaking the truth. But there are others who,

regardless of the moral precepts concerning truth, and the certainty of bringing down upon their devoted heads the awful displeasure of Almighty God, speak falsely and act deceitfully during many years of a wicked life. It is on this account that it would be the veriest folly for us to believe all that we hear.

In view of this fact, a man who invariably speaks the truth can freely forgive his hearers, if they exhibit some degree of incredulity, when he relates a fact which appears to them unreasonable.

We sometimes doubt the veracity of the best of men, because what they relate seems to us incredible. It is a custom among men to reject everything which appears unreasonable, as being either untrue or very doubtful. In this way our progress has been much retarded, our reason being insufficient, at once, to comprehend every fact that may be related to us.

The bad effects which lying produces upon society, afford sufficient reason why all men should speak the truth. All the good effects that the power of expressing our thoughts in words can afford us, are derived from speaking the truth. But there is a consideration, beyond and above the temporal advantages to be derived from speaking the truth, which greatly increases its importance. It is the will of God that we should speak the truth. Were it not for this fact, it might admit of some argument to determine whether

it is more beneficial to us, as inhabitants of this earth, always to speak the truth, or sometimes to utter falsehood. I greatly fear that many would think it better to speak falsely sometimes, and would offer very plausible reasons for their opinion. But when we reflect that it is contrary to the will of God for us to lie, there is no room at all for arguing in favor of falsehood; there is no justification for even an occasional falsehood.

There is but one thing that God cannot do—he cannot lie. He is “a God of truth.” It seems to me that the highest motive that can influence man, is a desire to be like God. We are told that man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. If we speak the truth, and cannot be induced to lie, we retain in this particular the likeness of our Creator. To speak the truth is to act like God. I cannot conceive of any higher motive than this, for doing any act that man has the power to perform.

The Scriptures abound with the praises of truth and the condemnation of falsehood. A few examples from the Holy Bible will be sufficient to show how wicked it is to lie. Ex. xx. 16, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” In the Proverbs, 6th chapter and 16th and 17th verses, a lying tongue is mentioned among the things that are an abomination unto the Lord. Colos. iii. 9, “Lie not one to another,

seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." In the 21st chapter of Revelations, 8th verse, we are told that "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." In the 27th verse of the same chapter, we are told that "There shall in nowise enter into heaven, anything that maketh a lie."

Such are the reasons why we should refrain from lying, and always speak the truth. Many other arguments of a similar nature might be offered; but if a man will not be induced to speak the truth for the sake of promoting his own happiness and that of his fellow-man on earth; if he will not speak the truth, because he loves God and wishes to be like him; if, added to this, the terror of occupying a place in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, is not sufficient to deter him from falsehood, I know not what more powerful inducement can be offered to turn him from such wickedness. With these remarks concerning our obligations to speak the truth, we will proceed to a consideration of what is truth and what falsehood. Concerning truth and falsehood we observe the following particulars:

1st. What we say may be strictly true in sense; that is, the words which we utter may convey an idea to the minds of our hearers which is strictly true, yet

we may believe, at the time, that we are uttering a falsehood.

2d. We may believe that we are speaking the truth, when, in fact, what we utter is not true.

3d. We may speak the truth, knowing it to be true.

4th. We may speak that which is not true, knowing that we speak falsely.

In the last two cases our innocence or our guilt is evident. We know that we do right when we, having a right to speak, say what is true, knowing it to be true. And we are fully conscious of our guilt if we speak falsely, knowing that what we say is not true. But in the first and second cases our condition is a little different. In those cases the act really performed is not the act which we intended to perform. In deciding on those cases we should say that when a man intends to speak falsely his intention is wicked; and when he intends to speak the truth his intention is right.

When a man believes that he is speaking the truth, and what he utters is, in fact, not true, we should make a distinction between error and falsehood. The reason he does not speak what is, in fact, true, is owing to a misconception of the facts; and what he says is erroneous, but we would not say that it was a falsehood, for this word carries with it the idea of guilt.

Whilst we are uttering a sentence which, if written, would convey an idea to the mind which is true, if we assume the tone, look, and gesture of irony, those who hear us will believe that we mean something different from what we say. In this way we may be said to act a lie, whilst we utter truth. If any kind of falsehood is more criminal than another, it is that in which truth and falsehood are so blended as to convey an idea which is wholly false. Such a falsehood usually creates double the amount of difficulty and harm that is caused by speaking a lie without any mixture of truth. It is in such a mingling of truth and falsehood that Satan delights.

We may be guilty of falsehood by our actions in a number of ways. If we were asked the direction to a certain place, and should point the wrong way, or, when asked a question which should be answered in the affirmative, if we should shake our heads, our action would be equivalent to a falsehood, it being generally understood that a shake of the head is a sign of negation.

If we utter as truth that which we do not know to be true, we are, to some extent, guilty of falsehood; for those who hear us are as completely deceived as if we knew what we asserted was false. When we utter anything as truth, our hearers suppose that we know it to be true; if we do not, we deceive them by

inducing them to believe that we know something of which we are ignorant; and they expect us, when we make an assertion, to tell them if we do not know it to be true. Of course a man has a right to express his opinion about a subject without knowing whether that opinion is correct or not; but he is under obligation to express it as his opinion only, unless he knows it to be true.

When we have no intention to deceive our hearers, and are satisfied that what we say will not have that effect, we may, if we choose, say things that are not strictly true, without being guilty of falsehood. We may imagine a case for the sake of illustrating what we have said; or we may write or relate a fable without being in any way guilty of falsehood. In these cases, although what we say is not strictly true, yet the idea conveyed by our words is; and it is in this that our truthfulness consists when we speak or write something fictitious.

There are some instances in which most persons agree that a man is excusable even if he speaks that which is false, with the intention of deceiving. If you should tell a robber a falsehood for the purpose of saving your life; or if you should intentionally deceive an assassin to divert him from the perpetration of crime; or in case you should tell a madman a falsehood for his own advantage, or to prevent him

from performing some wicked deed; the crime of falsehood would be small compared with the wickedness which is prevented by it; and, if the urgency of the case is such that no lawful means can supersede the necessity of lying, I think it would, in such cases, be excusable. We cannot claim that to lie would be right under such circumstances, but that to do so may be admissible.

It will not do to extend this privilege any farther. If we do, we give entirely too much latitude to those who are inclined to indulge a desire to deceive others. The merchant might claim that it is necessary for him to speak falsely sometimes. For example, a man might enter his store who did not pay his debts promptly: the merchant might claim that, for the sake of peace, with the desire not to give offence to such individual, he has a right to tell him that he has not the article which he wants. Upon the same ground, every business in life may be pursued by some who think it necessary to tell lies sometimes, in order to prosper. With regard to such cases, I would say, if a man cannot, without lying, successfully pursue the business in which he is engaged, he ought to quit the business, and engage in some occupation which does not require so great a sacrifice of one's honor and virtue.

If an individual has no right to know the answer



to certain questions which he has asked of me, is this lack of right sufficient reason why I should tell him a falsehood? By no means. If he has not a right to know the answer to his questions, this is sufficient reason why I should not answer them, but it is no excuse for telling a falsehood. My duty in such a case would be to refuse to give any answer.

Is it right always, and on all occasions, to speak the truth? If it is right for us to speak at all, it is right to speak the truth, but there are many occasions in which we ought not to speak at all. We have no right to speak the truth if, by doing so, we are likely to cause trouble which would not be occasioned if we said nothing. We have no right to speak the truth merely for the sake of injuring the reputation of another.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### SLANDER.

VERY nearly allied to lying is another evil of which men are sometimes guilty; we call it slander. It is often more hurtful in its effects than lying, and usually comprises a double fault; that of lying, and that of a malicious design to injure the character of another.

There is nothing to which man has an exclusive right, nothing which he can justly claim as his own, that is either more valuable or more durable than his character.

It is that, which gains for him the respect and esteem of other men; it is that, which contributes mostly to render him happy or miserable in life; it is that alone which he carries with him to his final resting place in eternity.

The riches of Croesus are but trash to a man who is dying; he can freely exclaim, "Millions of money for a moment of time." His character is all that he can carry with him. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it."

When we are about to leave this world, we look upon an irreproachable character as a priceless gem. To be at such a time, conscious of possessing a character which is pure before God and man, is a comfort with which one would not dispense at such a time, for any inducement that could be offered.

"Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something, nothing:  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name,  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed."

Since a man's character is of so much value to him, there is scarcely any injury you can inflict which he would feel more keenly than that of slander.

In a certain sense, a man's character is his property. If he is a mechanic, and executes a piece of work with taste and skill, all who behold this, will be satisfied of his ability to do such work, and any one desiring to have work of the same kind performed, would be likely to employ him. But suppose he who desires to employ him, has been informed that his moral character is bad; that he is a vile man, and not worthy of patronage. If this be not true, the man is slandered, and by this means deprived of the employment which his ability merits.

We have as good a right to go behind a man's back, and take a hundred dollars from his pocket, as we have, by maliciously injuring his character, to deprive him of the means of honestly acquiring that amount.

The injury which the slandered person sustains, generally extends beyond the loss of a single opportunity to get employment. If the individual who believes him to be unworthy of his patronage, in consequence of the slander he has heard, does not, by some means, learn that he has been deceived, the slandered man loses his patronage entirely; besides, he loses the benefit of the recommendation which this gentleman would naturally have given him. In this

way, one act of slander might so injure the reputation of a mechanic, that he could scarcely get any employment in his neighborhood, and would be forced either to live in want, or leave the neighborhood.

The injury which may be done to a tradesman by slander, is like that experienced by the mechanic. His reputation is injured, he loses the respect and esteem of his neighbors and those who deal with him, if the slander is believed. Besides the loss of the regard which others had for him, without which every man must be wretched indeed, he also loses custom; and may possibly be so much injured in this way, as to fail in trade, and become bankrupt. He had much rather be robbed of his wealth by violence, than by slander; for if robbed by violence, his character would be left, and, by industry and skill, he might redeem his pecuniary losses; but he cannot be robbed of his wealth by means of slander, without first being robbed of his character, so that, when thus robbed, he is "poor indeed."

The character of the physician, or the lawyer, is still more easily injured by the tongue of the slanderer. The effects of slander on their popularity, and its influence on their ability to acquire wealth, is more serious.

The right of a man to the quiet possession of a

character uninjured by the slanderer, is as just as his right to any species of property he may own.

The rule to be governed by, with regard to a man's character, is, to some extent, the same as that concerning the right of property. You ought to feel that you have done as great a crime when you have spoken slanderously of a man, as if you had stolen some of his money. If this rule were observed in society, there would be very few slanderous words uttered.

There is one rule concerning the right of property, which seems to be especially applicable to the character. The rule is this: If a man has possession of certain property, to which he has no legal right further than the right of possession, and no other person has a better right than he, no one is justifiable in disturbing him in the possession.

With regard to the character: If a man has a reputation, no matter how he acquired it, we have no right to deprive him of it; for no individual can possibly have a right to the character of another. It may be urged as an objection to this, that a man sometimes has a reputation for talents or accomplishments which he does not possess. In this case, the question might be asked, Ought we not to expose his want of ability, and bring him down to his proper level? In answer to this I would say, Each individual of the commu-

nity has a right to his opinion; and if public opinion sustains a man contrary to our judgment, it is very likely that he has more merit than we are willing to accord him. The fault may be in our judgment. So that, if we attempt to set public opinion right with regard to a man's merit, we may be injuring his reputation without doing justice to society.

In case we think a man receives more praise than is his due, we ought not to set about trying to deprive him of his honors; but we ought to lay aside jealousy, and endeavor to imitate his good qualities.

The injury to a man's moneyed interest is what the laws of society attempt to make amends for, when one is injured by slander. The law cannot pay back, or cause the slanderer to restore to an individual, the respect of the community once it is lost; for, although his reputation may have been injured by accusations which were wholly false, still, when the suspicions of a community are once aroused against a man, no matter how unjustly, it is very difficult to restore him to the position he previously held, and restore the confidence of the public as it formerly existed. For this reason, the laws of society attempt nothing more than to indemnify an individual who has been slandered, for the amount of injury which his moneyed interest has sustained by the slander. The remuneration in such cases is generally very

ample, so far as money can make amends for injury done to one's character.

When a man is pronounced by the authorities of the land, not guilty of a fault which has been alleged against him, it seems that this ought to be sufficient to restore him at once to the confidence of the public. It does, no doubt, restore his respectability, as much as it is possible for an injured reputation to be restored; but when a stigma is placed upon the character, it cannot always be laid aside at once; like some stains upon the flesh, it must remain there until it is worn off.

When we reflect upon the difficulty of removing a stain from the character, it brings to our minds anew, the baseness and heartlessness of the slanderer.

The term slander is commonly used to signify the circulation of mischievous falsehood. It is so considered in common law. The law not holding a man guilty of slander unless what he states concerning another, is false.

But even the truth may not always be spoken blamelessly. The truth itself may be made instrumental to malicious designs. To speak the truth for the sake of accomplishing a wicked design, if not slander, is certainly very wicked.

Slander is thus denounced in the Bible:—Ps. ci. 5,  
“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I

cut off." Prov. x. 18, "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool." In the third chapter of Paul to Timothy, eleventh verse, we are told that the wife of a deacon must not be a slanderer. That his wife's being a slanderer, should unfit a man for the office of deacon, is indeed a great reproach upon the slandered. Jer. vi. 26—28, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes; make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us. They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters." In Romans i. 30, Paul classes backbiters with haters of God.

There are many conversations in which slander is the principal element. Whenever the character of an individual becomes the topic of conversation, and a feeling of charity does not dictate the words which we utter, we are liable to speak slanderously. "Charity thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Charity requires that we shall put the most favorable construction on the actions of others, that their actions will allow.

In forming our opinions of the actions and intentions of others, it is our duty always to put the most favorable construction on them that we can, without varying from truth. Charity demands this, whilst



calumny would prompt us to adopt an opinion which is most injurious to the good name of him whose actions we would criticise.

There are very few actions which a man performs that may not be construed either as being virtuous, or as being wicked. In speaking of the same action, if we choose to judge charitably we may call it virtuous; and if we are slanderously inclined, we can give good reasons for calling it vile. The best of men, even when performing the most benevolent actions, are not free from the vituperation of the slanderer; whilst the charitable man can frequently find worthy motives, good intentions, and evidences of a kind heart, in the actions of men who are commonly very wicked.

The truth is, there are very few men so wicked that they have not some good qualities, some redeeming traits of character. The charitable man does not fail to discover these, and hence he can always find a reason for entertaining a good opinion of the majority of men. But he who loves to utter calumnies, fails to see the good qualities of men, and only sees the evil they do; and even when a purely benevolent action is performed, he can find reasons, satisfactory to himself at least, for deciding that there is some latent evil concealed beneath an exterior of candor and goodwill.

Many of the most popular novels are no better than

slanders against human nature ; and if read much, are calculated to produce just such a character as they accuse man of possessing. Much reading of novels has a tendency to cultivate a love of slander, and lower our opinion of mankind.

There are some acts which men perform, and some things which they say, that will not admit of a favorable construction. We have a right to condemn such actions and such conversation. It never can be our duty to make evil appear good. On the contrary, evil actions, which are known to be such, ought to be condemned by all good men. But everything like a desire to accuse others falsely ought to be instantly rejected from our minds, and we ought to view everything in ourselves like a desire to speak slanderously, with holy horror.

Men cannot be too much guarded in their thoughts and words, when they are dealing with the character or motives of another. The apostle James gives an impressive idea of the evils of an unguarded tongue, and the difficulty of speaking nothing that we ought not to say. James iii. 2, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (5,) Even so, the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. (16,) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity ; so is the tongue

among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell."

The précepts of the Sacred Scriptures concerning evil speaking are numerous. It is a fault which will not be lightly passed over on the day of final reckoning. Then will all those who have recklessly injured others by their evil speaking and their slander, be required to atone for all the injury they have done by an unbridled tongue; then will the character of him who has suffered by slander appear in its true light, and if pure, then will he receive a just recompense. Ephesians iv. 31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you." St. Paul, in his letter to Titus, third chapter, says, "Speak evil of no man." And Peter says (1 Peter iii. 10), "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."

Slander is mostly circulated under the cover of secrecy. Men and women very seldom utter a slander against others without enjoining secrecy upon those to whom they utter their vile aspersions. Why does the slanderer enjoin secrecy on his hearers? Is it not because he knows that he has done wrong, and wishes to hide his shame under the cover of secrecy? The slanderer usually introduces his calumny by en-

joining secrecy upon all present. He says, "I will tell all of you something, but will you first promise never to repeat it?" I would advise my young friends on such occasions always to say, No! and resolutely refuse to hear anything from a person which he is afraid to tell them until they have pledged themselves to keep it a secret. You may be sure that it is some calumny which he is either ashamed or afraid to utter publicly. Then let not an idle curiosity induce you to pledge yourself to secrecy for the sake of hearing something which you may be sure ought not to be said. Your informant would not be anxious about secrecy if he did not already feel conscience-stricken.

The slanderer does not remove any portion of the guilt of his assertions by enjoining secrecy on those to whom he utters his calumnies. Secrecy cannot take away the guilt of the act. If it is wrong to slander a person, it is just as much wrong to slander him to one person as to twenty; if it is a sin to slander an individual, it is as much a sin to utter that slander to an acquaintance, who is more prudent than yourself, as it would be to publish it to the world. But if you utter your slanderous remarks to an acquaintance, on whose fidelity and good sense you can rely, you are sure that your guilt will not be known to others. By this means you may injure others to a great extent, and still keep yourself con-

cealed, but your sin will not be palliated in the least. You cannot conceal any species of wickedness from that all-seeing eye, which can penetrate even to the thoughts and purposes of the heart.

It is not always our duty, however, to be silent with regard to the evil that men do. It is always our duty not to speak of the actions of others for any malicious purpose, but when good can be accomplished and harm prevented, it is then evidently our duty to speak, and speak fearlessly. Whenever it becomes necessary for us to speak of the evil actions of others to promote the ends of public justice, or to protect the innocent, it is then our duty to do so.

It frequently becomes our duty to speak of the evil habits of others for their own good. We can render another no greater service than to induce him to turn from his evil habits; to "cease to do evil and learn to do well." We cannot do this, however, by speaking of one's evil habits behind his back. To effect any good, we must gain his confidence and speak to him only.

It often becomes our duty to inform parents of the evil practices of their children. If we do not, many a very worthy young man may be led astray by wicked persons, whilst the parents are wholly ignorant of what is going on. But even in this case,

much caution and some judgment is requisite, or we will do more harm than good.

We know, too well, that all men are not good men ; therefore indiscriminate praise is a fault as well as indiscriminate blame ; but not so great a fault. It generally harms him most who practises it. It induces others to suspect either the purity of his motives or the soundness of his judgment.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### DRUNKENNESS.

THIS is one of the most debasing sins of which man can be guilty. Drunkenness is not only a sin, but it is the precursor of many other wicked acts. A man will do many wicked things when intoxicated, that he could not be induced to perform if sober.

Ebriety deprives a man of his caution ; he becomes careless of right, and recklessly follows the bent of his passions. All the bad passions which exist in a man, and which have hitherto been kept in check by his caution and a desire to do right, are let loose by intoxication ; and he who, whilst sober, was just and

prudent, when intoxicated becomes reckless, quarrelsome, and indifferent to all of his moral obligations.

Drunkenness is a sin in which one cannot indulge without its causing him to commit other deeds of immorality even more wicked than intoxication. Even if it did not have a tendency to debase the mind, and destroy a man's moral principles, still it should be avoided, for it is sinful. It is denounced in the Bible as a species of wickedness for which a man will be banished from the presence of God. St. Paul admonishes us, in the following language, to avoid drunkenness: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." "Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness." "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor *drunkards*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."—Eph. v. 18; Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. It is evident, from what is here stated, that drunkenness is a sin for which we will be punished hereafter. It seems to me that the punishment which a man receives in this life for being a drunkard, ought to be sufficient to deter any person who possesses even a moderate share of reason, from becoming a drunkard. The temporary insanity which intoxication produces, the intense sickness which succeeds this condition, and the ridiculous, not to say wicked, acts which a drunken man will perform, ought to be considered punishment

enough to more than balance the little pleasure we can derive from quaffing intoxicating liquors.

Men frequently indulge a taste for ardent spirits without having the least idea that they will ever become habitual drunkards. They say it is no harm to drink spirituous liquors, if a man does not indulge his taste so far as to produce intoxication. They content themselves with this belief, and by degrees indulge a little more freely; at last they become drunk. They excuse themselves by saying, being intoxicated a few times does not, by any means, constitute a man a drunkard. They ought to remember that to become an habitual drunkard, a man only has to repeat single instances of drunkenness. All the sin that is attributable to habitual drunkenness is, though in a less degree, chargeable to each individual instance of intoxication.

It cannot, however, be admitted as strictly true that it is no harm to drink spirituous liquors if we do not drink to excess. There are, it is true, some men who can indulge a taste for ardent spirits, and seldom, if ever, be found in a state of ebriety. But the number of those who have this degree of self-control, is comparatively small. And those who can thus indulge often do much harm by gratifying their taste, for the friends who drink with them, having but little self-



control, will be, by their example, induced to become drunkards.

Every man who is an habitual drinker, likes to have a circle of friends with whom he can take a social drink. This circle increases, others are drawn in, and by degrees a whole neighborhood becomes addicted to this gross and degrading vice. It may be that some of those who have thus been drawn into the circle will become habitual drunkards. If they do, the fault is, in a great measure, attributable to that moderate drinker who must have his circle of drinking friends; since it is by his influence they were induced to drink.

Those who are thus corrupted are liable to corrupt others, whose degradation will become so great that their wives and children will suffer from want; whose weeping babes will cling round a famished mother, and whose destitute children will wander about the streets in tattered garments, unprotected and not cared for, save by the wretched mother whose sorrows are fast hurrying her on to an untimely grave. Then say not there is no harm in drinking, provided you do not drink to excess. There is harm, there must be harm, when such awful consequences may result from your indulgence.

It may be that you have no family to suffer from your excesses; your fortune may be so great that the

amount which you spend in revelry can be easily spared. Your prudence may be such that you will never become an habitual drunkard; still you cannot say that your drinking does no harm, so long as others less prudent, less wealthy, and on whose good behavior a needy family depends, are liable, by your example, to commence drinking and become drunkards.

We frequently hear it said of a drunkard that he is a good man, but a great enemy to himself. This is often true in the sense in which it is intended to be interpreted. The idea intended to be conveyed is, that the man of whom we speak is a good man when sober, and would be a respectable citizen if he would stay sober.

It is not true, however, that such men are enemies to themselves only. Their influence is exerted in a wrong channel, and, by getting others to join them over their cups, they become enemies not only to themselves, but to the whole neighborhood.

St. Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, fifth chapter and twenty-third verse, says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thy frequent infirmities." This advice of the apostle is often quoted to justify the habit of occasionally taking a drink of spirituous liquor. But the advice of the apostle does not allow drinking wine as a beverage at all; it is prescribed as a medicine. Timothy was to

take it for the purpose of healing his infirmities, and he was to take but little.

It is a well known fact that wine, taken in moderation, is sometimes beneficial to health. Physicians frequently advise the use of it, when their patients are feeble. This does not, by any means, justify the use of ardent spirits as a beverage. If too much is taken, instead of strengthening the individual, it enfeebles him; and, if persisted in, will most assuredly destroy life.

If spirituous liquors are drank by an individual for the benefit of his health, as soon as he no longer needs such stimulant, he should cease to use it. Even if his health should still require it, and he finds that he cannot use it without sometimes becoming intoxicated, he had better quit at once. The man who cannot use wine or brandy as a medicine, without sometimes drinking too freely, has no right to use any such remedy. If he knows of no other remedy, he had better let the disease have its course. For it is better to die from disease, than to live a drunkard.

In Prov. xxiii. 29-32, we find King Solomon's opinion of excessive drinking expressed in the following beautiful language: "Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath words without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that

go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red; when it giveth its color in the cup; when it moveth itself aright. *At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*"

Drunkenness disqualifies men for the duties of their station, first, by the temporary disorder of their faculties, and afterwards by a constant stupefaction. It often happens that men who are well qualified for business, allow their faculties to be destroyed by the effect of intoxicating drinks, and become wholly unfit for any trust, lose their employment, and roam about, degraded and worthless outcasts.

Men who have capacity enough to be useful citizens, and even ornaments to society, can, in a very short time, by habitual drunkenness, destroy their natural capacity, and render themselves most contemptible and disgusting creatures.

Drunkenness will most assuredly cause sorrow in the family of the drunkard. This consideration alone, ought to be sufficient to cause every man who has a family, to keep sober. If he has not sufficient regard for himself to shun the inebriating cup, he ought to do so for the sake of sparing the feelings of his brothers, his sisters, his father, his mother, his wife, and his children. He must be a vile wretch indeed, who can trample on the kind feelings of those who are thus

near to him, and, unmindful of the misery he is causing in their bosoms, go on in his besotted course.

Drunkenness shortens life. Men may disregard this fact, and prefer to enjoy their wine while they do live, to living temperately, and attaining that age which nature designed for them. Notwithstanding some might prefer this course, still, that drunkenness shortens life, is a fact which should not be lightly passed by.

Have we the right to choose for ourselves in a case of this kind? Have we a right to choose a life of conviviality, if we know that by doing so, we shorten our existence? Certainly not. We have no more right to choose a mode of life that we know will shorten our term of years, than we have to commit suicide in any other way. We are as truly committing suicide, when we destroy our life by slow degrees, as when we do so suddenly.

The habitual drunkard has no right to consider himself anything but a suicide, for he knows that he is killing himself.

It is a question of some importance to determine how far men are excusable for the crimes they commit when intoxicated. Many persons think that drunkenness is some alleviation of the crimes which a man may commit whilst in this condition. It is almost certain that men do commit crimes when intoxicated,

of which they would not be guilty if sober. Why is it so? Is it because they are less aware of the guilt of the action, at such a time, than when sober? I do not believe that in most cases it is. I believe that most men who commit crimes under the influence of intoxication are as fully aware of the guiltiness of the act which they perform as they would be if sober. The reason they are more apt to perform criminal acts at such times, seems to be owing to deprivation of caution. Should a man be held guiltless, when, previous to performing an act, he has brought himself to a condition of recklessness? This can scarcely be considered a palliation of the offence.

It would be a very poor rule to establish in morals, that, by sinning, we may bring ourselves to a condition which gives us a right to sin. This would be the condition of the drunkard, if his being drunk were an excuse for the crimes he committed whilst in that condition.

Morally, he is doubly guilty, if he commits crimes whilst under the influence of spirituous liquor. He sins by being intoxicated; he also sins in committing the crime. The degree of the crime may be held as being less than it would have been had the man been sober; but the two sins together would certainly amount to as great wickedness as the solitary crime committed by a sober man.

Many individuals, after they have been the victims of intemperance for a number of years, resolve that they will quit their evil practices; cease to do evil and learn to do well. For a time they succeed pretty well; but they return to the society of their old friends, they try to be as jovial and intimate as formerly, but they find it impossible; their friends solicit them to drink; for a time they waver between duty and inclination, and finally yield to inclination. Their old habit asserts its sway with renewed energy, and they cease to strive against it, believing it impossible for them to reform.

The better plan would be, when a man resolves to leave off drinking, to leave his old associates, and even to remove to a different home; for his former associates are not going to permit him to quit the practice of which they are so fond, if he remains among them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## OATHS.

MEN cannot live happily in a civil society, unless the wicked are restrained from gratifying their inclination to do evil, and prevented from trampling on the rights of good citizens. The virtuous must be protected in their rights, and the wicked must be coerced into obedience to law, that the state may be prosperous, and the citizens happy.

Whenever the laws of the land are violated, it becomes an object of great importance to learn the truth concerning the fault committed, to discover the guilty person, and inflict such punishment as will be likely to deter him from again violating the laws of his country. By promptly punishing the wicked, who are proven to be violaters of the law, not only those who are detected in committing crimes, but all evil doers are restrained from gratifying their desires to do evil, on account of their dread of the punishment which such acts may bring upon them.

If every citizen of a state would act in strict obedience to the moral law, the state would have no need of a code of criminal laws, for there would be no



criminals to punish; but such a condition of society is scarcely to be hoped for in any government. There will always be some evil doers, some who cannot or will not love their neighbors as they do themselves. There are always some who do not feel the restraints of morality sufficiently to render it useless to have other restraints over them, for the preservation of the peace and happiness of society. Consequently every enlightened nation has its code of laws, for the purpose of rewarding the good and punishing the bad.

We are under moral obligation to obey the rulers of our government, and be obedient to the civil officers who execute the laws of the land. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou wilt have praise of the same: for he is the *minister of God* to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the *minister of God, a revenger* to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

There are some witnesses to almost every evil act which men do; and whenever a man violates the laws of his country, it becomes necessary to learn from the witnesses of the transaction the whole truth concerning the affair, in order that amends may be made to those who are injured, and the aggressor be duly punished. The truth can generally be elicited concerning

every fact, if the witnesses to it can be induced to testify, and testify truly.

In order to be sure that the witnesses will testify truly, most nations have made it a rule to require them to take an oath before testifying, swearing that they will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; they are then asked such questions touching the affair as are deemed necessary for the purposes of justice.

The object for requiring a witness to take an oath to tell the truth, before he testifies in any case, must be to render his obligations for telling the truth stronger than they would be if he were simply called before the court, and asked all necessary questions, without being sworn. The object is evidently a good one, for the judges must know the truth before they can decide justly in any case. But is it really true, that being sworn increases our obligation to tell the truth? Are we not always under obligation to tell the truth, if we speak at all? And if we fail to speak the truth without being sworn, are we not as sure to displease God, and incur the penalty of our guilt, as when we have sworn? I see no material difference.

If a man lies, without taking an oath to speak the truth, he will as surely be punished as if he had been sworn before speaking falsely. But this does not seem to be the general opinion among men. Some

seem to think that to speak falsely, without having sworn to tell the truth, is comparatively virtuous. Some persons will speak falsely concerning a fact, if questioned about it without being sworn, who would not dare to testify falsely on oath.

I once heard of a man, who had more wit than virtue, being asked by a lawyer, why he contradicted in his oath, something he had said before entering court. "Ah!" said he, "I was *talking* then; I am *swearing* now."

From the prevalence of the belief that taking an oath to speak the truth, increases our obligation to do so, it would seem that it is almost indispensably necessary, in order to elicit the truth, to require the witness to swear he will tell the whole truth. But is there no other mode of impressing the mind of the witness with a full conviction of the fact, that all he does, is done in the presence of God? and that if he testifies falsely, he will be called to a just and fearful account for his crime? If this can be done without an oath, the oath had better be dispensed with. If the witness feels a proper sense of his obligation, and of the civil consequences of testifying falsely, he will as certainly speak the truth, as if he had taken the most solemn oath.

The object for requiring a witness to be sworn before he testifies, cannot be to make the punishment

for perjury more certain hereafter. This would be a wicked design; besides, taking an oath would hardly produce this effect. Our calling on God to witness the truth of what we assert, will not cause him to be more attentive to what is transpiring, than he would be were his name not mentioned. God will surely know whether, as a witness, we tell the truth, and he will as surely punish us if we do not.

The object to be obtained by administering an oath, may perhaps be as easily accomplished by other means as by the oath itself. The responsibility of the witness, the fearful punishment which may be the consequence of his bearing false witness and thus incurring the displeasure of Almighty God, could be expiated upon by the judge before the witness is required to testify. By this means, the witness might be brought to a lively sense of his obligation to speak the truth.

If this plan would answer, I think it would be preferable to the present system of taking an oath before testifying. The main object would be obtained, namely, to elicit the truth. And no one would be under the necessity of doing something doubtingly, in order that justice might be done. Christians do not like to do anything doubtingly. They are forbidden to do anything, if they are in doubt whether it is agreeable to God's will. In taking an oath, there

is much room for doubt. Some of the best biblical scholars are divided in opinion as to whether it is, or is not, right to swear in legal matters.

Some think it right to give evidence on oath, whenever it is required, in administering the affairs of government. Others think it is not, and others still are in doubt what to think.

Those who maintain that it is always immoral to take an oath, offer, in proof of the correctness of their opinion, the fact that oaths are frequently forbidden in the New Testament. In the 5th chapter of Matthew, 34th verse, our Saviour is said to have uttered this expression; "Swear not at all." Adam Clarke makes the following note on verse 34th: "Much has been said in vindication of the propriety of swearing in *civil* cases before a magistrate, and much has been said against it. The best way is to have as little to do as possible with oaths. An oath will not bind a *knave* nor a *liar*; and an honest man needs none, for his character and conduct swear for him."

We are told to use *yes* for our affirmative and *no* for our negative, because "whatever is more than these cometh of evil."

Those who deny the lawfulness of oaths, in addition to what has been said, hold that no one has a right to require another to peril his salvation by commanding him to do things that are contrary to the Sacred

Scriptures; and they believe that taking an oath is a violation of scriptural precepts.

They can see no reason why the precepts of the New Testament can be blamelessly violated in this instance, and be binding in every other. As they understand those precepts, oaths are positively forbidden.

They can see no reason why the crime of false swearing, which is punishable by human laws, does not entail sufficient suffering on the guilty one, without requiring him to call directly upon the Creator.

Those who contend that there is no impropriety in taking an oath in civil matters, believe that those passages in the New Testament, which forbid oaths, are not intended to prohibit judicial oaths, but merely profanity.

They remind us that the apostles, on several occasions, called God to witness the truth of what they asserted. St. Paul to the Romans, says, "God is my witness that, without ceasing, I make mention of you in my prayers." In the expression, "Behold, before God I lie not." God is called on as a witness to the truthfulness of what is asserted. They also claim that our Saviour answered when examined on oath. Being "adjured by the living God" to declare whether he was the Christ, he answered the high priest.

Since there is so much difference of opinion as to

whether it is right to testify on oath, there must be some doubt in the minds of many; and it would be the duty of all those who are in doubt whether it is right or wrong, to refuse to swear, if they had any right to resist "the powers that be," which St. Paul tells us "are ordained of God." But since "whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God," I can see no reason why any man should have scruples about swearing, so long as *the power* requires it.

Oaths are somewhat different in their nature: they regard either the past or the future. Those concerning the past are assertory. Having witnessed a transaction, we can assert what is true concerning it, and deny what is false. It is of the utmost importance sometimes to learn all the facts concerning a particular transaction. Unless the witnesses can be believed, the duties of government cannot be safely and justly performed. Hence the importance of the assertory oath, so long as men believe that they will more certainly incur the displeasure of God by testifying falsely on oath, than by bearing false witness when not sworn.

The oath respecting the future, or promissory oath, could perhaps be more readily dispensed with by governments. The promissory oath is usually taken

when a public officer is about to enter upon the discharge of the duties of his office.

Those offices, in entering upon which the officer is required to take an oath for the faithful performance of his duty, are for the most part guarded by requiring the officer to give a bond sufficient to indemnify the state for all losses which it may sustain by his misconduct. Besides this, public opinion condemns him as an outcast and villain, who fails to act honestly in the discharge of his duties as a public officer. These are sufficient checks for a man who has any honesty. He who would violate his trust, knowing that his securities would suffer for his crime, and he would be rejected from all good society, would most probably not be restrained by his oath from doing wrong. If we elect a rogue or a knave to office, an oath will not restrain him; but if we elect honest men, they need not take an oath, for they will act honestly without it.

Oaths are sometimes required in the most petty details of official life. The frequency of oaths, and the minor importance of many occasions on which they are required, is calculated to induce in some a want of reverence. Everything connected with the will of God ought to be viewed by man as of great importance.

If an oath is taken by a man before entering on the duties of his office, he ought never to lose sight of his



oath in performing his official duties. He ought always to inquire whether an act which he is about to perform as an officer, is in conformity with his oath. It is too frequently the case that the oath is forgotten, and the duties of the office are discharged with a view of gaining the approbation of the public, of securing honor among men, and of shunning the penalty attached to a failure in the discharge of his official duties. These considerations, no doubt, occupy the minds of officers more than the oath which they have taken. If these are sufficient to bind a man to the faithful performance of his duties, why not dispense with the oath? It is certain that an oath should not be used in cases in which it will be considered of less importance than some other inducements to do right.

# BOOK THIRD.

## OF GOVERNMENT.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### GENERAL REMARKS ON GOVERNMENT.

ALL of God's creatures are subject to some form of government. Everything lives and moves and has its being in accordance with laws which God has established, and all must be governed according to his will or suffer the consequences of a violation. The earth and all the products thereof, as well as the animal portion of creation, are subject to and governed by laws which he has established. But man, though the superior portion of creation, and exercising authority over all other creatures, requires more laws for his government than all the rest of creation. And, notwithstanding the many forms of law provided to restrain him from evil and coerce him into a proper discharge of his duties, still in many things he fails to perform God's will.

All the rest of creation is governed by those laws of God which we denominate the laws of nature, except so far as man exercises dominion over a part; and move on smoothly and accurately in their appointed course. But man is governed by natural laws, by moral law, and by civil law. The first two forms of law which we have mentioned, and to which he is subject, are directly from God; whilst the latter, though the production of man, has the sanction of Omnipotence.

Obedience to all these forms of law is necessary for man's happiness. If he violates natural laws very grossly, he cannot live; or, if he does, his life will be only a prolongation of misery. If he does not obey the precepts of natural law, he becomes a degraded, unhappy being, and no ray of hope illumines his dark path, or dispels the gloomy mists which hang like a veil over his future existence.

If he violates social laws, he is liable to suffer the penalties which society has affixed to such crimes.

Man is in every stage of his existence the subject of government. From his earliest infancy, until he has reached the age of manhood, he is subject to the government of his parents and amenable to the laws of his country. After he is no longer directly under the government of his parents, he is governed by the laws of the nation in which he resides; and he is at all

times, and in every stage of his existence, governed by the laws which God has established.

Man has in every age of the world, since the population became sufficiently dense to admit of it, been governed by laws established by society. This seems necessary for his happiness, his progress in civilization, and to enable him to fill the upward and onward tendency which God has made an important part of his nature. For man to progress, he must live in society; and to live in society he must be governed by laws which will sustain order and promote the mutual welfare of the members of that society.

Man unassisted by his fellow-man, obtaining his support from the products of the earth, independent of and separate from the rest of mankind, would be unable to make any progress in learning and refinement. Ages might roll by, and he would still be the same rude being he was ages before. He would be almost wholly unable to make any material change or improvement to better his condition in life, to cultivate his mind and prepare himself for enjoying the blessings which a beneficent Creator has placed in his reach. But, when governed by the laws of society, and enjoying the advantages thus afforded, he becomes a being entirely different from the rude savage of the wilderness. He does not then have to perform every service for himself; labor is divided, so that each

man can devote his whole energy to one pursuit; every necessary article is provided in sufficient quantities for all, by every one producing more of a particular article than he needs for his own use.

Some persons perform one service, some another; thus every industrious individual throws in something to the common stock, and thus every man, though laboring for his own benefit, produces something for the rest of mankind. So that men living in society, and being governed by judicious laws, become, as it were, a band of brothers aiding and comforting each other.

A feeling of this kind ought to animate, encourage, and direct us in our labors. But even if man is not prompted to good works by the love he entertains for his fellow-beings, still, whilst living in society, subject to the laws of society, the products of his labor are beneficial to his neighbors. His interest makes it so. The surplus products which are the result of his labor will serve to supply a deficiency which his neighbor feels, who is directing his own energies in a different channel; and he will readily part with this surplus, for something his neighbor has produced, which he needs. By thus dividing labor, and mutually aiding each other, men have made such improvements in their condition, have made so great progress in the arts and sciences, and have dragged forth from the secret repository of nature such brilliant facts, that

their own works strike them with admiration and awe. Such are the happy effects which result from living in obedience to the will of God.

How do we know it is God's will that men should be gathered together in society, and live in obedience to the laws of that society? The precepts of the Sacred Scriptures teach us this. We learn from that source, that we should obey the laws of the land and submit to the rulers of our country.

We have only a few precepts which refer directly to the fact that it is God's will for us to live in society and be governed by the laws of the state; these are sufficient, however, to establish the fact that it is so; but even without these, we are satisfied, from the general teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, that such is his will.

How could we obey the Christian precepts, if we did not live in society and conform to its regulations? Could we love our neighbors and yet avoid them, live far away from other men, have little or no intercourse with them, and have no motives or interests in common with them? Such acts do not result from love; if we love a person, it is essential to our happiness to be associated with him; we love to rejoice when he rejoices, to witness his prosperity, and aid him in adversity. If we avoid society and live far away from our fellow-men, separate and alone, or in little squads

like some savages, we will seldom meet with an opportunity of performing an act of benevolence. We would soon become objects of charity ourselves, and every man would of necessity be engrossed in his individual wants, and his sympathy for the sufferings of others would be but a feeble emotion. He would find it as difficult to "weep with those that weep," as to "rejoice with them that do rejoice."

In God's manner of governing the children of Israel, we discover that it is his will for men to live in society, and be governed by the laws of the society.

We have, beside the general teaching, some precepts which point directly to the subject of civil government. These precepts recognise state government as being in accordance with the will of God. The first portion of the thirteenth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans, which we have previously had occasion to quote, teaches us the duty of obedience to rulers, and that it is God's will for proper officers to rule over the citizens of a state, so that good order and quiet may be maintained. We are told by Peter, also, to obey the ordinance of man. He tells us plainly that it is God's will for man to obey the regulations of society, and the rulers which society recognises. 1 Peter ii. 13-15, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto

them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; for so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

From what has been said, it is evident, that it is God's will for man to live as a social being, and be governed in his social relations by the laws, rules, and regulations of the society in which he lives.

There can be no reasonable doubt that it is God's will for man to live under some form of civil government. There are many forms of government among men, and no one of these forms is particularly designated as being most suitable to the will of God. Hence we conclude, that men may of right adopt any form of government that they think will be best calculated to promote good order, and the prosperity and happiness of the citizens.

It matters not whether a government is monarchical or republican, so that it is the form which the people prefer, and the laws of the government are founded on just and moral principles.

The real object of civil government is not to restrict or diminish the liberties of the governed, but to protect every one in the enjoyment of his rights. Man considers liberty a blessing; civil liberty is a great blessing; but it does not, as some may imagine, consist in having the liberty to do just whatever we



choose, whether it be right or wrong. This kind of liberty would not be a blessing, but a curse. It would result in the worst form of anarchy that the world has ever known. Civil liberty, as I comprehend it, is the effect produced by a system of just laws, administered by impartial officers; so that no man is deprived of any privilege which he may innocently enjoy, and no man is allowed any privilege in the use of which he would be interfering with the rights of others.

Good government, then, is not a means of restricting our liberty, but of securing it. It secures to each man his rights. Without it, he would have the same rights, but would not have the power to enjoy them.

Good government secures good order, equity, and the enjoyment of our rights, and prevents anarchy. Any form of government is better than anarchy; even a bad government is better than no government. Anarchy is more destructive to human happiness than the most absolute tyranny. The French people suffered more during the awful scenes of that revolution which required the strong arm of Napoleon Bonaparte to restore order, than did the Romans under the terrible dominion of the tyrannical Nero. Without the restraints of government, there would be no check to ambition, hatred, malice, and revenge. To what extent would these not lead evil men? He is no friend to liberty, who is not a friend to civil government.

We have shown that civil government is right, because it is in accordance with the will of God. And because it is in conformity to his will, there arise from it the following happy results. It contributes greatly to our progress in civilization and enlightenment; it secures the enjoyment of our rights, our liberty, and with them it secures our happiness. It renders man that wise, social, and benevolent being which God intended he should become.

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## CHAPTER II.

### CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

SEVERAL different theories have been proposed by authors, for explaining the nature and origin of civil government. Some think the present existing forms of government have arisen from the patriarchal, in which the father ruled over his family and all his descendants; and they suppose that the present governments can be best explained by a reference to the patriarchal form.

In explaining the nature of civil government from this starting-point, the conclusion is, that a monarchical form of government is the most natural. It is sup-

posed that, the whole family being accustomed to obey the will of their ruling parent, and being accustomed to regard his wishes with great reverence, they would naturally be inclined to obey that member of the family as their ruler, whom he should appoint as his successor.

From this train of reasoning they derive monarchical government from patriarchal, and thus establish the right of the son to succeed the father as ruler. But they cannot pursue this theory far, without adopting the principles of another theory, which materially differs from the patriarchal. By the principles of the patriarchal theory alone, the right of succession in the reigning family cannot be established, because there is no reigning family in the world, which has continued to be the ruling family since the days of the patriarchs.

We are told that it is natural for the remaining members of the family to prefer him as their ruler whom their common parent has chosen as his successor, and they obey him as their king. Why do they obey him? Is it because the patriarch has chosen him, or because it is their will to do so? We are told that they obey him, because they prefer him to all others, as their ruler. They do not then *obey* him because the patriarch has chosen him, but they are influenced by this circumstance to prefer him.

So that their obedience arises from their own choice, and not from any natural right which he has to rule over them. His right to rule arises from the common consent of the people ruled.

The patriarchal form of government certainly did exist at an early age of the world, long before civil government reached its present degree of perfection. A species of government similar to the patriarchal still exists as a universal condition of human nature. It is parental government. This form of government must of necessity exist in every nation, and in every age of the world; for without it the youths of a nation could not be prepared for obedience to civil government, and when they became men, they would not understand their rights or the rights of others, nor would they be prepared to respect them. And since the physical force of any government resides in the masses, there can be no security to any form of government without parental authority being exercised to prepare the children to become good citizens.

When we attempt to derive national government from a supposed original patriarchal government, we soon discover that it is impossible to apply this theory in its simple form.

The patriarchal form existed, and people were thus governed in societies and small tribes, before more extended states and nations were formed. It must

have been, to some extent, the precursor of all other forms of government. But it does not follow that all other forms of government are dependent upon and to be explained by the principles which it involves.

Man is by nature a progressive being; and in civil government, as in everything else in which he is engaged, he improves. He makes mistakes, discovers his errors, and corrects them.

During the patriarchal age, he must have known the necessity of civil government. He felt the importance of having his rights respected by others, and the necessity of his regarding theirs. He first adopted the patriarchal form, and as long as this answered the purpose of securing to every man the enjoyment of his rights, it was all the civil government men required. As man advanced in civilization, and began to form more extended societies, he needed a more comprehensive form of government to secure order throughout a large empire. One ruler alone, unaided by official agents, could not maintain order, and see that justice was done.

When a more comprehensive form of government was required, the patriarchal ceased, and the monarchical was established. Mankind, in order to secure their rights, and enjoy civil liberty, first lived under a patriarchal government, but when they found it necessary, in order to gain the same objects, to institute

a different form of government, they established monarchies.

The patriarchal theory would make government an existing fact, which man must take as he finds it, and which he has no more right to change, than the child has to direct the manner in which his father shall govern him. According to this view, there never could have been any material change in the form of civil government, and we would still be living under the patriarchal form; and, like the right of the family of Levi to the priesthood, no one could lawfully rule unless his descent were in a direct line from the ancient patriarch of the nation.

There is, perhaps, not a monarch in the world, who rightfully rules over his people in conformity with the patriarchal theory. In every nation of Europe, the ruling family has, at some period of the nation's history, been driven from the throne, and superseded by some other family, better suited, in the opinion of the majority of the people, to rule over the nation. I believe this has been done in every nation in the world.

Men do not accept their government as an existing fact, with regard to which they have nothing to do but obey. They have always claimed and exercised the right of improving the laws of their nation, so as to ameliorate their condition. When this could not be

done peaceably, they would exercise force. They would revolt when the rulers of the government became too despotic, and either force them to adopt a milder form of government, or they would dethrone them, and appoint new rulers. Men will not long submit to a government by means of which they are as effectually deprived of their rights, as they would be without any government.

We cannot apply the patriarchal theory to any existing government, without such changes and modifications as will render the patriarchal condition a minor part of the theory. But if it would apply in every particular, would we not wish to know for what cause the patriarchal form itself was adopted by men? There must be a cause for every existing fact; and the same causes that resulted in patriarchal government, also induced men to establish other forms of government. In order, then, to explain the nature of civil government, we need not endeavor to explain one form of government by another, but we must endeavor to discover the causes which lead men to unite themselves into societies, and form governments.

Man is so constituted that many men cannot dwell together in amicable relations unless the evil passions are so restrained and kept in check by just laws, that the wicked are prevented from indulging their evil

propensities, and the weak are protected from the oppression of the strong.

Civil government must have been instituted by men, for the purpose of securing to every one the enjoyment of his natural rights. Civil *liberty* consists in being protected in the enjoyment of our rights. This is very different, however, from the idea conveyed by the commonly received definition of civil liberty, which we quote, as follows: "Civil liberty is no other than natural liberty so far restrained as is necessary and expedient for the general advantage;" or, as expressed in another form, When man enters into society, "he is to part with so much of his *natural liberty*, in providing for himself, as the good, prosperity, and safety of society shall require."

In harmony with such a definition of civil liberty, authors have endeavored to explain the nature of civil government; and hence the difficulties they have met in explaining its principles, and the conflicting opinions which some who adopt this definition have advanced. No matter how correctly and systematically they may have reasoned, so long as the basis of their argument was not true, their conclusions could not be correct.

It is not true that man yields his natural liberty, the gift which God bestowed on him at his creation, to society. Would man willingly abridge or alienate



the rights which God has bestowed on him, merely to subject himself to the control of other men? Think you that all mankind would unite in bartering away their birthright for a mess of pottage? No! there must have been some sufficient reason to induce men to live in subjection to civil government.

Civil liberty does not make man, by his own consent, throw away his natural liberty for civil tyranny. Man, by entering society, does not part with his natural liberty. He enters society and binds himself in a mutual contract with the other members of society to respect their rights, they bind themselves to respect his; so that he enters society for the purpose of securing, not of surrendering, his natural liberty.

Says one, "As government implies restraint, it is evident we give up a certain portion of our liberty by entering into it." It is true that government implies restraint, and consequently something is restrained by it; but what is it that is restrained? Our natural liberty? By no means, unless natural liberty signifies a right to do wrong; for the laws of civil governments are designed to restrain men from doing wrong. This is the restraint which government implies. The laws of nature do not grant man any liberty to do wrong; he has no natural liberty to perform wicked acts, God never has granted him any such liberty. Since civil

government only restrains men from doing wrong, and natural liberty does not allow us to do wrong, it cannot be that civil government restrains our natural liberty.

We think it has been fully shown from Scriptural precepts, that it is God's will for men to be subject to civil government. Our natural liberty is claimed as the gift of God. Would God will that we should lay aside that liberty which he bestowed on us, for any gift that man could grant? It cannot be that God would will for us to live under any form of civil government, if to do so, it would be necessary to sacrifice any natural right which he has bestowed for man's advantage. He wills that man shall live in obedience to the laws of civil government, because under their protection he can enjoy his natural rights. Thereby good order is established, and tyranny restrained.

Men have united themselves into societies, and formed governments by joining together in a social contract, to protect each other's rights.

If government did not contribute to the happiness of the people, men would not submit to its regulations. The physical force of every nation rests in the people. The rulers of a government have no power to enforce obedience if the people do not will to obey.

It matters not what the form of government may be, it is public opinion that sustains it.

It is denied by some of the subjects of monarchical governments that the social contract among the citizens of a state is an existing fact. They admit that the government of the United States of America was established chiefly on the principles of a social contract; for the representatives of the people, the men chosen by them for the purpose of forming a contract, met together and agreed on conditions which all of the states ratified. They can perceive in this, something of the nature of a contract; but they do not perceive the applicability of the social contract to the monarchical forms of government in Europe. Do they doubt that those forms of government exist by the common consent of the subjects? Let them recollect how feeble is the power of any sovereign compared with the united force of the whole nation; and think what he could do if the people did not will to obey him.

It is by the consent of the subjects that a king rules over them. It is because the people love monarchical institutions that monarchies exist; and it is because the government secures their rights and promotes their happiness, that they love its regulations.

Is it not a well-known fact that whenever the

citizens of those governments believe that their rulers are depriving them of their liberty, instead of protecting them in the enjoyment of it, they either revolt from such despotism and demand a change of laws, or overthrow the government and adopt new laws and appoint new rulers? In every monarchical government, a revolution will take place whenever the people are satisfied that the despotism of the government is depriving them of their liberty.

Since the people have the power to overthrow an old government and establish a new one, and will exert that power to this end whenever they are satisfied that their government is tyrannizing over them, how can it be denied that all governments exist by common consent of the people governed? If all governments do exist by common consent of the people governed, then every government is based on social compact.

In order correctly to comprehend the principles, we have only to understand the social contract on which it is based.

In the social contract, each individual of society is bound in certain obligations to all others comprised in the limits of the society, and all the members of society are collectively bound to each individual member. In a simple contract, only a few individuals unite themselves for their mutual interest. In a

society thus formed, if all the parties can agree to do so, they may annul the contract, at any time, without materially injuring any one. As such contracts are usually intended to last only a few years, there are generally expressed in the contract certain conditions on which the society thus formed shall dissolve partnership. It is not so with the social contract. There are so many individuals concerned in it, their interests are so dependent on the continuation of the contract, and their peace, welfare, and happiness so dependent on the fulfilment of the contract, that it can never be annulled without great injury to many. The social contract cannot at any time be rendered null and void without causing a wreck of the whole social fabric.

In a simple contract, if one of the parties fails to perform his portion of the contract, the other party is released from his obligation; it is not so in the social contract. No individual can release another, or release society, from the obligations imposed by the social contract, simply by failing to perform his obligations. In such a case, it becomes the duty of society to compel the individual to perform his part of the contract.

In the social contract, all the individuals of the society unite together for the purpose of using their power collectively to secure to each individual of the community the liberty to enjoy all of his rights, and

to prevent any one from trespassing on the rights of another.

Because all are thus combined and act together for the maintenance of peace and good order in society, and because they have contracted to act as a society in the accomplishment of these designs, and since no one has a right, as an individual independent of society, to perform the work of the society, to act independently in the accomplishment of its purposes, it has been said that individuals surrender a portion of their natural rights to society.

We are told by Dr. Wayland that "every individual promises to surrender to society the right of self-protection." This opinion was advanced by Locke and Burke, and has been endorsed by many other wise men, but apparently without any good reason. Do they mean that an individual, by entering society, transfers to the society the right which he previously had to repel force by force? If they do, the proposition cannot be true. If an individual is assailed, or any immediate danger threatens his person, the law of the land does not require him to risk his person or his life by waiting for the protection which it can afford him. In many instances the strong arm of the law would come in too late to afford him any relief. The deed would be done and the injury suffered before the law could interpose its

power in his behalf. It permits him, in such cases, to protect himself, to repel force by force, and the law of nature allows no more. If there is any difference, the law of the land allows a man more liberty in self-defence than does the law of God. The law of God requires us to suffer injury if any one is so wicked as to assault us. Matt. v. 39, 40, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." It is evident that a man does not surrender to society his right of self-protection, if by the right of self-protection we mean the right to repel force by force, because the laws of society allow him more liberty in that respect than he had before he entered the society; more than the laws of God allow.

If the proposition means that, in a state of nature, every man has a right to redress his own wrongs by the subsequent punishment of the offender, and that the citizen transfers this right to the government, the proposition is still untrue. Redressing our own wrongs by the punishment of the offender, is avenging ourselves. All moralists agree in condemning a desire for revenge. They reprove it as betokening a savage and immoral man, and as wholly contrary to the will of God. The Sacred Scriptures decide the question

at once. Rom. xii. 19, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

You may ask, If the individual has no right to punish the offender, whence does the state derive that right, since the state government has its foundation in a contract among the individuals inhabiting the state? How can they confer on the state a right which they never had? You may say, it has been shown that the right to punish men for the crimes which they have committed rests in God, and therefore no one can have this right except those to whom God in his wisdom and goodness may choose to grant it. This is true; no one has a right to punish criminals except those to whom God has granted this privilege. It is from him that rulers must derive their authority to punish criminals, and it is from him that they do derive that authority. Rom. xiii. 3, 4, "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil; wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

Individuals do not surrender to society the right to



punish those who transgress against them, for they do not possess that right themselves, and never did; but the officers of government have authority to punish criminals, because they are ministers of God, revengers to execute wrath on those who do evil.

Dr. Wayland tells us that "every individual promises to surrender to society the right to redress his own wrongs." We have just shown that that right does not, at any time, belong to the individual; it is a right peculiar to society. Of course the individual does not surrender a right which he does not possess.

Dr. Wayland has mentioned no other rights which he supposed the individual surrendered to society. We have shown that these are not surrendered by the individual, by showing that he had no such rights to surrender.

To say that society takes away an individual's rights, and, at the same time, protects him in the enjoyment of his rights, would be contradictory.

The individual does not promise to surrender any of his rights to society. He promises to aid society in the accomplishment of its objects, to maintain the laws by which the society is governed, and to aid in executing those laws whenever his assistance is necessary.

Society promises to protect the individual in the

enjoyment of his rights, and to redress his wrongs and grievances.

The individual does not obtain anything from society for what he surrenders, for he surrenders nothing. But, by maintaining the laws established by society, he enjoys all the advantages of good government. This is a blessing to the good and virtuous, and a restraint to the wicked only.

We will give an example, showing how in one instance the individual aids in sustaining the institutions of government, and the advantages he derives in return for this aid. An individual pays a small sum of money for the support of the officers of government, and the government which is thus sustained by his aid protects him in the right of property, and secures to him the peaceable enjoyment of all he possesses. Thus, in every instance, the individual is fully recompensed by society for the trouble and expense which he has endured to maintain its institutions.

It is not only the duty but the interest of every citizen to exert himself to enforce the execution of the laws in every instance, no matter how trivial the occasion may be, how obscure the individual, or how high his station. No circumstance of this kind should be allowed to affect, in any way, the just administration of the laws.

To aid in executing the laws is promised by every

one, and we are all under obligation to fulfil this promise. If the laws are not executed, individuals are not protected in the enjoyment of their rights, and if wrongs be not redressed by the proper authority, society is of no advantage to individuals. They would redress their own wrongs, and very soon confusion, disregard for the established government, and a general system of retaliation and revenge, would sever all the bonds of society, and, if not checked by a stronger form of government, would cause the destruction of the greater portion of the citizens of the state.

The individual aids in sustaining the government, but at the same time he is, and necessarily must be, entirely in the power of the government. The officers, who are bound to use the power of the government for the benefit of the individual, may use it for his injury and oppression. The use of this power to oppress the citizen is guarded against in the conditions of the compact on which the government is founded. But the observing of these conditions must depend upon the virtue of the rulers and the people ruled.

It makes no difference what form of government society may adopt, if the contract which is entered into provides for the protection of the individual, and the society performs the conditions of the contract, the people will enjoy civil liberty. Civil liberty does not depend on the form of government. A man may

enjoy civil liberty under monarchical as well as republican rule; and he may suffer oppression under a republican as well as under a monarchical government. Civil liberty can only be enjoyed when the existing government protects the rights of the individual, and abstains from every species of tyranny. It cannot exist under any form of government unless the people are virtuous. The more virtuous a nation of people is, the more prosperous they will be, and the fewer the restraints they will need from the government. The less virtuous they are, the more strict the government must be to preserve harmony and good order.

A people who are comparatively virtuous may enjoy civil liberty under a republican form of government. Being but little evil done by such a people, there is but little to restrain.

If a disregard for the rights of others prevails, if the different classes of society cannot live in harmony with each other, if the people's idea of a free government is that every one is free to do as he chooses, regardless of right, such people are not capable of enjoying republican institutions. If such a people should attempt to establish a republican government, it would soon terminate in anarchy, and they would at last be compelled to resort to a despotic government to restore order and quiet in the nation.

A people who lack virtue, will not be governed by

an innate regard for morality, and disregard Christian precepts, need not attempt to establish a republican government. Civil liberty cannot be enjoyed by such a people under such a form of government.

The form of government adopted by any nation must be suited to the moral condition of the inhabitants of the nation.

In proportion as the amount of virtue increases, the power of the government may be diminished, and in proportion to the lack of virtue, the strength of the government must be increased. One nation of people may be sufficiently virtuous to live happily under a republican government, whilst another would be far more happy under a monarchy. Their virtue being less, the power of the government would have to be more consolidated, so that it could, at any time, command a force sufficient to compel refractory individuals to perform the conditions of their contract.

Since it is true that the nation which possesses the greatest amount of virtue requires the least aid from civil government to secure individual rights, since only comparatively virtuous people can enjoy civil liberty under republican institutions, it follows that as soon as a nation of people now fit to enjoy republican institutions, degenerates and becomes less virtuous, those people lose the power of enjoying civil liberty

under such a form of government, and are compelled to adopt some more consolidated form.

The American people should cultivate every virtuous principle with earnest zeal ; for upon their virtue depends the perpetuity of the liberal form of government of which they are justly proud. The people of America have already proved to the world that they did possess virtue enough to live happily under a republican government. But they have yet to prove, in the ages to come, that the amount of virtue necessary to enable a nation of people to live happily under a republican government, can be kept alive in the hearts of the people who live under a government so liberal. Already there are some symptoms of degeneracy from that high standard of virtue which enabled our fathers to live happily under the republican government which they established. Already there is a growing disregard of the rights of others. This must be checked ; we must respect each other's rights by reason of our own virtue, or we must have a government which will compel us to respect our neighbor's rights, even if we love him not.

The fundamental principles of the social compact are sometimes expressed in a written document ; such is the case in the United States. In some other countries, these principles are established by uncontested usage ; such is the case in Great Britain. In

either case, those principles and practices, whether expressed or understood, which constitute the social compact by which the inhabitants of a nation are bound together under one government, are called the constitution of the country.

After the citizens of a country have assembled together and formed a constitution which contains the principles on which they are to act as one nation, they appoint persons who are capable and trustworthy to enact laws which are applicable to all the transactions between men, in which one party is liable to disturb the rights of the other. These laws must be in accordance with the constitution.

The men who are chosen to enact laws are, as a body, called the legislature of the state; and each member of the legislature is called a legislator.

The laws being enacted, in obedience to which the citizens of the nation are required to act, it becomes necessary, whenever an individual is accused of having violated those laws, for some one to decide whether the accused has really violated the law, and, if found guilty, to declare what punishment the law requires him to suffer. It becomes necessary then, after a people has formed a social compact, and appointed a legislature, which has enacted the necessary laws in accordance with the original contract, to appoint also a judicial branch of government. We must have judges

to decide whether an accused individual has really violated the law, and, if so, what punishment must, in obedience to the law, be inflicted.

After the law has been enacted by the legislative branch of government, has been violated by the individual, he has been found guilty by the judges, and the legal sentence pronounced, there must be some one to execute the sentence. We must have governors, sheriffs, &c., to constitute the executive branch of government.

Civil government is naturally divided into three parts or branches; viz., the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. Each of these departments of government is essentially independent of the other, and responsible to society for the acts which it may perform.

If the legislature enacts laws in violation of the social contract, and these laws are enforced, this is tyranny on the part of the legislature, and society is the sufferer. Society has, I think, a right to repudiate such acts of a legislature, and, as soon as may be consistently with justice, appoint another legislative body composed of men who are more worthy and more virtuous than their predecessors.

If the judges do not decide correctly, according to the constitutional enactments of the legislature, society is again the sufferer, and must endeavor to have



judges who are more worthy of that important trust. And if the sheriff does not execute the sentence of the judge, society is again the injured party, and will, as soon as it is possible to do so consistently with their mutual obligations, rid itself of an executive officer who has proved himself to be unworthy of the people's confidence.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### DUTIES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICERS.

As it is the province of the legislator to make the laws by which a nation is to be governed, it becomes one of his first duties to make himself acquainted with the nature of the compact by which the people whose representative he is, are bound together. He must know all the conditions of the contract, and fully appreciate the obligations which devolve on both society and the individuals composing the society, by reason of that contract.

Every law which he enacts, or to which he assents, must be in accordance with that contract; and he goes beyond the privileges of his office, if he proposes or assents to an act which in any way conflicts with the constitution.

It being a part of his duty to enact laws by which society, and every individual of the state, are to be governed, he ought to understand the relation which exists between the individual and society, and the mutual obligations of each. He ought to know what are the rights of individuals, and what the rights of society. Without this knowledge, he cannot determine concerning an act, whether it is equitable or oppressive.

He is the representative of the people, to enact laws which will secure to every man the enjoyment of his rights. How can he do this, unless he knows what are the rights of individuals? Unless he is properly prepared to discharge the duties of his office, instead of being a sentinel on the watch-tower of liberty, he only serves as a channel through which worse, though wiser men than he, may pass to crush the civil liberty of those who have confided to him the care of their dearest rights. He it is, in whom society trusts for the enactment of such laws as are necessary for the maintenance of peace and good order in a state, and by whose enactments the constitution of the state is to be kept sacred and inviolate. If he is ignorant of the fundamental principles of the social contract on which the government is based, how can he know that the laws which he would enact, are in accordance with those principles? Without such

knowledge, he is neither capable of guarding the rights of the people, nor of maintaining the permanency of the established government. He must know the rights and powers of the rulers of a nation, as well as those of the citizens, before he is prepared to enact just laws, which will promote the welfare and happiness of all those who are affected by them.

Having made himself acquainted with the nature of his obligations, and prepared himself to enact laws which are in harmony with the constitution, equitable, and conducive to the best interests of all whom they may concern, it becomes his duty to exercise the power which has been conferred on him, strictly within the limits allowed, for the good of the whole society. It is his duty to act independently of any sectional or party motive; without partiality, to carry out the principles of the constitution of his country, and to do no unjust act to favor any party or section.

The legislator is not merely the representative of a party, or a particular section, but he is a lawgiver for all the citizens of a state. If no one had to be governed by the laws which he may enact, except the individuals of the party by which he is promoted, his obligations would be to that party alone; but since all the citizens of the state are to be governed by the laws which he enacts, they are all interested, and all either benefited or injured by the use he makes

of the power conferred on him. For which reason, he is bound to carry out the principles of the constitution, with a view of promoting the welfare and happiness of all the citizens of the state.

He has no right in any instance to overstep the limits of the power granted him by the constitution. If he usurps any power not granted, he assumes himself the fountain of power, and, if permitted to retain a power thus usurped, he establishes the false and dangerous principle that the legislative branch of government is the fountain of power in the state. By continuing to act on this principle, the authority of the legislature might become absolute and tyrannical.

The judicial officer is also bound to act in accordance with the constitution of the state. It is his duty to decide all cases within his jurisdiction, according to the laws which have been enacted in conformity with the requirements of the constitution. But since no branch of government has a right to enact laws in violation of the original contract, and the judge has a right to decide upon the constitutionality of a law before he enforces it, if the legislature should abuse its privilege and violate the principles of the constitution, the judges are under no obligation to enforce such enactments. Thus the power of the judge is a check to the authority of the legislature. If that

body should enact unconstitutional laws, society would not be very much injured thereby, if the judges were just and discreet.

The right of appointing the judicial officers may be vested in the legislative or executive branch of government, or the judges may be elected to office by the people.

It matters not whether a judge be chosen by the people or appointed to office, his obligations are the same, and he is responsible to society for his manner of discharging the duties of his office. It is his duty to see that justice is done to each individual of society, in the manner prescribed in the laws of the land, and he has no right to allow his judgment to be biassed by the legislature, if that body has appointed him to the office.

To provide against any corruption of this kind, and render the judicial branch of government independent in the discharge of its duties, in fact as well as in principle, the judges should be chosen by the suffrages of the people.

It being a duty of the judge to decide upon the constitutionality of a law before he enforces it, he ought to understand the principles of the contract in accordance with which he must decide.

The jury forms a part of the judicial agents of a government, and each juror is bound to decide on all

cases which come before him, with scrupulous impartiality, according to the best of his ability.

It is also the duty of each one to endeavor thoroughly to understand the case on which he is to decide, and to become acquainted with the true intent of the law in that case.

The duty of an executive officer is simply to perform promptly and impartially whatever the legislative and judicial branches of government have ordered to be done. He has no authority to decide concerning the constitutionality of a law. Therefore, if he is required by the other branches of government to do something which he believes to be unconstitutional, his only resource is to resign. He has no right to hold the office and refuse to perform duties which others properly authorized have required of him, and he cannot conscientiously perform an act which he deems unconstitutional.

The chief magistrate of a government usually has authority both as a legislative and as an executive officer. Whilst acting as a legislative officer, his obligations are the same as those of other legislative officers, and he is bound by the same rules. As an executive officer, he is bound to execute what is required of him by law, not retaining any legislative power by which his acts as an executive officer shall be influenced.

The duties of citizens of a state include the duties of every individual inhabiting that state, comprising all the officers as well as private citizens. The first duty of all, as members of the same society and forming one body politic, is to maintain inviolate the original contract by which they are united, and in accordance with which they have formed a civil government. It is the duty of the officers of the state especially to guard the constitution.

Inasmuch as the individuals of a state have bound themselves together in a social contract, it becomes the duty of every citizen to observe the conditions of the contract, and live in obedience to the laws which are enacted in conformity therewith. It is also the duty of each individual to aid in enforcing the laws of the land.

If individuals allow the wicked to trample on the laws with impunity, they are making a sacrifice of the power which protects their civil liberties, and allowing good order to be banished from the state. It is their duty to endeavor to secure to every one the protection of his rights, and to make an effort to procure for every injured individual just and adequate redress. By thus uniting in carrying out the objects of government, good order, peace, and the enjoyment of our rights will be secured, and civil government will be a useful agent in promoting the happiness of mankind.

As the objects of society cannot be accomplished without the institutions of civil government, and civil government cannot be carried on without expense, it becomes the duty of every citizen cheerfully to bear his portion of the expense. The agents necessary for carrying on the work of civil government must be supported by the state, or they cannot do the work required of them. The means must be furnished, either directly or indirectly, by the citizens.

Society is morally responsible for the kind of agents chosen to perform the duties of officers of the government. It is therefore the duty of each member of society to be very careful not to cast his vote in favor of any one who will probably make an unworthy officer.

**THE END.**



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