











SELFISHNESS,

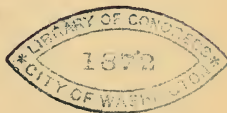
AND

ITS REMEDY.

BY

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

Wilson, Rev. Joseph



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P R E F A C E .

THE phrase, "*A selfish world,*" is in almost every body's mouth, and is heard on almost innumerable occasions; yet very few seem to be aware that it is as truly applicable to themselves individually as to mankind in general. In this respect it is similar to the equally common phrase, "*We are all sinners,*" which vast multitudes frequently utter, without any adequate apprehension of the real nature of sin, or of their own entire depravity.

Some may bring the charge of Selfishness against the world, in utter ignorance of their own moral and spiritual condition, never having even dreamed that they themselves are perpetually acting on this very principle; while others

seem to acknowledge the general fact, in extenuation of their own manifest delinquency, or to cloak the more effectually that selfish disposition which they suppose to be concealed from others.

While Selfishness is confined within its ordinary channel and pursues "the smooth and even tenor of its way," no danger is apprehended and no voice of warning and condemnation is heard; and it seems to be regarded as at least a necessary principle, if not a positive virtue.

But when it transcends its customary bounds, and startles society by some unusual display of its desolating power, and especially when our individual Selfishness is involved, then the universal shout of unqualified execration is heard on every hand.

The general sentiment seems to be, that Selfishness is virtuous and commendable so long as it promotes one's own individual advantage, and becomes sinful only when the selfish schemes of others run counter to our own. The deadly Upas in our own garden is permitted to grow and its fruit is delicious to the taste; but when the tree in another's garden overshadows our's and we eat of its baneful fruit, then the unsparing cry is heard, "Cut it down, why cumpers it the ground?"

The subject of Selfishness is of vast importance, and should be well considered and understood by every individual who regards his own real moral and spiritual welfare, or that of society in general. For no person can rationally expect to be permanently happy, who acts from a purely selfish principle; nor can the condition of humanity be essentially and permanently ameliorated, so long as the tyranny of Selfishness maintains its long-established and universal sway.

Selfishness is diametrically opposed to the law of man's well-being, because it is in direct opposition to the law of God, as made known by natural and revealed religion. There are, in the government of our beneficent Creator, fixed and unalterable principles or laws, as well in the moral as the physical system. To conform to these laws, is to promote our peace and happiness; but to transgress them is the certain road to misery. To maintain the life, health and vigor of our bodily organization, wholesome food and suitable exercise are absolutely necessary; and may we not conclude, from analogy, that our mental constitution as absolutely requires appropriate nourishment and activity, and that these principles can only be found in the fear of God and conformity to his precepts? But, important as the subject must be confessed to be, the writer is not aware that there exists a single

treatise in any language, devoted exclusively to the sin of Selfishness. The present work is an humble attempt to supply the deficiency, and meet an imperative demand of the Church and the world.

The author has, for years, had his mind directed to the subject of the ensuing pages; and he now gives his thoughts to the public, not in the self-flattering confidence that he has exhausted the theme or treated it as its importance demands, but in the hope that he may do some good to the cause of truth and righteousness, or may at least be the means of calling abler minds and pens to the task of exposing and exterminating the universal and gigantic vice.

If he knows himself, it has not been the writer's object to make a display of learning or ingenuity; and therefore, scarcely any books have been consulted in the composition of the work, except the books of *conscience*, of *experience*, of *observation*, and the best of all, the Book of God.

It seemed to him, that something easily comprehended by the unlearned reader, would be most suitable to the object in view and most potent in its accomplishment; and therefore, the illustrations are drawn almost entirely from common life in both Church and State.

To the candid reader and to the cause of the God of truth

and righteousness the author consecrates his labours, with considerable diffidence and hesitation. If he shall be able to secure the attention and approbation of the reader; and if, under the blessing of his gracious Lord, he shall have been the unworthy instrument of spiritual good to a single soul, he will not have entirely lost his reward.

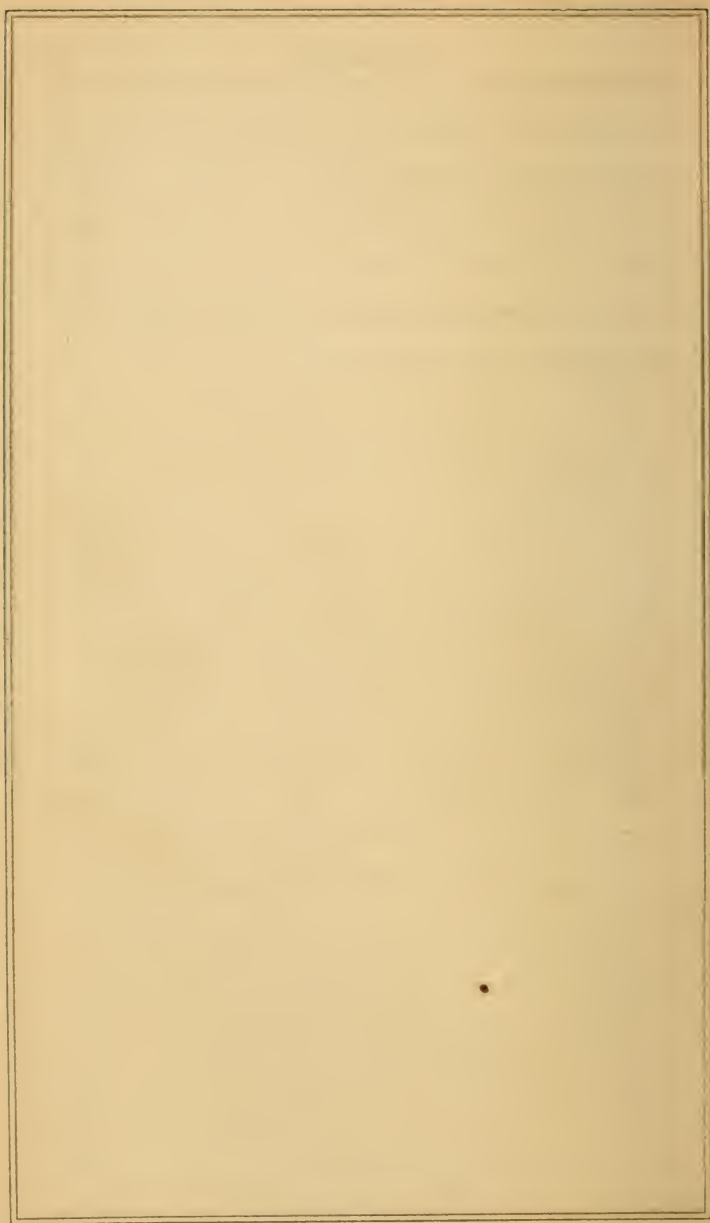


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PART FIRST.

Origin, Nature and Evil of Selfishness.

CHAPTER I.

NATURE AND ORIGIN OF SELFISHNESS.

Selfishness and Self-love defined and distinguished. God loves Himself, but is not selfish. All Beings bound to love what is good and right. Supreme and subordinate Love. Holy Self-love. Origin of Sin. Love of Money. Selfishness.

SELFISHNESS is supreme love of self. Self-love is that regard for one's own welfare and happiness, which is consistent with supreme love to God, and with the measure of love that is due to others; but Selfishness is sinful love of self—a supreme regard to one's own advantage, in opposition to supreme love to God and equal love to man. Self-love, when properly exercised, is innocent and right. It is a principle implanted in us by the Creator at man's original formation, and undoubtedly belongs to all intelligent beings.

God loves himself. As an infinitely perfect Being, he must love that which is holy, just and good, and, consequently, must love himself. His love for himself must be in proportion to the degree of moral excellence which he possesses; but that excellence is infinite in degree, and therefore he loves supremely his own glorious being and perfections.

In thus loving himself God is not selfish; for as by his very nature he is bound to love supremely that which is infinitely perfect, it is just and right in him to love himself supremely, since, in so doing, he is loving infinite justice, truth and holiness, without injury to other beings and to the good of all. He cannot do otherwise without ceasing to be God. Were it possible for another Being to exist more excellent than God, then he would be bound to love that Being more than himself, and then supreme love of himself would be selfishness; but since he alone is Jehovah, and since there is and can be no other, it is not selfish, but perfectly right and necessary that he should love himself with supreme approbation.

All intelligent creatures are bound to love that which is good, both by the principles of their own spiritual nature, and by the declared will of the Creator. The Father of spirits impressed upon his offspring, in their original creation, his own moral image and likeness; and to suppose the existence of

a spiritual being without obligation to love what is right and good, or at liberty to love evil, would be to renounce the light of reason, and give imaginary being to a spiritual monster of hideous deformity.

It can readily be conceived, then, that all intelligent creatures—as emanations from the all-perfect Deity—are bound to love the right, even in the absence of positive statute. In the case of angelic beings, it is not known that they are under any such positive law as that which God gave to the human family; and it is reasonable to think that their own holy nature, and the glories of an ever present Jehovah, are sufficient motives to supreme and eternal love.

Therefore, whether by nature alone, as it may be with angels, or by nature and statute together, as with man, all are bound to love moral excellence, because God their Father loves it; and to love infinite excellence in a supreme degree, that is, with all the powers of their nature.

Consequently, it must be admitted that supreme love of God is perfectly consonant with the nature of moral agents, and that God can require nothing less, and is not unjust in making the demand. Hence the rectitude of God's law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

For the same reason that angels and men are

bound to love God supremely, they are obligated to love themselves and each other in proportion to the degree of moral excellence that they possess; but since that degree must in all cases be infinite, they cannot lawfully feel for themselves or claim from others more than a finite love.

Holy creatures, then, to conform to the law of their nature and the will of their Creator, must love their own moral excellence and well-being and desire their increase and perpetuity; because this makes them like their God, and enables them to glorify him, by obeying his will. And since true happiness is inseparable from holiness, to love and pursue the latter is equivalent to loving ourselves and seeking our own felicity, in subordination to the glory of God.

Love or benevolence, to be pure and right, need not be disinterested, and, strictly speaking, cannot be so. "Disinterested benevolence" is not a proper mode of expression, since we should be deeply interested in all that is for the glory of God and the good of ourselves and others. It would be more correct to say, "unselfish benevolence," for no benevolence can, in the nature of things, be disinterested, since we must be deeply concerned in every thing we ought to do. Disinterested benevolence is impossible; but selfish benevolence—if the phrase may be allowed—is undoubtedly sinful. Selfishness and benevolence are opposite ideas; and therefore, acts which have their

origin in Selfishness or are designed to promote it, though they outwardly appear to be benevolent, are, in reality, not so, in the sight either of God or of right reason.

Holy self-love is that delightful self-complacency which holy angels and redeemed saints enjoy and will forever enjoy, as they see the Divine excellencies reflected from their own sanctified natures; and is in perfect unison with the triumphant song: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

This self-love the first parents of our race undoubtedly possessed, when created in the image of their God, "in righteousness and true holiness." An undeniable proof of this position is necessarily deduced from the transaction in the garden of Eden, usually called, "The covenant of works." When God gave permission to Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of all the trees of the garden, with one exception, it was equivalent to saying: "Seek your own gratification and happiness, in subordination to my will;" and their love of self was clearly appealed to in the threatening of death in case of their partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree; for in the penalty annexed, they were forewarned, that by transgressing the Divine command, they would, in addition to the loss of God's favour,

loose their own uprightness and happiness, and bring upon themselves all the wretchedness implied in the awful term, death.

It was to the principle of self-love that Satan appealed in his successful attempt to seduce our first parents from their allegiance to their God. To what other emotion of their holy nature could he apply his temptation? When the Tempter promised: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"—he presented to their minds, as a motive to compliance, the certainty of an improvement and elevation in their condition, by an increase of knowledge, glory and happiness.

They took the bait thus artfully presented, and by desiring to elevate themselves in opposition to God's will and in violation of his command, their self-love degenerated into sinful Selfishness, which needed only the overt act of eating the forbidden fruit, to complete its iniquity. They sinned, not so much in desiring an advance in honour and happiness—for obedience would have secured that—but in seeking it by unlawful means. In the very thought and act of disobedience, then, their self-love was perverted, because directed to an improper object—it became sinful, because contrary to the Divine will and precept—and it became supreme, because it was, from that moment, the ruling principle of their souls,—dethroning God from their

hearts, and setting up their own will as the supreme rule of action.

Selfishness therefore, is self-love, perverted, sinful and supreme—the first sin and the essence of all sin.

If the views just presented be correct—and we see not how they can be successfully controverted—they seem to throw a clear and satisfactory light on the long mooted point, as to the origin of moral evil. Perverted self-love, or Selfishness, may, with truth and reason, be regarded as the *first* and *parent* sin of all—the bitter fountain whence have proceeded the floods of iniquity that have, for nearly six thousand years, polluted and desolated the earth, and brought misery and death to untold millions of the human race.

The Bible, indeed, declares, “The love of money to be the root of all evil,” or evils,—that is, of all *kinds* of evils, for the term “evil” is, in the original Greek, in the plural number. There are multitudes of sins and evils which do not spring from the love of money, as their specific source, but flow from different and opposite passions. The love of money is only a specific form of Selfishness. Men love money, because it furnishes the means of self-gratification and indulgence. Covetousness, indeed, justly merits the title of the eldest daughter of Selfishness and the most fruitful parent of sin and misery; and it may well be questioned whether any other form of transgression has been or is more prolific of wickedness and woe.

The view that has been taken of the primary and fundamental character of Selfishness, seems to be corroborated and established by the words of our Lord. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Here, renunciation of self or Selfishness is the first step towards discipleship, which, when taken, leads to a willingness to suffer with and for, and to obey, the Captain of our salvation.

Further, the love of money, as a distinct emotion of the depraved heart, is found only where money or its equivalent has an existence, that is, where civilization has made less or greater progress; and its intensity is generally in proportion to the degree of refinement.

Savage hordes of men are not characterized by the love of money, for they have little or none, and few occasions for its use; while among the highly civilized and refined, the love of money is the *universal, controlling and all-absorbing* passion of the multitude.

Civilization, then, gives occasion to covetousness, for in the language of the royal Preacher, "money answereth all things;" and should the conventional uses of wealth be taken away, though it would not abolish the depravity of man, it would oblige that depravity to seek some other channel than that in which it now frets and roars with such a swift and destructive flood.

But Selfishness is prior to, and independent of all conventional forms of society; and lies, in the human heart, the lowest of the strata of moral evils, and sustains all the rest. On the hypothesis contended for, we may expect Selfishness to be the first sinful passion to develop itself, the strongest in its influence, the most obstinate in its resistance to moral power, and the last to yield to the Divine and benevolent energy of the religion of Jesus Christ.

And is it not even so? Ordinary observation of the workings of the infant mind, will be sufficient to convince any one, that Selfishness is the pioneer of evils, and prepares the way for the ingress (or rather egress), of all sin's hateful brood. It manifests itself and attains considerable strength, in very early infancy, and long before the understanding becomes enlightened on the subject of moral duty, or the conscience performs its office, it has become the ruling principle; and it not only lives, but flourishes, even after conscience has begun to exercise its sway, and education to impose its restraints on the wayward passions.

It grows with the child's growth and strengthens with his strength, and still continues to grow and strengthen, even when physical nature shows signs of decay and warns of approaching doom.

Ask you a proof of its superior strength?

We say not, "look at the conduct of a selfish world,"

the proof is nearer hand ; an hour's conscientious examination of your own heart and life will render other proof unnecessary.

The obstinacy of Selfishness is equally apparent. When it fills the soul, the light of truth is repelled, and the power of reason rendered void. So thought a sagacious and close observer of men, when he wrote :

“ Convince a man against his will,
He's of the same opinion still.”

And that Selfishness is that principle of our fallen nature which last yields to the influence of the Gospel and the sanctifying power of God's Spirit, the past history and present state of the Christian Church, and each believer's enlightened conscience will abundantly testify.

CHAPTER II.

EXTENT OF SELFISHNESS.

Multitudes of Worlds. Their Moral Condition unknown by us. Earth not the Birth-place of Selfishness. Satan and his Angels. Man's Temptation and Ruin. Selfishness Universal in all Ages and Nations, and all States of Society. It survives all Changes. Is modified by opposing Influences. Its Presence and Power in Irrational Creatures. Selfishness of Men and Brutes compared and Contrasted.

To what other part, besides ours, of God's vast empire, if to any, Selfishness may have extended its baleful influence, is not known to man, and probably will not be until the judgment of the great day. It is supposed, not without reason, that innumerable worlds, besides our own, are peopled by intelligent agents ; and though it might gratify curiosity to know what is their moral state, yet it would be a waste of time and idle speculation to make the inquiry, since we have no data on which to proceed, and it is a matter with which we have no immediate concern. This however, we do know, from the testimony of inspira-

tion, that before the earth felt the curse of Selfishness, it had already desolated that world which had been assigned as the abode of Satan and his hosts, in whose spirits it still reigns with unmitigated malignity.

Earth is not the birth-place of Selfishness. Before man was created it had already invaded one of the departments of Jehovah's empire and found a home in the spirits of some of his highest creatures. In what way or on what occasion Satan and his angels rebelled against their Sovereign is to us a mystery, and all we know of the manner of this original revolt is, that "they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day."

"They left *their own habitation.*" This seems to intimate that Satan and his associates had assigned to them by their Creator some particular orb as their abode, and some special duty there to be performed.

The opinion has hitherto obtained, that the rebel angels were originally located in what is called heaven, that is, in the immediate presence of Jehovah, and that they were the companions of those holy spirits who now surround the throne of God. But, in the light of the passage above quoted, this opinion does not seem to be correct, for the phrase, "*their own habitation,*" seems to intimate a place *peculiar* to themselves. May not that world have been situated

between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter? This conjecture derives plausibility from the discoveries of modern astronomers, for that space in the heavens is found to be occupied by a considerable number of small planets, called asteroids, which are supposed to be the fragments of a former mighty sphere. Of that world was Satan constituted the lord, and placed at the head of its principalities and powers? And did he, as their vice-regent and leader, influence the minds of all his associates to desert their post, and forsake their duty, in violation of the command and in despite of the power of their just and Omnipotent Monarch? Was it to increase their knowledge and elevate their condition, that they forsook their appointed sphere, and dared to intrude on other dominions, or even to enter the immediate presence of their King uninvited, and there utter their impious wishes or demands?

Whatever may have been the particular occasion or form of their rebellious movement, Selfishness was undoubtedly at the foundation of their defection, and prompted them to set at naught the will of their rightful and righteous Ruler, and follow their own will as the supreme law of their conduct. Disappointed in their ambitious schemes—arrested and subdued by almighty power, they sought the dishonour of their injured Sovereign and the gratification of their own malignity, by attempting to transfer their selfish spirit

to the soul of man. Satan's own experience naturally suggested the best mode of assailing man's uprightness, and enabled him confidently to anticipate the utter ruin to man's integrity and happiness that would result from the success of his temptation. He did, alas, succeed; and besides the prison-house of fallen spirits, one more world, at least, has become a theatre for the woeful display of satanic Selfishness.

If Selfishness be the first sin and the parent of sin's hateful brood, we may expect to find its presence universal in this fallen world. Accordingly, a slight acquaintance with the history of man will clearly reveal the humiliating fact, that it is not a local distemper—confined to particular nations, districts or ages—but common to all. It is a fault of the race—a radical infection of man's moral constitution, and coextensive with man in all climes, and in every age of the world. Every nation and every condition of humanity—savage and civilized—rude and refined—barbarous and enlightened, has exemplified the universality and strength of this primitive fountain of all sin and misery.

Who does not see that this principle is as prevalent and operative in the present, as in any former age of the world—not only among the barbarous and un-Christianized tribes of earth, but also among those nations enlightened by the brightest rays of science, and blessed with the self-denying religion of the Son of

God! Nor is even the Christian Church, in its purest condition, exempt from this offspring of hell; but, on the contrary, this seed of the old Serpent glides, into the sanctuaries of God, conceals itself among the draperies of Christ's Temple and leaves its loathsome slime on the hearts of the children of the Most High. In some respects, separate nations or races of men have their peculiar characteristics—formed and cherished by tradition, custom, education and pursuit. Some are proud and supercilious; others, humble, and respectful to strangers. Some are fond of war and contention; others disposed to peace, and to cultivate amity with their neighbours. Some are constitutionally indolent and inactive; others industrious and ever on the alert. Some are remarkable for intelligence, invention and enterprise; whilst others are as much distinguished for deficiency in all these respects.

Frequent, sudden, and sometimes very great changes in national character are produced by conquest, mingling of people and change of external circumstances. But no conquest of one nation by another, no amalgamation of different races, and no change of government or condition, have been found sufficient to eradicate from the heart of man the spirit of Selfishness. It is still the universal and ruling passion of mankind. Great and lasting changes were effected by the power and splendour of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Monarchies. Mighty cities, like those of

Nineveh and Babylon, were erected and adorned with consummate skill—filled with a refined and warlike people, and guarded by impregnable walls and brazen gates; and were at length subverted by superior force, and buried for ages beneath their own ruins. Their luxurious and haughty inhabitants were destroyed or scattered to the four winds of heaven, whilst their gorgeous palaces have “not been inhabited or dwelt in from generation to generation; neither doth the Arabian pitch tent there, nor the shepherds fold their flock there; but wild beasts of the desert lie there, and their houses are full of doleful creatures, and owls dwell there, and there satyrs dance; wild beasts of the islands cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; they have become a possession for the bittern, and pools of water, and are swept with the besom of destruction.” Isa. chapters 13, 14.

But Selfishness remained unsubverted, undestroyed; and the only change it underwent was the transfer to other regions, where it continued to flourish with primitive vigour.

The rapid movements and irresistible power of Alexander, could not overtake or subdue Selfishness, for it was the cherished inmate of his own bosom—the prompter to his ambitious career, and the spirit of his hosts.

The iron power of Rome, whether republic or imperial, which weakened and subdued surrounding

nations, contributed nothing to weaken and subdue the power of Selfishness; but rather to extend and strengthen its dominion. It reigned triumphant in the centre, and thence radiated to the circumference of the colossal Empire. The heart was deeply imbued thereby, and all the members of the body politic yielded to its overbearing sway. On the division of the Empire into eastern and western, as represented by the legs of iron in Daniel's great image, and the subdivision of the parts into the nations of modern times, as symbolized by the feet and toes, composed of iron and clay; the source of evil remained undivided, undiminished, and unmixed with any ingredient that sufficed to abate its virulence. In the Babylonian head of gold; the Median and Persian breast and arms of silver; the Grecian belly and thighs of brass; the Roman legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay; in all the members and to the extremity of each, self was, and is the presiding spirit—the Deity worshipped by the prostrate nations.

Selfishness may be, and in fact undoubtedly is, different in degree in different nations and communities, on account of the various circumstances of each. Many causes may combine to increase, or lessen, or restrain the evil; but no cause, natural, civil or moral, has hitherto availed to remove it. Knowledge, the arts and sciences, commerce and friendly intercourse of nations, and especially the

self-denying and benevolent religion of the Bible, are powerful agents now at work, and well calculated, in their nature and influence, to effect a great and glorious change in the physical and moral condition of mankind. But, thus far, little progress has been made in giving a healthful tone to the spiritual system of man; because of the malignity of the disorder under which that system labours, and the unskillfulness, nay, even Selfishness, of those whose duty it is to administer the remedy. We might well despair of the desired change ever being effected, should we confine our views to the former of the agencies enumerated above, for they are terrestrial, and partake of man's infirmity; but the last, the purifying religion of Jesus, is celestial in its origin, and not only sufficient to effect the change, but, under the influence of God's renovating Spirit, will finally succeed; although to the present day it has not accomplished what God designs and has pledged himself to produce.

In considering the universality of Selfishness, as existing in our world, we may appropriately extend our view beyond the family of man. It is curious and instructive, and at the same time humiliating, to observe the presence and power of this spirit in the irrational tribes of earth. By some mysterious channel, Selfishness has flowed from man through all animated nature, even in its minutest forms. We

say, "has flowed *from man*," for it cannot be supposed that the inferior creatures are such now as they were when "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good." A great change has taken place in irrational beings; and this change is undoubtedly posterior to man's defection.

The ground itself was cursed for man's sin; and that malediction may necessarily have extended to all the animals treading thereon and sustained by its products. In whatever way the change was effected, whether by a deterioration in the quality of vegetable nature, or by the direct power of the Almighty, it must be regarded as a just visitation on the lower animals of God's displeasure against man's offence, and as a part of the punishment which that offence deserved.

This view of the case derives support from the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, who synchronizes the renovation of brute nature with man's spiritual restoration to the Divine image. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt

nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This may be admitted to be partly figurative language, but it would be presumptuous to affirm that it is nothing more, and that no change is to be expected on earth beyond the bounds of the human family. A few common instances will be sufficient to prove and exemplify the existence and operation of Selfishness (we can give it no other name) in brute animals, and those domesticated by man, and therefore supposed to have their natures, somewhat ameliorated by cultivation.

The individuals composing but one herd of the same species and family, that peacefully graze the same pasture, and manifest a strong attachment towards each other, are immediately transformed into a selfish horde, on the presentation to them of extra food by the hand of their owner. And though that food may be distributed in separate parcels sufficient for each, yet the stronger drive away the weaker from their portion, and the latter bestow the same treatment on those who are inferior to themselves; thus, each one endeavouring by force to deprive all the rest of their right and monopolize to himself the whole supply. The stall-fed oxen must be separated by strong barriers, to prevent them from robbing each other in mere

wantonness, and trampling under foot what they are unable to consume.

The domestic fowls that harmoniously parade the same yard, immediately become a band of aliens, or what is worse, brethren estranged, as soon as the yellow grain is scattered among the flock. What eagerness is displayed by each to pick up the greatest amount of food! What deliberate pushing aside of one another, and what savage fights frequently occur over a single grain!

Nor is the affection which brutes display for their young to be justly regarded as an exception to the operation of self. It is merely the same thing under another type. The hen, the very symbol of parental affection, loves her young, and guards them with watchful eye and unwonted courage, because they are *hers*, for, while tender of her own, she will cruelly kill the helpless chick from another brood that comes within her reach.

A sweet poet, the modern Psalmist of Israel, has sung—

“Birds in their little nests agree;
And 't is a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight.”

But much of the beauty of the sentiment, if not of the poetry, evaporates, when we are apprised that, as to the birds, their agreement is the result of feeble-

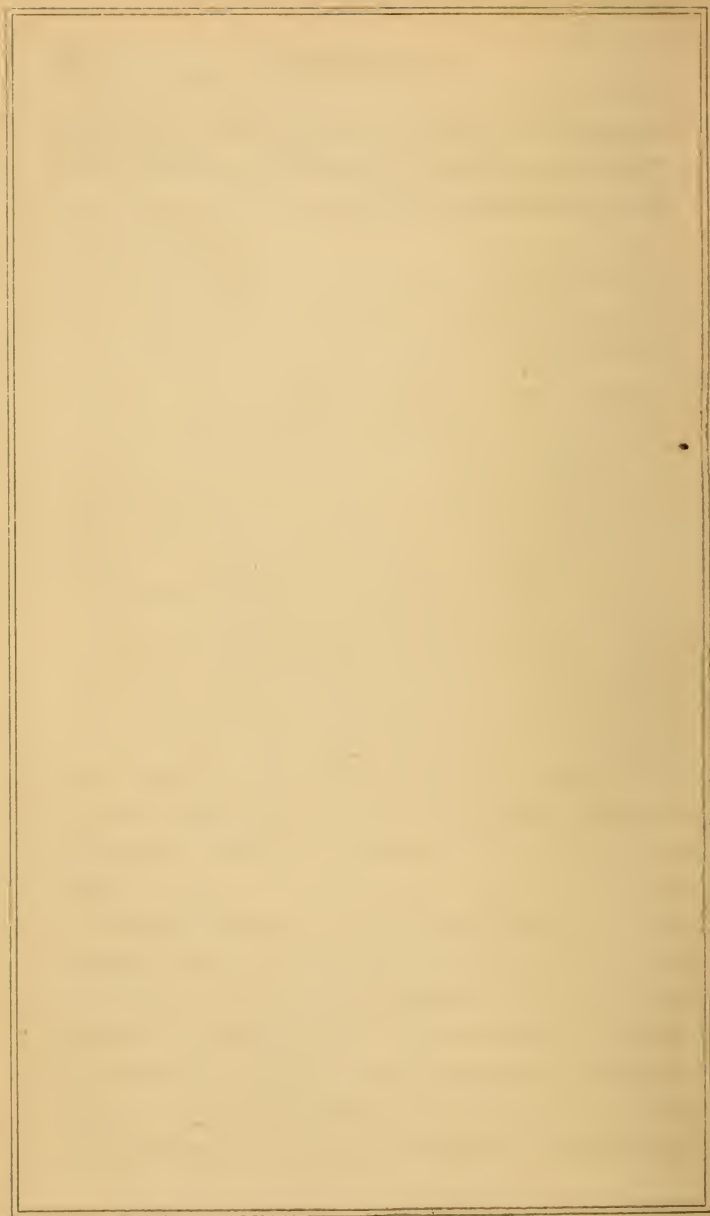
ness, rather than affection, for the loud clamour of each for the worm brought by the parent, shows that the feeling of self is still the paramount one in their small habitation.

It is humiliating to find that there is so great a community in Selfishness between man and the brutes. They act alike in a thousand different ways, and because of this it is that when any one acts from un-governed animal passions, to the injury of another, he is said to be *brutish*, and he is indeed doubly so, for in the gratification of self he resists the dictates of reason and conscience, renounces the authority of his God, and outrages the claims of humanity.

There is, indeed, an essential and wide difference between the Selfishness of man and brutes. In the latter, it is an unconscious feeling or instinct, and not to be accounted for; whilst in the former, it is practised and cherished with a full consciousness of its iniquity, and in clear view of the judgment seat of Him who "will render to every man according to his deeds."

It is painful too, to be convinced that very much that passes currently in this world for affection and philanthropy, has no higher claim to merit than that possessed by instinct, or is easily resolvable into Selfishness itself. This is true in innumerable instances, even in reference to parental and filial love; and the "Great Searcher of hearts" undoubtedly discovers

the operation of Selfishness in many acts and achievements which are generally regarded as splendid deeds of benevolence or patriotism.



CHAPTER III.

NATIONAL SELFISHNESS.

Patriotism, True and False. Selfishness, the Ruling Passion of Ancient and Modern Rome. Cry of Heretic. Persecution. Russia—Austria — Spain— France — Britain — United States — South America, and Eastern Nations. Exceptions. Abolition of the Slave Trade. Individual examples of Patriotism and Benevolence. Selfishness of Kings and Rulers. "Divine Right." Primitive Governments. Examples of Good Rulers. Wars and Aggressions. National Disputes and Commerce.

IN treating of the universality of Selfishness, it has already been stated that it has formed, and now forms, a prominent trait in the character of each and every nation, whether of ancient or modern times. All that is necessary then to include in the present chapter, is some of the forms and occasions in and on which national Selfishness manifests itself.

All that is felt or endured by a nation at large, or in which the generality of the people is concerned, properly deserves and receives the epithet "national." Accordingly, the term is applied to the general feel-

ing or sentiment of a nation, to the government and those by whom it is conducted or administered, to aggressions, wars and conquests, to discoveries and acquisitions, to commerce, trade, and foreign intercourse, to pursuits, customs, and amusements, and to the moral characteristics by which each is distinguished.

When any portion of the human family assumes a distinct and somewhat enlarged form, on account of position or for the purpose of mutual advantage and protection, there speedily springs up a general feeling or sentiment, akin to that love of home and its inmates, which, with few exceptions, is the feeling of our race.

This love of country is denominated "patriotism," and is undoubtedly as proper in the national mind and as necessary to the general welfare, as is the love of home in those who compose the family circle. Indeed, it is the same feeling on an extended scale. The political or voluntary exile speaks of the land of his birth as his *home*, and his heart yearns after it, although there may be no individual household there to claim his special regard.

But, patriotism, to be pure, must not be vitiated by contempt and neglect of other nations and their welfare; and much less must it be associated with the desire and effort to promote our own interests at the expense and to the injury of all others; otherwise, it

becomes as truly selfish, as does the feeling of self-love from the same cause. Judged by this rule, true patriotism, in a national aspect, must be admitted to be a virtue of rare occurrence in this selfish world; if indeed it can be proved to have had, or now to have a real existence.

To go no farther back—for it would not give a different view of our subject—was not Selfishness the ruling passion of Rome, under every form of government, from kingly to imperial? It was the spirit that prompted her to wage war with surrounding nations, or to interfere in their contests with each other. It characterized her conquests, and shone in her triumphal displays; and was no less visible in her treatment and government of subjected tribes. She had already learned the full meaning of the modern adage, “to the victors belong the spoils.” And may it not be asked—to what national act of her’s, in respect of any other people, can the historian point as a clear exception to the charge, and as purely or mainly an act of self-denial and philanthropy? Rome still exists under the eighth head of the Apocalyptic Beast; and is she less selfish than she was under either of the former seven? Where shall we look for that self-mortification which forms one of the cardinal graces of the faith she now professes? Is it to be found in the stereotyped cry of “Heretics,” raised against all that renounce, or do not believe, her monstrous dog-

mas; or in the burning and slaughter of tens of thousands of martyrs to the cause of Christ? Is it to be sought for, in the persecution of the Waldenses and other Christians; or in the singing of "Te Deums" over the slaughtered Huguenots? Verily, No! Rome, in her old age, and last gasp for life, has but renewed and augmented the spirit of her youth, and remains truly, according to her own boastful declaration, "Ever, everywhere, and unchangeably, the same!" She has indeed exchanged the rods of the Lictors for the stakes of the "Auto Da Fe," and supplanted the beasts of the Amphitheatre with the more savage and insatiable brutes of the Inquisition; but the same selfish and diabolical spirit reigns throughout.

To the history of which of the modern nations of Europe shall we look for exceptions to the spirit of national Selfishness? Is it to that of Russia and other Powers, in the partition of Poland? Let the writhings and groans of that oppressed people reply, as she suffers under the repeated embraces of the northern Bear. Is it to that of Austria, in her treatment of Hungary? Let the voice of her expatriated Governor give the response from his prison in Turkey, or from the mountains and plains of free America, among which its indignant tones have scarcely ceased to reverberate. Is it to that of Spain, in her conquest and government—or rather extermination—of the aboriginal nations of Mexico and South America? Let the

ghosts of the murdered Montezuma and thousands of his unoffending subjects be summoned to give their testimony. Nor would a different verdict be rendered by the souls of the martyrs of the Netherlands, as they utter their voice from beneath the golden altar. Is it to that of France, under her Bourbons—or during the splendid and ambitious sway of her first Napoleon—or in her tumultuous and fitful republican moods? Let the dark and bloody night of St. Bartholomew give the double answer for France and Rome. Let the National Assembly say, whether it was not Selfishness, the most brutal, which dethroned and murdered an unoffending king, and evoked from the lowest sinks of atheism and debauchery, a thousand monsters such as Robespierre, Danton and Marat. Let Napoleon speak from the mountains and plains of Spain, Germany and Italy—from the burning sands of Egypt and snows of Russia. Let the feeble voices of Tahiti and Algeria tell by what spirit France is animated at the present moment. Will the history of magnanimous and Christian Britain—the self-styled “Mistress of the seas,” on “whose dominion the sun never sets,”—reverse our declaration? What say suffering Ireland, and idol-besotted and imbecile India? What says China, even under the stupefying influence of the drug forced upon her by British cannon? What say the records of England’s Colonies on the shores of North America; and especially, the

old Thirteen—now United States—previous to and during the arduous struggle for independence and liberty? Was the Declaration of July 4th, 1776, a libel?—or did Selfishness prompt to all the acts enumerated and condemned therein, as the instrument itself avouches?

In regard to the nations of the New World, it may be observed, that their origin is of too recent a date to afford numerous examples illustrative of our subject; and the voice of history is yet to pronounce its verdict.

But to say the least, our treatment of the Aborigines, and the Negro race, are no proofs of disinterested benevolence. In the acquisition of territory and in our covetous longings after Cuba, there is more of self than can be justified by the law of self-preservation. The brief history of the Mexican and other southern Republics, is sufficiently prolific of examples of national Selfishness. Their frequent political changes, their intestine broils, and wars with one another, abundantly testify that supreme love of self has lost nothing of its strength and activity, by a transfer to this continent, or by investing itself in the robes of republican simplicity.

It is scarcely necessary, in our brief review, to allude particularly to the Asiatic nations, and it must suffice, for the sake of brevity, to say that Assyria, Babylon and Persia, in their conquest and

oppression of other nations; that China, the self-denominated "Celestial Empire, in her contempt and treatment of the outside barbarians;" and Japan, in her exclusiveness, clearly demonstrate that the same original taint of our fallen nature reigns in the East, as in the West, the North, and the South. Turkey is illustrious for her selfish bigotry, intolerance and cruelty, towards her Christian subjects, and all other believers in the Cross. And lastly, Africa too, utters not only a self-accusing voice in the histories of Egypt, Carthage and the Barbary Powers, but a voice of condemnation, louder than that of the enraged lion or she-bear, robbed of her whelps, that makes the blush of shame mantle on the cheeks of Europe and America, as she indignantly points to the slave ship, heavily freighted with her manacled and groaning children, and to the millions in hopeless bondage in the Islands, and on the Continent of America. Selfishness originates the predatory excursions of her native tribes, sells the captives to the piratical slave trader, begets the horrors of the "middle passage," and lands the emaciated and heart-broken victims in the "house of bondage."

This dark picture is somewhat relieved, yet at the same time rendered more distinct, by the cheering and hopeful light that emanates from, at least, one combined act of modern nations. We allude to the denunciation of the horrible traffic in slaves, by

Great Britain, the United States and other Powers; and their continued efforts for its final extinction. Our rejoicing over this act would be complete, were it not for the remembrance, that in the case of Britain, it was performed with hesitation and not till after the ardent and long continued pleadings of such noble and philanthropic spirits as Clarkson, Sharpe and Wilberforce; and, as respects the United States, for the fact, that while the left hand is raised in opposition to the trade from Africa, the right hand confirms and perpetuates the bondage of its unhappy victims in former years.

Relief and hope are also obtained from individual and associated examples of patriotism and benevolence that have a national aspect and bearing, such as those of the Howards and Wilberforces of England, together with the spirit and efforts of her Bible, Tract and Missionary societies—such too as that of our own Washington and his compatriots, and of our institutions of Christian benevolence, which have so closely followed those of the Mother country, and in some instances taken the lead, as in the Temperance reform. And such with emphasis as individual examples, in the case of Sweden and England, are those of a Lind and Nightingale;—the former, the world-renowned and world-beloved Queen of song and benevolence, who, though of Sweden, is not exclusively a Swede, she is the world's charmer.

Her loving spirit has made her a cosmopolite, and her charitable acts have irradiated with smiles the face of humanity itself, and allied her with the benevolent inhabitants of heavenly spheres. The latter, the queen of sympathy and love, who forsook the endearments of home, that in a far off land she might assuage the sufferings of the sick and wounded, and pour the consolation of the Christian faith into the ears of the dying. Noble Sisters! your names will be immortal. May thousands arise in future generations not only to call you blessed, but to tread in your shining footsteps!

The above exceptions to the spirit of Selfishness, reflect an unfading lustre on the nations that produced them; and contribute much to qualify the condemnation that national Selfishness so justly merits.

Selfishness, from the commencement of national existence, has almost invariably distinguished kings and arbitrary monarchs of every grade; and has not been wanting in rulers of limited power and constitutional origin. The love of arbitrary power, and power in all its forms, is innate with depraved man. But that love springs from, and is supported by, the supreme love of self. It is one of the streams that flow from the same polluted fountain; and in fact, but another aspect of the same distorted form. The pleas that are frequently, and indeed generally, put

forth in justification of the grasping and retention of sovereign rule, are hollow in the extreme. The most specious, probably, and the one most confidently relied upon, is that of "Divine right." But those who advance this idea as an argument, cannot surely be ignorant of the truth, that the righteous Sovereign of all worlds has, neither in reason nor revelation, sanctioned arbitrary governments as such; and that though all governments have the Divine approbation, yet they possess it only so far as they are founded in equity, and administered in justice, for the general good.

The assumption of "Divine right" for the exercise of unjust and tyrannical power, is a mere pretence, fabricated for the purpose of imposing on the ignorant and credulous, and to bind fast the galling chains of slavery. Did not Selfishness oppose, rulers would be anxious to employ all practicable means of increasing the intelligence, and elevating the moral character of the people, and would ever be ready and joyful to share with them the cares and responsibilities of government. But the fact is almost universally the reverse. The anxiety of arbitrary rulers ever has been to keep the people in ignorance of their rights, and to obstruct them in the acquisition of them whenever they make the attempt.

The possession and exercise of arbitrary and selfish power increases its virulence, just as the indulgence

of any other vicious passion adds to its force; and this will suffice to explain the fact, that this power is so reluctantly relinquished, and that those, from whom it has been wrested, are so eager to resume it when opportunity offers; and even hesitate not to put in operation the most cruel measures to eradicate the seeds of liberty and philanthropy from the national mind. If the appeal be made to reason or revelation, instead of establishing the "Divine right" of absolute monarchy, the argument will look in the contrary direction. The first governments instituted by man were Republics; or, at least, the republican element was largely infused into the patriarchal and kingly forms of remote antiquity. The people not unfrequently reversed the decisions of their rulers, who seemed to think it no violation of their rights, or dishonour to their dignity to submit to the popular will. Not to mention other nations, this is true in reference to the Israelites, as well under monarchical rule as during the existence of the Theocracy, which was probably the first form of government directly instituted by the Almighty.

If rulers believed that their power rested on "Divine right," would they not exercise that power in obedience to Divine will, and for the good of their subjects? or do they assert, that God has given them a right to do iniquity and practice oppression, and

that he has withheld from the suffering people the right to resist or complain?

The fact that power has been, and is, so generally exercised in opposition to God's will and to the injury of man, clearly proves that arbitrary sovereigns do not, in reality, regard themselves as having received their power from the "King of kings," or as being under any obligation, as his stewards, to wield it in subserviency to his purposes and commands.

Their reluctance, too, to divide their power with the people, and their promptness to seize every occasion of regaining it when wrested from them, reveal the fact, that Selfishness, not zeal for the honour of God, is the paramount feeling of their minds.

It is unnecessary to attempt to strengthen the position assumed, or establish the conclusion just drawn, by a specification of examples of Selfishness in the rulers of this world. The history of nations is rife with humiliating and heart-rending exhibitions of this nature; and those who are at all acquainted with human affairs, can readily supply the omission from history's ample store. Besides, what has been already said in the former part of this chapter, will equally apply to the rulers of those nations whose acts have been considered; for rulers are primarily and personally responsible for those measures which become national by being acquiesced in, and sus-

tained by the nation whose representatives and agents they are.

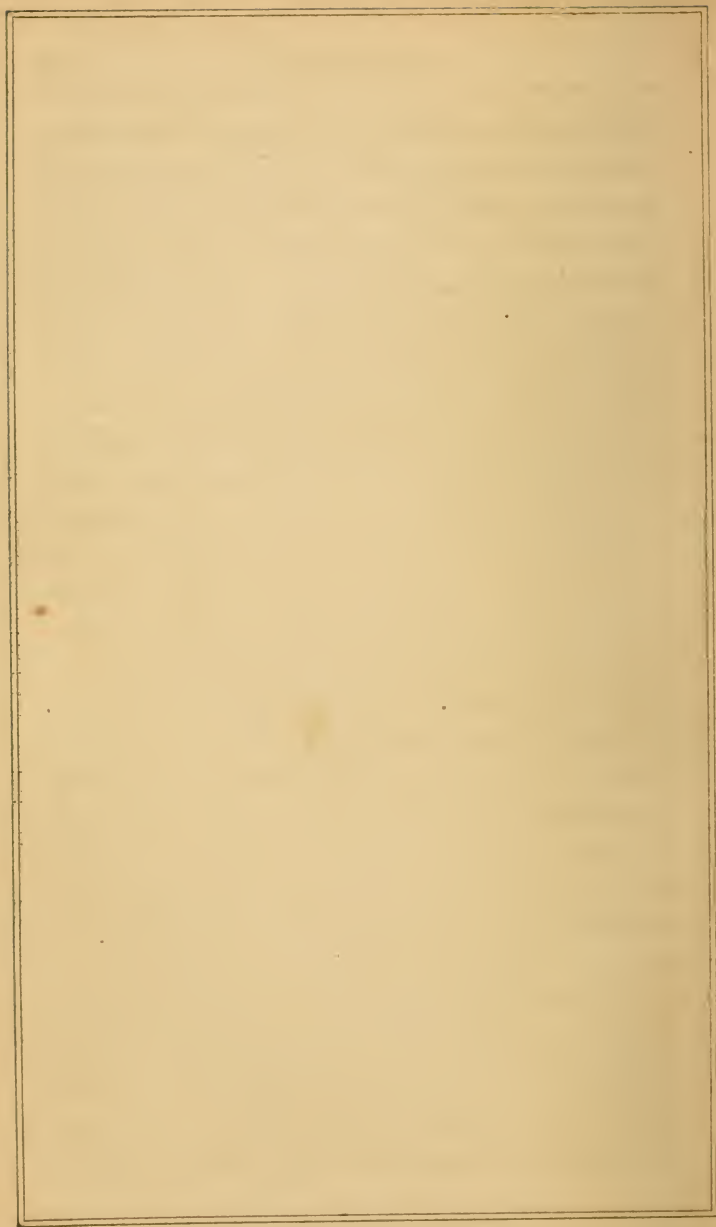
The great difficulty in regard to examples to suit our purpose is, not to find a sufficient number of appropriate ones of a selfish character in the high places of the earth, but to decide which to select from the almost endless list that presents itself. Alas! that it should be so; but there are rare instances of an opposite description; and it may be said of them with truth, as of angels' visits, "they are few and far between."

That wars of aggression and conquest have generally had their origin in national Selfishness, no one will be disposed to deny. The lust after power, aggrandisement and wealth, has ever induced some nations to invade the territories and trample on the rights of unoffending and weaker nations. Some specious pretext may indeed generally be alledged in justification of attack; but when weighed in the balances of truth and justice, it will be found vastly deficient in reality and importance, if indeed it is possessed of a particle of either. When nations are influenced by the spirit of martial glory, the desire to extend their dominion, or to fill their coffers with the wealth of others, the first occasion is promptly and greedily seized to unsheath the sword, and let slip the dogs of war, to shed the blood and devour the substance of one another.

When national disputes arise, as they necessarily must while human nature is so sinful and imperfect, reason and philosophy would dictate a resort to friendly negociation and arbitration to settle the difficulties; and these peaceful measures would scarcely ever fail, did not Selfishness or pride in one or both of the parties exist. Were every nation as anxious to abstain from injuring the welfare of others as it is to advance its own, each would learn and practice war no more; swords would soon be beaten into plough-shares, and spears into pruning hooks, and universal and perpetual peace pervade and bless the earth.

That great and permanent good sometimes, yea, frequently results from national conflicts, affords no justification of the Selfishness that generally excites them, and no alleviation of the woeful scenes by which they are accompanied, even should a door of freer ingress be opened thereby for the Gospel of peace, as recently in the case of China. This is a part of His wonderful workings, who brings good out of evil, light out of darkness; who makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath restrains. War, in itself considered, is "evil, only evil, and that continually." In commercial regulations as to themselves, in trade and diplomatic intercourse with others, nations generally give most palpable evidence that Selfishness is the presiding

genius in their councils and measures. What unremitting exertions are made, not only to secure advantages to themselves, but to accomplish this to the injury of others! Indeed mutual advantage seems seldom to have formed a part of any nation's plans when treating with another, except when its own selfish purposes cannot otherwise be accomplished. Our subject might further be illustrated by a reference to other features of national character, but the length of this chapter and our proposed limits warn us to desist.



CHAPTER IV.

SECTIONAL AND POLITICAL SELFISHNESS.

Nations divided into Sections. Causes of this. Difference of Origin. Conquest. Separate Histories. Grievances. Religion. Selfishness the real cause. Ambitious Leaders. State of our Union. North and South. Political Parties—their Rise and Use. Self-interest governs Parties. Party Leaders seek Honour, &c. Misrepresentation. Slander. Falsehoods. Hatred. Envy, &c. Presidential Elections.

THE same selfish spirit that arrays one nation in opposition to the welfare of another, is often found as active and virulent in different portions of the same nation. Thus we hear of North and South, East and West, in reference to one people, united under the same form of government, and having the same general interests, and every patriotic heart is often pained with the violence of party dissensions, and with the fear that their animosities will terminate in final alienation and civil bloodshed.

This state of things may arise from various subor-

dinate causes. In some nations each of the sectional portions may, at a former period, have formed a distinct people of different origin, and for a long time under its own government and laws. One or more of these may have been subdued by force of arms by another, or otherwise annexed. - But however the parts may have been united, whether willingly or unwillingly, or whatever may be the manifest convenience and advantage of such union, it is seldom found that a complete amalgamation of feeling and interest has ensued. Their separate histories still keep their former nationalities before the mind, and there are not wanting multitudes of ambitious and restless spirits who, in the hope of personal advantage to be derived therefrom, cease not to foment traditional animosities, and loudly demand a restoration to the former position. Real or imaginary grievances are magnified, and every evil endured is uniformly attributed to the misgovernment or opposition of the ruling power. Neither indolence nor improvidence is sufficient to account for poverty and suffering, but every woe, personal and general, is declared to be the necessary result of the hated union.

Difference of religious sentiment and practice tends greatly to augment and perpetuate the general ill-will and discontent, and bigotry blinds the mind, to the inevitable consequences of ignorance and superstition. Should there even be a marked difference in

the inhabitants of the same district, both in character and prosperity, that difference, if it be at all confessed, will be ascribed to any other than the right cause.

To what does truth oblige us to trace all this? Primarily, to national Selfishness; and next and efficiently, to selfish and ambitious agitators, who have political schemes to be furthered and personal advantage to be gained, by keeping alive the fires of envy and hate, or by fanning the flames of civil commotion. Agitators are seldom, if ever, true patriots; and fierce party leaders are to be suspected of having some personal advantage in view. True patriotism waits for a clear call of Providence before it proceeds to action, and is distinguished alike for self-denial and perseverance.

Our own happy union, if we may believe the declarations of selfish politicians, has, more than once, been endangered by sectional differences and interests. The North and the South have been arrayed in violent opposition, which it has taken all the wisdom and patriotism of our best men to overcome.

In every civilized community, and especially in those that have adopted a mixed or popular form of government, parties will necessarily arise who take different and frequently opposite views of constitutional questions, and of the measures best calculated to promote the public good. This is not surprising when we take into consideration the limited nature of

man's faculties, and the imperfection of his powers of reason and judgment. It is in a great measure unavoidable, and is, in many ways, productive of great national benefit; for the different parties watch each other with eagle eyes, and are not dull in discovering or slow in proclaiming, any mistakes in judgment or evil consequences in the doings of their opponents. Thus, constitutional principles are guarded and strengthened, and at last established; and enactments, clearly inimical to the general welfare, are the sooner abrogated and reversed at the demand of the public voice.

Politicians, who take opposite views of the same subject, may be equally conscientious in their sentiments and patriotic in their intentions; and may not be fully aware themselves, to what degree they are influenced by sectional prejudices and self-interest. Is it not obvious to the least thoughtful and observant, that the views and politics of a party generally accord with their real or supposed self-interest, and that mostly of a pecuniary nature? When do they feel themselves compelled, by a love of truth and justice, to adopt and sustain measures contrary to their own advantage? A few noble souls there have been, who have heroically sacrificed popularity on the altar of truth; and have preferred to be right, rather than to occupy the highest posts of public honour and emoluments; but such are the exceptions, while the great

majority of politicians are evidently actuated by motives that have their origin in Selfishness. All have not the same specific object in view. Each class, great or small, may fix on some attainable point, as the ultimatum of their ambition, to reach which they spare no labours, and strain every nerve. The prime leaders of each party may have in view the highest offices and honours within the gift of the sovereign authority; whilst the subordinates are, from their humble sphere and minor influence, limited to a lower range. .

From the highest places of the national government, down through the civil divisions of states, counties and towns, office and its emoluments—either for themselves or their friends—are the objects of strife with the mass of all party leaders.

That such is the fact, we have sufficient proof in the sweeping removals from office that take place, as one or the other party gains the ascendancy. No capacity for official duty or faithfulness in its discharge, will, with few exceptions, suffice to retain in his place a political opponent; and hence the adage is generally carried out—"to the victors belong the spoils!" If we are warranted in believing any party, then a vast amount of misrepresentation is employed for the purpose of blinding the public mind and perverting its judgment. Whence comes this? Truth disdains it; patriotism requires it not; humanity blushes at it,

and it can be referred to no other source than the supreme love of self. Indeed, to such a degree are the acts of each party distorted and condemned by the other, that an independent observer might be excused for concluding that neither was worthy of the least confidence, and that to both or all, the old saying might be justly applied, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Not content with general misrepresentation of public measures, no sooner is an individual nominated for office, than the pen and tongue of slander are busily set to work and continue to labour unremittingly, so long as there is the most distant prospect of success. Passed mistakes and errors are dragged from the sanctuary of private life, and thrown broadcast over the length and breadth of the land, and made to fly, with electric speed, to the ends of the earth. Even constitutional foibles are distorted and magnified into frightful monstrosities, and small acts of benevolence themselves, are held up as specimens of avaricious meanness. Can political Selfishness prompt to a course more disingenuous and unbecoming, not to say malicious?

The evil does not stop here; from the same authority, the declarations of each party, we are assured, that almost innumerable falsehoods are industriously propagated, with the view of injuring the character and blasting the hopes and prospects of opponents.

It matters not, in reference to our subject, whether the declarations are true or false. If true, the conclusion is established; but if untrue, the testimony itself is a malicious lie. It will not extenuate the evil to say that the falsehood is unintentional. This may indeed be true, in reference to the majority of its retailers, but the wholesale fabricators and venders of the article can plead no such excuse. Their position enables them to ascertain and register facts, and their duty even to their enemies, as well as to the public, requires them to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." In any view of the matter, it is Selfishness that prompts to the course pursued, both in those who knowingly originate, and in those who busily circulate the poisonous fictions.

Political and personal hatred of each other is the legitimate consequence of misrepresentation, slander, and falsehood; and that hatred is found to be in direct proportion to the amount of injury willfully inflicted by each party on the other.

This spirit of hate is propagated from father to son, from generation to generation, and insinuates itself into all the circles of social and civil life.

Lastly, malicious envy and rancorous spite are prominent evils in political life, preying upon the spirits of those that cherish them, and shrouding with a sickly gloom all surrounding objects.

Envy withholds just praise from those who merit

approbation, and greedily gloats over the mistakes and misfortunes of its objects, while spite stands ready, with drawn sword, to pierce the fallen, and trample in the dust a subjected foe.

Such are some of the moral evils that too commonly flow from political Selfishness, but the task would be hopeless to enumerate them all—their name is legion, and their nature is to defile and tear in pieces the body which they possess and control. Who should not blush for his countrymen and tremble for his country, when he witnesses the scenes frequently presented in political strife, and especially, for months together, once every four years, on the eve of a presidential election? Were such scenes the necessary concomitants of popular forms of government, their advocates might well be ashamed to stand up in their defence, and monarchists and absolutists might be excused for congratulating themselves on their happier lot.

But, no! the evil lies in our corrupt and selfish nature, not in rational liberty. If there be less political strife where freedom is unknown, it does not prove that Selfishness is there extinct, but that it has found other channels through which it continues to flow as steadily and destructively as in the domain of Republicanism.

CHAPTER V.

CIVIL SELFISHNESS.

Evils of Civil and Social Life. Laws for their suppression, yet they still exist. Fountain of Evils not reached. Disputes between Neighbours and Friends. Difference between "MY OX" and "YOUR OX." Retaliation. Lawsuits. Quarrels among Brethren. The Duellists. Violators of the Seventh Commandment. Murder. A recent Example. Tale-bearing, Lying, Perjury, and False Witnesses. Works of the Flesh.

THE evils that attend and afflict civil and social life are many and aggravated, and have, for ages, engaged the attention of legislators and political economists, and called forth the sympathy and labours of the philanthropist. To restrain and lessen those evils, and if possible to exterminate them, legislators have passed the most stringent laws and organized courts of justice for their execution. Nevertheless, the evils still exist, and will necessarily continue to exist, so long as the fountain whence they proceed continues to send forth its bitter streams. That fountain has hitherto not been reached by legislatures and courts of justice, and it is doubtful whether any serious de-

signs have been entertained by them for its discovery and exsiccation. All that they have done, or seem to have attempted, is to dry up some of the streams after they have performed their work of desolation, or to lop off some of the branches of the deadly upas, after tens of thousands have been poisoned by its baneful exhalations. The moralist, too, has, in a great measure, failed in laying bare the source of these evils, and in prescribing any efficient remedy or preventive. He has indeed traced them to the universal depravity of man's nature. But depravity is a general term, embracing both the cause and effect, and fails to give a definite idea of the matter. It is somewhat like ascribing the death of thousands to the plague or Asiatic cholera, whilst the essential and specific nature of both diseases remains undiscovered; or, to use the language of physicians, when the cause of disease eludes their investigation, it is to attribute the disorder and death of the patient to some "lurking mischief," whose nature and location they are entirely unable to ascertain. It will not suffice for the physician to say that the patient's sufferings are the result of disease, he must be able to fix on the organic distemper, in order to be a successful practitioner. Without a correct knowledge of the local derangement he may sometimes perform marvellous cures, but that will be rather the result of accident than of skill. So the moral physician must

know under what form depravity primarily and specifically manifests itself, that he may effect its extermination. To apply the preceding remarks to the subject in hand, when we say that Selfishness is the root and fountain of the social evils that afflict society, we give the thing a "local habitation and a name," so that each conscientious individual may exclaim, "I have found it, I have found it."

To Selfishness may be traced the disputes and difficulties that so frequently arise between neighbours, and originate bitter and long-continued alienations and animosities. Some trifling injury may be done by the beasts of one neighbour breaking into the enclosure of another. A pettish or angry message by the injured party to the other is the consequence, and this is succeeded by a reply of similar character. Or, if the matter is the subject of a personal interview, recriminating words will, probably, in nine cases out of ten, greatly magnify the evil. Should one neighbour go to another with this or a similar acknowledgment, "My ox has gored yours, and I must remunerate you for the loss," he is received with kindness and praised for his honesty. But should he say, "Your ox has gored mine, and I demand satisfaction," the case is quite reversed, not only as to the fact, but also in the feelings of the parties. In the former, the announcement is made in a calm and subdued tone approaching to indifference, and received,

it may be, by the other, with a polite inclination of the head, which seems to say, "Very well." But in the latter case, the information is given with a sternness approaching to ferocity, and received with a repulsive look and unbending form that seems to speak the language of defiance. And why is it so? Each should be as willing and joyful to grant as to receive reparation; and this would be the case, did not the love of self immediately arise to inflict a moral injury on both, a thousand times greater than the loss of a fatted ox.

On the denial of pecuniary compensation for injuries sustained, how often is retaliation resorted to, not as a measure which conscience can justify on any principles, but merely for the gratification of selfish revenge. In retaliation, self is seldom satisfied with less than four fold, and frequently exceeds that, if it recognizes any bounds at all. Thus a double transgression of the law of love is committed, since it is not only "an eye for an eye," and "a tooth for a tooth," which our Lord pronounces wrong, but two eyes for one, and all the teeth for one, and the head itself in addition!

Another form in which Selfishness manifests itself in almost innumerable instances is, "suits at law." Neighbours, and frequently intimate friends, are set at variance by some slight circumstance which, in itself, is scarcely worthy of serious notice; but Self

ishness magnifies the matter beyond all true proportions. A personal interview adds oil to the flame of resentment already kindled; and if arbitration is at all thought of, it is rejected as unsatisfactory; and nothing will appease the demand for vengeance, but a reference of the matter to a court of justice, often with the declared intention of the party bringing the suit to put the defendant to the greatest possible trouble and cost. The suit proceeds, and the "glorious uncertainty of the law," and the quibbles of legal advisers, keep the waters of strife in agitation for months and years, at the expenditure of much valuable time and money, so that the spirits of the parties are chafed and maddened towards each other, and a flaming firebrand is tossed from family to family, whilst the friends and acquaintances of the parties kindly take part in the affray, and perform the office that Sampson's foxes did to the standing corn of the Philistines. What a vast amount of bitter feelings is thus generated and indulged! What slanderous and reproachful words are uttered; and what wicked wishes and imprecations are poured into the offended ears of the God of peace and love!

Even brothers by nature and brethren by grace (at least by profession), are not unfrequently caught in this hellish snare. Sons of the same parents, and members of the same Church, aye, and office bearers too in the family of God, are sometimes seen in satanic

strife about the mammon of unrighteousness, or a small portion of the inheritance left to them by paternal love. Our pen cannot portray the black and dismal shades of such a scene.

Who, but the Omniscient One, knows all the heart-burnings endured, the spiteful words spoken, the quenchings of brotherly love, the family altars neglected and closets forsaken, or formal prayers arrested in their course heavenward, and returned, like molten lead, into their guilty bosoms ; the Christian ordinances desecrated by an irreconcilable spirit ; Christian fellowship changed into worse than heathenish alienation, and still more iniquitous than all this, God's Holy Spirit resisted and provoked by the ungodly strife, and the body of Christ, the Church, paralyzed and benumbed by the presence of such undutiful members!! All these evils are commenced and continued under the plea of obtaining and supporting right. But the futility of the plea is sufficiently apparent, from the fact that oftentimes more is voluntarily worse than wasted in the litigation than the value of the property involved. Besides, there is an utter disregard of the Divine injunction which forbids brother to go to law with brother, and enjoins the patient suffering of wrong rather than to commit a breach of charity. In seeking our own rights, we must have a paramount regard to the rights and authority of God, and to the claims of Christianity. But these are set at naught,

and pure Selfishness sits sovereign upon the throne of the heart, entrenched by the almost impregnable ramparts of pride, and guarded by a host of self's hateful progeny.

Hark! hark!! What report is that which comes from yonder retired grove by the side of the majestic Hudson? It sounds not like the discharge of the sportsman's gun. No! it is the sharp crack of the duellist's pistol, announcing that death, with lightning speed, has winged his way to the bosom of a friend or neighbour, sent by a hand now red with murderous blood. It may be that an affectionate and beloved husband has been suddenly and unexpectedly snatched from the wife of his youth, who, with an agonized heart, will bend over the lifeless clay, and soon commit to the dust the light of her eyes and joy of her life, doomed thenceforth to tread her weary pilgrimage alone, under a burden of unavailing woe, which none but such as she can know. A parent, too, the noble example and well-qualified instructor of his offspring, has been torn from the arms of his loved ones, and an irreparable loss inflicted on the family circle. What heart can conceive the anguish of such a widow, and the desolation of such a household! A patriot too, whose counsels have gained and sustained his country in many a dark hour and trying emergency, has fallen, not in honourable warfare or public service, but by the hand of a fellow-citizen, a martyr

to a barbarous custom, continued and sustained in civilized society by a code falsely denominated that of "honour."

Last, but not least, a professor of the religion of the meek and lovely Redeemer of man, and an ornament of the Church of God, seduced by worldly reasoning, has been drawn from the path of duty and the altar of devotion, to shed his blood, not as a witness for Jesus Christ, but as a victim to the insatiable monster of selfish revenge! Thus a lovely and beloved wife puts on the untimely and perpetual garments of widowhood, children mourn a loss not to be retrieved, a nation deplores a faithful patriot and servant ignominiously slain, the Church blushes and puts on sackcloth to see her Saviour's wounds opened and bleeding afresh. Infidelity sneers and hell triumphs!! At such a scene as this reason stands aghast, and anxiously enquires, "Whose horrid work is that?" And what answer can be given, but that Selfishness is the fiend that kindled the fires of envy and malice in the bosom of him who challenged his friend to the field of murderous strife, and whose hand dealt the deadly blow; the fiend, too, whose deceitful pleadings allured a noble and Christian spirit into a measure which his conscience condemned and his heart abhorred. Honour! forsooth! then may thieves and devils talk of honour, as well as the willful and determined duellist. No, it is malice prepense or sheer

cowardice. Sinful self has been wounded by a real or imaginary insult, and self fears lest the finger of ungodly scorn should be pointed, or the reproachful epithet bestowed, if the invitation to single combat were declined.

Does he who reluctantly goes to the field of blood, merely yield to the right his enemy possesses, to call him there? This cannot be affirmed; for neither reason nor reason's God, ever gave such a right for such causes as duellists avow. The alledged right is a violation of all right, natural and Divine, and owes its origin to supreme love of self, or to some other subordinate principle of man's depraved nature. True honour prompts a man to risk his own life to preserve that of his neighbour; and a true regard for what is right, dictates implicit and universal obedience to the Divine will.

All violations of the seventh commandment of the Decalogue, are examples of Selfishness of the most brutal character. The despoiler of female virtue deliberately lays his plans for engaging the affections of his victim, and then by an honourable promise, made with seeming sincerity and solemnity, but really with consummate hypocrisy, succeeds in robbing the confiding heart of his deceived one, of a jewel more precious than its life's blood; in recompense of which, all the material jewels that sparkle on crowns of royalty are utterly valueless.

The toy of an hour is then abandoned to the scorn of the world, and too generally driven by shame and want to the lowest haunts of vice, there to administer, for a brief season, to indiscriminate lust, and then to sink, a loathsome outcast, into an untimely and ignominious grave, unwept by her nearest relatives, and leaving none behind to call her blessed. The "strange woman," too, pursues a similar course of selfish gratification, as described by the inspired King of Israel in the seventh chapter of the book of Proverbs: "For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And behold there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart. She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves. For the good man is not at home, he is gone a long journey; he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straight-way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thy heart decline to her ways; go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”

The Selfishness of adultery is, if possible, still more apparent; for the brutal perpetrators not only sin against their own and each other's souls, but against the souls of their bosom companions, to whom they have plighted perpetual love and fidelity at the altar of God; they bring dishonour and woe on innocent families, whom they are bound to love and cherish with the fondest regard. “The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for

themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. For the morning is to them as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. He is swept as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth." Job 24: 15-18.

"The adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? So he that goeth into his neighbour's wife, whosoever toucheth her, shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding; he that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts." Prov. 6: 27-35.

To what other depraved passion than the one of which we are treating, shall the crime of murder be generally attributed? One example will be a fair type of the great majority of cases. An individual becomes a hired servant in a wealthy and highly respected household, in which he is treated with all proper confidence and kindness; to which, however, his adamant heart is utterly insensible. Besides himself and fellow servants there are, it may be, but

two others composing the family—an aged couple, husband and wife, who, for nearly fifty years, have together pursued the honourable, “smooth and even tenor of their way,” and are looking forward to the period, as not far distant, when they must pass through “the valley of the shadow of death” to the world of reunion, love and life eternal. They fondly hope that it may be the privilege of one to comfort the other in the last trying hour; and that affectionate children and dear friends may administer to the necessities of both, in the last conflict, and receive their parting blessing.

Not so, ye aged pilgrims! The demon of covetous Selfishness is at work in the heart of one, in whom, perhaps, you have too much confidence, and soon will he be prepared for the horrid work to which he is impelled. At midnight, when the “deep sleep falleth upon man,” the ungrateful and selfish wretch enters stealthily, and treads his way through the familiar dwelling of his aged benefactors. He stands by the bedside of the unconscious sleepers, and ere they are aware of danger, the fatal weapon has entered the loving bosom of the tender wife and mother, and after a feeble struggle with the powerful assassin, the kind husband and father falls by the same arm, to linger a few long hours in the agonies of death. Side by side, in the silent chamber of death, the bodies of the aged Christians slumber, whilst their selfish and

cruel murderer hears, with atheistic indifference, the sentence of the law, and soon receives the just reward of his deed. O, Selfishness, child of the devil, thou hast indeed proved thy parentage, and gained thy threefold aim!

The tale bearer passes from house to house, and for the gratification of a selfish feeling, whispers around the evil reports that in most cases may have originated in misapprehension or malice. The evil is magnified in every recital, and probably ends not but in the "separation of chief friends" and long-protracted enmities, so that the vivid description of the Roman poet is fully verified.

"Rumour—than which no swifter evil lives—
Waxes by change—by motion strength acquires;
First small, through fear, now rears itself on high,
Walks on the earth and hides its head in clouds.

* * * * *

A monster horrible and great, to whom there are
As many wakeful eyes—strange to be told—
As many tongues—as many babbling mouths,
As many ears erect, as there are plumes
Upon its loathsome form. By night it flies
In midway air, and roars thro' earth's dark shade,
Nor ever shuts its eyes in sweet repose;
By day sits sentinel on highest roof,
Or lofty tow'rs, and mighty cities frights;
As firm a friend of falsehood and of wrong
As messenger of truth."—VIRGIL *ÆNIED* 4.

It matters not, in most cases, though the reports may be founded in truth, since the circulation is generally prompted by envious and selfish feelings, and hence the justice of the legal adage—"The greater the truth, the greater the libel." There may be cases where it is proper and necessary to expose the character and designs of the wicked, as a safeguard to the public good, or a warning to the innocent when they are exposed to danger and suffering; but such cases are probably comparatively rare, and when they occur should be conducted with the utmost tenderness and self-denial. Were this course pursued, the tale bearer's avocation would cease, and many a social evil would be dried up in its source.

Of lying, false witnessing, and perjury, it must be obvious that Selfishness is the sole origin, and the same may be affirmed of other forms of social vice that might be enumerated. The liar, to accomplish some injury to his neighbour, or procure some unlawful advantage to himself, circulates a conscious falsehood, and by so doing practically denies the omniscience of Jehovah, and braves the terrors of his righteous judgment.

The perjurer advances a step farther in satanic Selfishness and malice, and seeks, by legal forms, to establish and perpetuate a lie, while in reality he but confirms his own title as a child of the devil and enemy of all righteousness.

These all are the legitimate offspring of Selfishness, that lust of the flesh whose works are manifest, “which are these—Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of which I tell you now, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”—Gal. 5 : 19–21.

CHAPTER VI.

CONJUGAL AND PARENTAL SELFISHNESS.

The Division of the Human Race into separate Nations and Families, a Divine Appointment, and Proof of Wisdom and Goodness. Importance of the Family State. Causes Destructive of Family Peace and Prosperity. Selfishness the Principal Cause. Husband and Wife. Origin of Conjugal Discord. Selfishness towards Children. Excellencies and Faults unduly magnified True and False Parental Love. Partialities and Antipathies. Indulgence, misnamed "Fondness" and "Kindness," while it is in reality Selfish and Cruel. Severity. Chastisement, Deficient or Excessive—Tender or Harsh. Divine Chastisement our Example. Selfishness in the Education of Children at Home and Abroad. Rewards. Favouritism. Testamentary Selfishness.

THE division of the human race into nations, was a direct result of God's confounding the language of the proud Babel builders; and whilst it was a righteously inflicted judgment on man's impious audacity, was also mercifully intended for man's good, by acting as a restraint on his evil propensities, and as a means to the more speedy subjection and population of the earth.

The subdivision of communities into distinct families is a still more beneficent institution, and bears the clearest marks of its Divine origin. It was, indeed, necessarily anterior to all other civil associations, and lies at the foundation of the whole. It dates from Eden, and if not perfectly developed in that blissful place, it was so, soon afterwards, when the first human pair felt the delights and assumed the responsibilities of parents.

When the duties of the family state are faithfully and constantly discharged, it is, beyond question, the most happy condition of social life, and fraught with the richest blessings to society. By family discipline the individual is trained for social and public duty, and qualified to be a blessing and ornament to his kind, in whatever sphere he may be called to move. On the contrary, if this be neglected, and evil passions be indulged and exercised, the family becomes as miserable and hurtful as it should and might have been the opposite, and is acknowledged to be the most prolific source of crime and wretchedness.

Various are the specific causes which mar, and too often destroy, the peace, happiness, comfort, and usefulness of domestic life.

In multitudes of families, poverty and pinching want, however induced, prevent much physical and mental comfort, and inflict no small degree of absolute suffering, whilst wealth and luxury, in many

others, are probably attended with as great, if not a greater amount of disquietude and pain.

In great numbers, indulgence and improvidence are attended by a long train of evils, whilst avarice and penuriousness draw after them followers no less numerous and hurtful. A lack of self-respect and honourable ambition keep many in the dust, whilst pride and sinful emulation are the ruin of thousands.

But of all the existing causes of domestic infelicity, none are so great or so much to be deplored as Selfishness; for it is just that one from which most of the others have their origin, and in the absence of which they would cease to exist.

Unless individuals enter the important relation of married life with the determination to practice towards each other constant self-denial, unpleasant feelings and frequent bickerings, if nothing worse, will be apt to ensue, whatever may be the amount of tenderness and conjugal love. The angel before marriage will ere long be stripped of her robes of innocence and light, and assume the ordinary garb of frail and sinful humanity; and the manly form that seemed the very type and personification of nobility, purity and generosity, when it stood before the hymeneal altar, will soon be found to enshrine other feelings and tendencies besides those of love and condescension. Some trifling circumstance or unimportant difference of sentiment or judgment, gives the

first occasion for the developement of the principle of Selfishness, which calmly slumbered in the bosom during the hopeful period of courtship, and slumbered then, because each party constantly sought and rejoiced in the happiness of the other, and felt that the practice of self-denial, so far from being a painful sacrifice, was fraught with the most exquisite delight.

But "circumstances alter cases"—and the circumstance that hope is realized in the possession of the beloved object, removes the restraint imposed on self, and allows it to exert its primitive strength and tyranny. Or to vary the expression, Selfishness, which before had concealed itself under the garb of affection and wrought in an amiable mood, may now throw aside its assumed disguise, and operate in its own hateful nature. This principle shows itself on innumerable occasions, in the obstinacy of self-will, the pride of opinion and the inveteracy of habit (nature's second self), and without the utmost watchfulness and opposition, will increase in strength with every exercise of its power, until it obtains complete ascendancy in every thought, word and deed.

Finally, it will sap the foundations of love, confidence and respect, one after the other, till some terrible explosion may lay in ruins the beautiful fabric of domestic love and harmony, and leave little else than the broken fragments to tell where once it stood.

To prove that Selfishness, in one or both par-

ties, is the prime disturber and greatest enemy of nuptial bliss, needs only the candid scrutiny of their own hearts, by those who have suffered or are now suffering under its malignant sway. Is it not this which leads one violently to oppose the wishes or will of the other without adequate reason; especially considering that before marriage they would have been met by a different spirit and found an opposite issue, either by being gladly anticipated or promptly gratified in the moment of expression?

The differences of sentiment that existed prior to a union for life, formed no obstacle to harmonious intercourse; but now they are discussed with unyielding pertinacity, and diverge the more from every attempt to reduce them to a parallel; and the only compromise that can be effected, to preserve the peace, is, that each must pursue his and her own wilful way—the father, to educate the sons according to his ideas of right, and the mother to bring up the daughters after her own fashion. A little mutual forbearance and honest search for truth would probably have conducted them to the harbour of concord; but the demon of Selfishness has been evoked, which rules the storm and heeds not the voice which says, “Peace, be still.”

Habits, which were once charitably tolerated, or even were thought to give a pleasing variety to the character of each, are now regarded as so many inex-

cusable blemishes, and are perpetually commented on as proofs of deficient intelligence, refinement or taste.

The deductions of reason or conscientious convictions may indeed be assigned by each for a perseverance in their unhappy differences and contentions; but whatever motives or reasons may be alledged, Selfishness will be found, on close examination, to be the groundwork of the whole, or at least, to present an insuperable barrier against their amicable adjustment.

In their treatment of their offspring, as well as of each other, parents, more frequently than they are probably aware, act under the promptings of a selfish spirit. Even parental love, without which life would be given in vain, or worse than in vain, may be deeply imbued with the spirit of self, not only as an instinct of our sentient nature, which we share with the irrational animals, but also as a principle of action which should submit to the control of reason and truth, and be ever exercised for the best good of its objects. What, but Selfishness, magnifies beyond proper bounds, in the eyes of parents, the beauties, talents and acquirements of their children, and, at the same time, makes them blind to their opposite defects? Is it not because they are THEIR children, that they see in them what they cannot dis-

cern in others, though much their superiors in all respects?

If not entirely blind to their children's faults, yet their self-love is immediately offended should a neighbour or acquaintance discover the same faults and speak of them in the most friendly manner; though they themselves have angrily reproved them many times a day. True parental love is distinguished from the selfish in this, that the former, if it sees, as it must and will, commendable points in the physical and moral character of children, rather seeks to conceal them, especially from their possessors, whilst, at the same time, it ardently and perseveringly aims at their cultivation, as well as to supply every deficiency and eradicate every evil propensity; but the latter loudly proclaims and proudly parades every amiable disposition and splendid acquirement, even in the presence of the children; and, on the contrary, glaring faults are extenuated and evil passions excused, without a well directed effort to amend the one or subdue the other.

The unreasonable and unjust partiality which one or both parents frequently exercise towards one child to the injury of the rest, is not always, perhaps seldom, owing to any superiority of that child, above others, in form, temper, behaviour or attainments, but takes its rise from something in the parents themselves; and that something, if it be not pure Selfish-

ness itself, is closely allied thereto. A silly assertion, in the form of prophecy, may have been verified at the birth of the favoured one, and thenceforth the strength of parental feeling, we cannot call it love, is concentrated on the little interpreter of dreams or unconscious fulfiller of predictions; and this feeling knows no abatement in after life, whatever may be the career or position of the idolized object.

In the same way, a wicked antipathy against one or more of the children is indulged from their entrance into the world, and ceases not its baneful influence until the parent's heart is still in death. Nor is that the end of the evil; the partiality and antipathy have wrought their appropriate work in the bosoms of brothers and sisters; and if they have not entirely dried up the fountain of kindred affection, have thrown therein the bitter roots of envy, jealousy and strife, and spoiled the sweet streams of fraternal and sisterly love. The evil, moreover, is often greatly augmented by the partial and selfish parent's speaking, in bitter and unfeeling terms, to one child of the imperfections or faults of another; thus becoming a tale-bearer of the most odious stamp, and perpetuating whatever alienation of feeling may have existed. Oh! Selfishness, thou polluter of parental hearts, thou destroyer of domestic peace and love, can thy envenomed presence effect a more lamenta-

ble ill, or thy poisonous fang inflict a more deadly plague?

Parents also selfishly sin in the improper and untimely indulgence of their children, and especially of the favourite. We say *improper*, because all indulgence is not necessarily wrong. There may be and are frequent occasions, when the wishes and desires of a child should be gratified, though it may cost the parent a trifling sacrifice. When the object or pleasure desired is innocent, or may furnish occasion for instruction, warning or profit, it would be wrong to deny it, if in the parent's power conscientiously to do otherwise. But to indulge children, however young they may be, and insensible of the wrong, in the wanton destruction of playthings, books or other property, is to cherish in them a willful, extravagant and pernicious disposition, which may lay the foundation of much future suffering in them, and bring the grey hairs of parents with sorrow to the grave. It is still more wicked and ruinous, to allow children of riper age to gratify their corrupt propensities in pursuits and pleasures which are positively improper and sinful.

Yet, this is positively done, not only by those parents who pay little or no regard to moral and religious principles, either in themselves or their offspring, but also by such as possess genuine piety, and feel religion to be the one thing needful for them-

selves and their families. Alas! they consider not what they do, and know not how soon, what God said to the too indulgent Eli, may be applicable to themselves: "I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Indulgence may be untimely, as well as essentially wrong. What would be innocent and beneficial on other days of the week, would be sinful and therefore injurious on the Sabbath day; that which might be proper in seasons of joy and prosperity, would be highly improper in times of adversity and sorrow; and that which might prove harmless at one period of life, might nevertheless be fraught with fatal injury at another. But we cannot further specify, since the occasions and subjects are very numerous on which the desire for gratification manifests itself in the family circle. Parents have indeed a difficult task before them in this part of their duty, and one that requires nice discrimination and wisdom from above, that they may avoid the dangers that lurk on either hand.

The improper indulgence of which we have been speaking, is very generally regarded and adduced as a commendable trait in parental character, because it is called by the name of "fondness" or some synonymous term, expressive of tender regard; while, in reality, it is the extreme of cruelty, since nothing

can be more hard-hearted in parents, than to cherish evil principles and implant and cultivate corrupt habits in the souls and lives of their children. It is admitted that the fond parents do not design to be cruel, but intend the very reverse; and yet, the result is the same as though they acted from a deep laid and refined plan to destroy the happiness of their children for life. An enemy, were they in his power, could not adopt wiser means of accomplishing their ruin, than to gratify every childish whim, humour every wayward fancy, throw the reins on the neck of every youthful lust, and let them feel no more restraint than the wild ass of the desert, "who scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth the crying of the driver."

To the judgment, that improper indulgence springs from Selfishness, the parent may be inclined to demur; and if so, let the motives be candidly scrutinized, and then say, whether the judgment should not stand as one of truth and justice.

A little child goes to its mother with the request that it may have or do a certain thing, which, for some reason, or it may be none at all, the mother denies. But the little pleader, having already learned from former instances the meaning of the adage, "Perseverance conquers all things," continues preferring its request, until the mother, somewhat vexed with its importunity, yields to the demand. Was it

not to rid herself of the uneasy besetment that she changed her purpose, and by so doing impaired the confidence of the child in her judgment or veracity? Or in other words, was it not a selfish consideration principally that influenced her mind in opposition to duty?

In the case also of a cheerful and prompt indulgence of an improper desire, it is done because it would give the parent pain to refuse, although conscious, at the same time, that a refusal should be given.

True affection induces parents to suffer pain themselves, rather than inflict an injury on a young and susceptible mind; but selfish love cannot bear to say "nay," and is soon overcome by the tears or importunities of the object of this spurious kindness.

On the other hand, parents may err by treating their children with too much severity, and requiring from them more instances of self-denial than are reasonable or proper. They may disgust and sour the feelings of their children by avaricious parsimony or monkish asceticism, and render even virtue and religion themselves unlovely to their minds, by representing all youthful pleasures and amusements to be essentially sinful and inconsistent with the claims of morality and piety. Many a son has been made a spendthrift or a rake by a miserly or over-righteous father; and many a daughter, a votary of fashion and

vanity by the rigid plainness and prudery of a mother. But avarice is Selfishness in one of the worst of its innumerable forms; and nothing, so much as self-righteousness, (that is to say, Selfishness,) prompts any one to over-act the part of virtue and religion.

The Word of God says—"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." The provocation here forbidden is undoubtedly that excited by unreasonable severity and restraint; and the discouragement which parents are cautioned not to inflict, is that want of energy and that depression of spirit which are almost the necessary result of harsh treatment. In the deficiency or excess of proper chastisement for their children's willful faults and errors, parents are too generally actuated by a selfish spirit; and it is impossible to decide to which extreme Selfishness is the more inclined, or in which it is followed by the greater evil. That correction is generally needed, and that love requires it to be timely and properly administered, are propositions that none will be inclined to dispute, who believe in the depravity of human nature, or know any thing of the frowardness of childhood and youth.

Reason and common sense urge to the duty, and a higher authority than either or both hath said, "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." Here the sparing of the rod is ascribed to hatred itself; not that the

parent actually hates his son, but because the result of the parent's conduct is as ruinous to the child as hatred could wish or devise, according to the well-known adage—"Spare the rod, and spoil the child." It is not, then, true affection for children, and dutiful regard for their real welfare, which inclines parents to withhold needed and proper correction, and the utmost that charity itself can say in extenuation of this sin of omission is, that in sparing the rod, a paramount regard is had for the parent's own feelings—he spares the rod to spare himself, and omits the duty, to save himself the pain or trouble of its faithful discharge. Again ; if discipline be frequently administered, it is often from selfish feelings, faulty, in both degree and manner. Sufficient discrimination is not exercised in reference to the nature of the acts themselves, or to the amount of guilt that may attach to filial disobedience or delinquencies. A comparatively trifling offence receives a punishment out of all just proportion to the fault committed, or a grievous and willful sin may be suffered to pass unreprieved, or be dismissed with the mildest rebuke.

In the former case, the parent's temper may be soured and irritated by some occurrence altogether disconnected with his child, and on the first occasion he pours the bitterness of his heart on the head of his son, and gives vent to angry expressions, that were in reality called forth by some other offender

than the one before him. In the latter case, the parent may be in one of his pleasant and amiable moods; some prosperous event in business may have fulfilled his expectations and gratified his desires; and he is disposed to see all things in the light of the sun that shines on himself, and even to laugh at acts of filial disobedience and mischief as evidences of precocious talent, or mere outbreakings of youthful spirit or sprightliness. In both cases, who does not see that the feeling which predominates is self, that can so easily magnify or diminish objects, as they may be agreeable or disagreeable to its own nature and operation.

In administering reproof or inflicting chastisement, manner is as important as matter. Indeed, a proper manner is essential to both, if they are intended and expected to produce a complete and beneficial effect.

If the manner be unnecessarily severe, the very nature of the discipline is changed; reproof then becomes vituperation and abuse, and punishment is transformed into barbarity.

It need not be said, how often reproof is given with irritated feelings and in angry tones; nay, how seldom it is bestowed in any other way. Some parents seem incapable for the task, unless vexation comes to their assistance. Hence the vengeful look and reproachful words, that, in innumerable instances are the inseparable accompaniments of any attempts to use the rod

of correction ; and hence, parents frequently as richly deserve chastisement for the manner of inflicting punishment, as their children do for furnishing the occasion that called for it.

Others reprove and correct in such a careless and uninterested manner, that their children can scarcely believe them to be in earnest, and are almost warranted in the conclusion that the parent regards the fault as no fault at all, or, at least, as one of so venial a character that it might have been suffered to pass without observation or remark.

In all such cases as the above, Selfishness acts a prominent part. Unjustifiable anger is of a purely selfish character ; and no injustice is done to mistaken fondness and undue leniency, by including them in the same condemnation. In God's government of his rational and spiritual offspring, there is neither unjust severity nor overweening tenderness, and therefore it is free from the charge of Selfishness. He chastises those he loves, when they need it ; and always for their greatest good, as well as for his glory, without the exercise of those selfish feelings with which man's bosom is polluted.

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ; furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of

spirits and live? For they, verily chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Heb. 12: 6, 9, 10.

The Divine government is a pattern to which that of parents should be conformed, for it is written: "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect;" but, to make any approach whatever towards such perfection, self-indulgence must be renounced, and parents must chastise, not for their own pleasure or for the gratification of angry feelings, but for the profit of their children.

We remark, in passing, that the term "*rod*," in the the foregoing paragraphs, has been used, not in its literal and material meaning, but in its metaphorical and moral sense. The use of the literal rod has, in intelligent and refined households, been almost entirely dispensed with, and it were best to be so, if its banishment from the family circle were always followed by the introduction of the superior force of mild reasoning, and ardent Christian instruction and prayer. But to expel the one, and make no use of the other, is to inflict a double injury on those who, if left to themselves, frequently go to ruin, and "bring both father and mother to shame." In the education of children, parents too generally inculcate and foster the principles of Selfishness. By education, as here used, is meant, not merely the instruction which it is the business of schools and seminaries of learning

to impart, but, according to the original meaning of the term, the whole system of "bringing up," till the period when the youth legally becomes a man, and may rightfully direct his own actions, and assume the responsibilities of manhood. It embraces the whole period of minority, commencing with the first dawn of reason, if not before, and continues its uninterrupted course until authoritative control gives place to mere friendly advice and parental admonition. During this period the foundation of future character is generally laid, and those principles are imbibed which will constitute the springs of action to the close of life. Circumstances may somewhat modify their influence, and, if evil, religion may in a degree restrain them, but generally speaking, there they are, wrought into the very structure of the mind and heart, defying alike the changes of time, the power of religion, and the approaching realities of eternity.

The period of education is consequently an inconceivably important one, and parents should be fully apprised of, and take into serious consideration, the permanency of the impressions which their conduct and training cannot fail to make on the susceptible minds of their children.

The work of education is effected both by example and precept. Long before the parent may judge it expedient to communicate oral instruction, the training of the little one has commenced and made rapid

progress, for it has had two living examples at least, (and in most cases more), constantly before its eyes, and from the nature of its position, those examples must be possessed of irresistible influence. Every look, tone, word, and action of the parent, has made an impression on the intellect or heart of the child which it is scarcely possible to erase; and the fact should be an abiding and solemn caution to fathers and mothers, that evil conduct on their part makes a more ready and lasting stamp on the character of their child than good does, because of the predisposition of man's nature to that which is sinful. If, then, men and women are ever to be what they might and should be, if the condition of the world is ever to be ameliorated, the groundwork of the desired change must be begun in the nursery, by parents setting before their children an upright and unselfish example, and, with unremitting assiduity, following up the same to the end with correct moral and religious instruction.

The phrases, "Cold as charity," and "A selfish world," have long been stereotyped forms of speech in all ranks and conditions of society; and, in answer to the question, "Why is it so?" the only correct reply would be, "Selfishness is the controlling principle of man's fallen nature; it is the first emotion of the infantile mind, the first lesson placed before its eyes at home, and the most distinct one that it reads in the

surrounding world." As soon as children are capable of understanding language, and comprehending a few general ideas, what do they commonly hear from the lips of their parents but the language of Selfishness, and what emotions do they behold, but such as perfectly harmonize with their theme?

The father talks of his business affairs in a selfish manner, and of money making as the chief aim and great business of life; and the mother discourses of her shopping, dresses and visits, of her pleasures and mortifications, as if nothing but what pertained to self, was worthy of a moment's consideration. How soon are children taught, that "getting on well in the world" means "getting wealth," whatever the character of the man may be, the means he employs, or the business he pursues.

How generally are sons and daughters, as they approach manhood or womanhood, given to understand, that a "good marriage" is one by which a large fortune is acquired or promised, and that "fine prospects" are those that glitter with gold and diamonds, and are decked with fine apparel and splendid furniture.

What but Selfishness, in its avaricious type, could induce parents to sacrifice the happiness of a child for life, by desiring and plotting for him or her a wealthy settlement, in utter disregard of the heart's emotions, or of the character of the one with whom

they seek to be allied? while, at the same time, they frown indignantly upon, and oppose violently, a union which has every ingredient but that of riches, to make it blessed. And when consent to what they are pleased to regard as an unsuitable match is extorted, it is sometimes given with a muttered curse and dire imprecation, that the wrath of heaven may pursue the disobedient and undutiful pair. These are no fancy sketches, but pictures drawn from life; and multitudes of parents will at once recognize them as daguerreotyped portraits of themselves.

Can it be a matter of surprise that charity is as cold as an iceberg, or the world selfish, when it is considered that they come forth from under such tuition?

Education, in the common use of the term, is conducted in the same spirit as that at home. If children at school are incited to diligence and perseverance in study, it is by the presentation of some selfish motive. A gilded toy, or splendid article of dress is held up, or some sensual gratification promised, as a reward for application and superiority in learning. The highest premium or first honour in the class or school is represented as the proper object of effort; and to secure that, every difficulty must be conquered, and every nerve strained to the utmost to outstrip all competitors in the ambitious and selfish contest. If somewhat higher motives are inculcated,

they are, nevertheless, of the same character. The admiration and applause of their parents and friends, to be bestowed on their learning and accomplishments, are urged upon the young as legitimate objects of pursuit and an ample recompense for literary toil. Or to mention the ultimate reason generally assigned for the propriety of close and continuous application to study, the sons are told that their learning and talents will enable them to rise and shine in society, amass riches in their business or profession, and attain to high, if not the highest, posts of honour and emoluments in their country; and the daughters are cheered with the suggestion, that their intelligence and accomplishments will gain for them the adulation of fashionable circles, enable them to command the matrimonial market, and secure for them a splendid settlement in life.

In the less wealthy and humbler ranks of society, where the ability does not exist to bestow a liberal education on all their children, parents frequently select a favourite from among them, and on that one, to the injury (it may be) of the rest, lavish all their means and expend all their anxieties; with no special regard to mental endowments or moral qualifications, but simply and solely with the view of carrying out their partial feelings or elevating themselves by the exaltation of their child. In this way many, unquestionably, are forced into public life, whose quali-

fications are by no means what their station requires; and who, instead of being, severally, an ornament and support, are a dishonour and burden to the profession to which they have been immediately destined.

In illustration of parental Selfishness, but one more thought shall be presented; and though, from the circumstances of the case, the idea might well seem to be unfounded, yet numerous facts establish its truth and justice. The partial Selfishness manifested through life, often follows the parent to the grave and like an evil spirit seems to haunt the sepulchre of the dead. The testamentary document, by which property, no longer to be retained and enjoyed, is distributed to surviving children and friends, bears ample testimony, that, up to the latest hour of life, the spirit of Selfishness was not extinct or impaired, however other passions may have yielded to the influence of time or the approach of eternity. Property has been retained as long as there was power to grasp it, and only surrendered and unequally distributed when death forced the surrender and called the former possessor to the bar of God. True parental love would suggest the duty and advantage of aiding children according to their need and to the extent of the parent's ability, when such aid would accomplish the most good and be most gratefully received; but, under the promptings

of avaricious Selfishness, the boon is withheld until the time, when, instead of being a blessing, it may prove to be a curse, by exciting fraternal discord ; and when sweet gratitude itself can be expressed, chiefly, by the plated coffin and sculptured monument.

CHAPTER VII.

FRATERNAL SELFISHNESS.

The Title. Design of the Family Circle. Selfishness in Infancy. Quarrels in Childhood. "Mine" and "Thine." Children's Quarrels short-lived. Children's most difficult Lesson. Self sacrifice. Contentions of Early Childhood, the Origin of Future Ones. Tale-bearing. Influence of Wealth and Poverty on Brothers and Sisters. Reading the Will.

If the title of this chapter, as well as that of the preceding one, be not altogether a misnomer, it is at least a mournful collocation of words; and vastly the more so, because the facts that necessitate it are of a still more lamentable character.

The family circle was designed to be the peculiar sphere of love, harmony and peace, whence a cheering light might radiate to the extremities of the social system; and when the original purpose is fully carried out, there is no more beautiful scene presented to the eye of man on earth, and none that exerts a greater power in purifying and ennobling the heart of man. But when its nature is polluted by

base principles, and its action disturbed by unruly passions, it is entirely the reverse of what it ought to be; and among the causes that contribute to convert the family into a pandemonium of evil, Selfishness will be acknowledged to be the most prevalent and deleterious, by all who have the government of children committed to them, or are attentive observers of their behaviour.

The comparatively innocent period of infancy is not exempt from its presence. In a variety of ways it shows itself in the little nursling as it hangs upon its mother's bosom and is supported by her encircling arm. Its tiny hand is frequently raised in impotent anger and self-will, against the one who cherishes it with maternal love and patience; and when its will is controlled by superior power, it gives vent to its selfish feelings in tears and outcries. It early shows a disposition to appropriate to itself whatever attracts its attention, and is grievously vexed when any pleasing object is wrested from its grasp. Thus, the mother's first controversy with her darling babe is occasioned by the spirit of self, and it proves to be but a faint and feeble earnest of future contests of a graver and more determined character. The war against self-will and Selfishness is rather mild, and the conquest more easily obtained, so long as the strife is confined to mother and one child; but as soon as a third party, in the form of a brother or sis-

ter, appears on the field of action, it becomes more fierce and desperate, and the issue more doubtful.

The mother's work, and father's too, is then doubled; for they have thenceforth before them the difficult task to keep the peace between those, who, however unintentionally, are still in reality strongly combined to resist their parent's authority and seek their own pleasure.

The quarrels between the two, over their toys and pursuits, are frequent and unyielding, and are carried on, both in word and deed, until a forcible separation gives time for passion to subside, and fraternal love to resume its sway for a brief season.

The disagreement occurs times without number, and every repetition seems but to increase the violence that attends it, and augment the Selfishness with which it is conducted.

The labour of governing such unruly and willful agents, goes on increasing in something like arithmetical ratio, as one after another is added to the number; as increasing age adds to depravity; and as corporeal and mental expansion serve to develop other corrupt propensities besides those already brought to view.

It early becomes absolutely necessary, practically to teach brothers and sisters the meaning of the terms "Mine" and "Thine," and to insist on their showing a proper respect to each other's rights. But

though it is easy to make them understand "Mine," they are dull of comprehension in reference to "Thine;" and are strongly disposed to change its meaning or to substitute the more agreeable term. And this dullness of the mind, like that of the bodily ear, is apt to increase with advancing age, till it terminates in almost complete deafness.

The frequency of juvenile contentions is somewhat relieved by the circumstance that they are mostly short-lived and soon give place to reconciliation and peace. Were they as obstinate as they generally are in adult age, they would be altogether intolerable, and the household, instead of being a type of heaven, would be a scene of perpetual discord and woe.

The most difficult lesson to be taught to children, and to be practiced towards each other, is that of self-denial; for it is precisely that one which is directly opposed to the predominating principle of their corrupt natures.

In all well trained families, brothers and sisters are instructed in the duty and pleasure of making sacrifices of each other's will and gratification for the good and happiness of the whole; but how dull are they to comprehend the one, and slow of heart to believe the other; or rather, how much opposed to the duty, and indifferent to the happiness that would follow its performance! If a present of choice fruit be made to one, great reluctance is generally felt and exhibited

to comply with the standing rule, which requires its distribution among the rest; or if there seem to be a ready compliance, Selfishness will select the best, or retain Benjamin's mess for its own gratification. And when the distribution is made by parental impartiality, the younger, insensible to their relative standing and just claims, very frequently complain that John's or Mary's portion is the largest and best, and are seldom satisfied or quieted by being reminded, that the eldest should receive the largest portion, and the most obedient and dutiful be rewarded with the best. The parent's presence and the fear of reproof may prevent or still the clamours; but suppressed envy and jealousy will find expression, when they talk over the matter by themselves, and in angry tones condemn a father's or mother's judgment, and reproach each other. In such familiar and apparently trivial occurrences as these, fraternal Selfishness begins its destructive career; and the attention of all concerned is specially directed towards them, from the conviction that they are too much overlooked by parents, and not sufficiently understood by brothers and sisters, as being the fountain whence flow the streams that embitter fraternal intercourse in after life, and the spring of that inquisitorial spirit which leads relatives of the nearest blood to torture each other in selfish revenge, or to compel conformity to their selfish desires and sentiments. Those

disputes and contentions which destroy brotherly affection in advanced life, and with which the world is replete, have likewise their origin, as to spirit at least, in early childhood and youth; and in what a large proportion of cases is it true that they arise from equally trivial causes? The disputes of childhood are about a toy or a plum, while those of manhood are frequently about some non-essential distinction or ceremonial observance, which derives its chief importance, in the estimation of its fiery advocate, from its connection with beloved self.

One selfish habit, too much tolerated and cherished by injudicious parents, is almost universally contracted in the family circle. It is that of tale-bearing.

Edward, unintentionally, hurts Charles, or inflicts a blow in anger, and the offended party, unable, it may be, to take vengeance himself, runs, with streaming eyes and bosom heaving with wrath, to pour his complaints and accusations into the ears of father or mother, in the hope that chastisement will be inflicted. Or Ann goes to her parent with a similar complaint against Susan, and having found an attentive ear and sympathizing spirit in the childish listener, they are encouraged to pursue the same course on all occasions. The offenders, too, under the influence of the same feelings, are keenly on the lookout for like occasions, and are not slow or backward in the work of retaliation.

Tale-bearing is not confined to cases in which personal injury is received, but extends to all conceivable circumstances in which misconduct or disobedience is really or apparently involved; and what discloses the Selfishness of the procedure is, that the same faults which are promptly told when committed by a brother or sister, are as carefully concealed or reluctantly confessed when the tale-teller becomes the actor.

That children should, in all cases, conceal the misconduct of one another from their parents is not asserted or intimated, but when it becomes proper and necessary that the fault or delinquency should be made known, it ought to be done in the tender spirit of fraternal love, and for the benefit of the transgressor. This, however, is very rarely seen in the practice of tale-bearing, whether among children or adults, and it is chiefly to expose the origin and motive of the habit that the remarks have been made, and they might have been entirely spared, without much impropriety, if the evil habit were confined to the juvenile household or time of minority. But, alas! brothers and sisters too frequently carry it with them when they leave the paternal mansion, to inhabit separate dwellings and rear families of their own. Remarks, confidentially made, (or made, at least, without the desire or thought of their being reported), are carried from one to the other, and, by

alterations or exaggerations, assume the appearance of malice or envy, and are so received, whatever may have been the spirit or intention with which they were uttered. Perhaps a natural bodily blemish or mental infirmity may have been the subject of conversation, and however unworthy of notice such improper discourse may be, it is sufficient, when reported, to produce angry feelings and alienation of heart in the guiltless possessor of the alledged defect.

In such transactions Selfishness operates in all three of the parties. The one, in commenting on the natural defects of the other, tacitly institutes a comparison between them, and would have the hearer to draw an inference therefrom as advantageous to him or herself, as detrimental to the other. The intent of the whole may be nothing more or less than this: "I have given you one half of the contrast, and the other half sits before you." The tale-bearer is actuated by some selfish consideration or only gratifies a mischief-making propensity, and the third party is wounded in a tender point, by having his personal appearance lightly spoken of, or his mental endowments underrated.

When the matter of malicious tale-bearing is some moral delinquency or grave offence, the evil is greatly aggravated, and the Selfishness from which it springs the more inexcusable.

If it be with manifest reluctance and pain that the

vices and misdeeds of a brother or sister are narrated ; if, in the spirit of charity and compassion, their guilt be palliated as far as possible ; if forgiveness be ready to throw the mantle of oblivion over them, and if there be a desire and endeavour to turn the guilty one from the error of his way, then must the narrator be exonerated from the charge of Selfishness and tale-bearing. He is but performing an imperative duty, for the same authority that says, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people," also says in a contiguous sentence, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart ; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. 19 : 16, 17.

In the providence of God, one or more members of a family may be placed in a more eligible situation for obtaining the necessaries and comforts of life than the rest, or be blest with more wealth and worldly prosperity, and when such is the fact, it should furnish occasion for the exercise of greater sympathy and benevolence on the one hand, and of joy and congratulation on the other, and such is the uniform result of true brotherly love ; but if wealth and prosperity generate, on the one side, cold indifference and unsocial distance towards poor relatives, and, on the other side, give occasion to envy and ill-will, what other verdict can be rendered, according to the evidence, than that Selfishness equally predominates on both sides ? That

the latter is the prevalent state of mind and feeling in the case supposed who will undertake to gain-say or deny, that has any knowledge of the human heart or experience of its workings? Envy, as well as love, has its sorrows and joys, but they are experienced on exactly opposite grounds. Whilst love rejoices in the prosperity and grieves at the adversity of its object, envy pines at the happiness and exults in the misfortune and suffering of even a sister or a brother. This is, indeed, to draw a melancholy and humiliating picture of human nature, but the portrait will not be deemed too darkly shaded by any who believe the Divine declaration, that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," defying the scrutiny of finite intellect, and being only perfectly known by Him "who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men." Nor is this an extreme case, or merely an assumed possibility, but an actual and almost every day exhibition of depravity and Selfishness, as thousands could readily testify.

The same evil principles are at work in those members of a former household, who are all placed in a similar position of worldly independence, and who, nevertheless, for filthy lucre's sake, break the bonds of fraternal love asunder, and contend as enemies, (or rather as fiends incarnate), about a small portion of worldly property. But these contentions, in the

form of law-suits, between brothers, have been already referred to in a former chapter, and need not to be enlarged upon here, with the exception of the additional remark, that the familiarity which brothers have been accustomed to use in their intercourse with each other, diminishes that respect which unallied strangers mutually feel, sharpens the sting of malice, adds venom to the poison of envy, and makes such a display of Selfishness the more wicked and abominable.

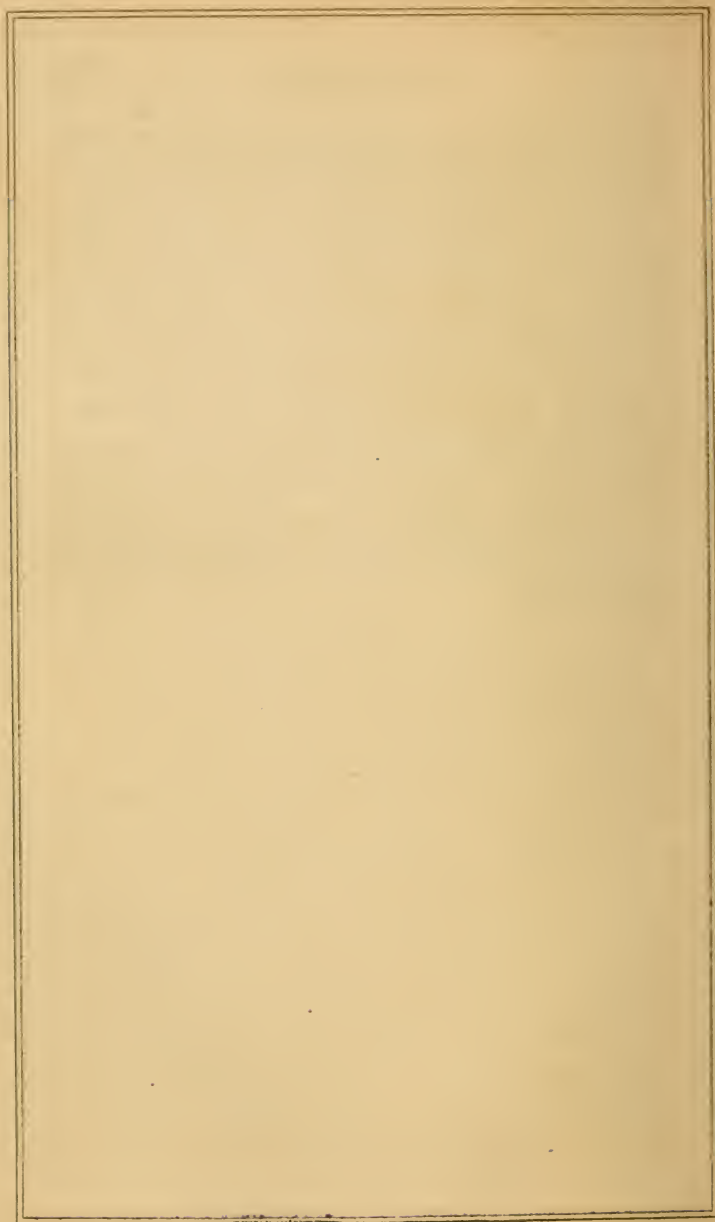
This chapter must not be brought to a conclusion, without an attempt being made to portray another exhibition of the spirit of self, which is as mournful as it is common. An affectionate parent, beloved and venerated by his children, is, in a good old age, laid in the cold embrace of death. The weeping sons and daughters, with other relatives, gather around the inanimate clay, and there recount the shining virtues and benevolent deeds of the departed, and in mutual sympathy condole one another on their irreparable loss. At the appointed time the neighbours and friends assemble to take a last look upon, and perform their last kind offices of respect to, the earthly remains of a former esteemed neighbour and friend. During the progress of the ceremonies, the sympathies of the assembly are deeply excited by bursts of grief from the mourners, and few eyes are dry, when, as they stand around the coffin, the fatherless and apparently

almost broken-hearted children take a long, last, lingering look, and give vent to a passionate flood of tears. In calmer mood they then follow the corpse to "the house appointed for all living," and submissively see "the dust returned to the earth as it was," there to slumber till the last trumpet shall sound and awake all the sleeping dead.

To the dear, old, familiar mansion their measured steps are then directed, and while they refresh their material natures with the bountiful provision made for them, they also refresh their spirits by recounting the kindnesses of their parent, and expressing their confident hope of his happiness in heaven. Their hearts seem to glow with love, as juvenile pleasures and brotherly kindnesses are brought to remembrance, and youthful dissensions confessed and forgiven. Ere they depart to their separate abodes, a duty, in reference to themselves, remains to be performed, (if then it must be done), and that is to read the paternal will. Amidst a flutter of hopes and fears, the instrument is produced, and, as the reading progresses, clouds begin to gather on the countenance of one, anger flashes from the eyes of another, envy scowls on the brow of a third, disappointment mutters on the lips of a fourth, and by the time that the reading is completed, a fearful storm is ready to burst on the assembled group, which will sweep before it, as if

they were chaff, the feelings of fraternal affection and peace, and scatter them around in mournful ruins.

What demon, with diabolical malice, has touched their hearts, and thus suddenly changed their tender emotions? No Satan, returned from "walking to and fro in the earth," has wrought the mischief; no fiend from Tartarus has raised the storm; but one, long an inhabitant of their own bosoms, has been again aroused with redoubled strength, and now rules with despotic sway. That fiend is Selfishness, and he will not voluntarily abdicate his power nor relax his tyranny, perhaps, until arrested by the all-conquering hand of death.



CHAPTER VIII.

MENTAL SELFISHNESS.

Mental Selfishness defined. Nature and Office of Faculties of Reason and Judgment. Facts and Truths, the Material of Reasoning. The Exact Sciences Certain and Undeniable in their Conclusions. Why Certainty is not attained as well in Political, Moral and Religious Sciences. Causes of Uncertainty and Error. Various Sources of the Opinions of Mankind. Love of Opinion. Early Education. Various Influences at Work to modify or change Opinions. Causes of Infidelity and Error. Influence of Matrimonial and Family Relations.

By mental Selfishness is to be understood that which has reference, principally, to the operations of the mind itself, and has but little connection with external and material objects. Selfishness is, indeed, in all cases, a mental feeling; but when it is chiefly or exclusively confined to the actions or emotions of the mind, it may properly be considered apart from that which terminates on outward things.

The faculties of reason and judgment are essential to man's intellectual and spiritual nature; and the true dignity of man consists in the exercise of those

powers according to the principles of truth and righteousness. Facts and truths are abundantly supplied in every department of God's empire; and it is the business of man's intellect, to collect, arrange and compare these facts and truths with an honest and upright desire to draw from them legitimate conclusions and correct sentiments.

These facts and truths being essentially the same at all times, and presenting one unvarying aspect to all minds, it is not unreasonable to say, that the conclusions drawn from them should be certain and invariable.

This actually takes place in the exact or mathematical sciences. An algebraic formula and solution are the same now that they were when the science was first cultivated; and the process of reasoning is the same in all minds, and equally conclusive. A mathematical axiom has undergone no change in thousands of years, and never will undergo any; nor has a problem built thereon lost any of its clearness or infallibility since the days of Euclid.

Every intellect, powerful enough to grasp the principles and pursue the train of reasoning, is equally assured of the truth of the conclusion, and is no more capable of doubting the result than of questioning its own existence. That the same certainty does not uniformly attend the exercise of man's rational powers, on political, moral and religious concerns, is not

to be attributed to any defect, or want of clearness or precision in the facts and truths which constitute the principles of those sciences, but mainly to the unhappy bias that mind itself has received from education, self-interest, or other similar cause.

There are principles in government, morals and religion, that, on account of their clearness and undeniable truth, may justly be ranked with mathematical axioms; and yet how infinitely various and discordant are the inferences deduced therefrom and the practical measures to which they lead!

There is, however, this obvious difference in the two cases, that while no progress whatever can be made in mathematical reasoning from false data or in the absence of true ones, a show of reasoning can be made in the other, as well in the absence of all data, as from those that are false.

Men reason, or rather talk and write, under the influence of prejudice and self-interest; and thus, the judgment is clouded and perverted, and truth falls to the ground.

The pride of learning and intellect obscures and warps the minds of many, and renders them insensible to the truth and force of new facts and recent discoveries. They may have formed a theory from mere speculative or imaginary data, and to that theory they are obstinately attached; and, as generally happens, whatever the power of truth may be,

are still unwilling to acknowledge themselves to have been in error. Selfishness, in any of its forms, creates so dense an atmosphere around the mind, that, either the rays of truth cannot penetrate to the understanding at all, or, if a few force an entrance, they are so refracted and discolored that the object is seen in distorted proportions.

The sentiments of mankind on the various subjects about which they are concerned, are mostly derived from a few sources, among which the following are most prominent: reason, experience, depravity, social relation, position and self-interest.

Opinions derived from a pure process of ratiocination, are comparatively few, and almost entirely confined to the well-educated and enlightened portion of mankind. The unlearned and labouring classes, even in civilized and Christian nations, reason but little, since the mind has not been trained to the exercise, and sufficient leisure cannot be commanded to acquire the habit. Nor do they generally possess the patience and perseverance that are necessary to a careful investigation and accurate understanding of the subject. From specious appearances, they are ever prone to jump to a conclusion; and hence, instead of planting their feet on the immovable and eternal rock of truth, they plunge headlong into the unstable and ever changing bogs of error, from which to extricate them is well nigh an utter impossibility.

Many rare minds have indeed appeared from among the middling and labouring classes, who, by force of native genius, have broken through the trammels of ignorance and prejudice; and, by self-culture and patient investigation, have become benefactors of the human race, and whose inventions, discoveries and improvements will be imperishable monuments of their intellectual powers, to the end of time. But these are the illustrious exceptions to the general rule. The sentiment of one of England's greatest poets is equally philosophical and true :

“’Tis education forms the common mind—

Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.”

The great majority of mankind form their opinions and character in childhood and early youth, from the teaching and example of parents and other instructors, without the slow and laborious process of reasoning; and by the time that the youth is qualified to become an independent actor on the stage of life, sentiments and habits, imbibed from parents and associates, have become so inwoven with the fibre of the mind, that it is almost impossible to effect a separation. It is in effect the same as if the opinions and habits were formed simultaneously with the mind itself, and constituted original elements of its very being; and from this fact, in all probability, arose the ancient doctrine of metempsychosis or transmi-

gration of souls. Sentiments, tastes and habits descend from generation to generation through thousands of years, and are more sure in their entail than patrimonial estates—as tenaciously grasped and vigorously defended.

To give up these mental inheritances, is like “plucking out the right eye and cutting off the right hand;” and having become part and parcel of conscious existence, the love of self strenuously and perseveringly resists their modification or surrender. Indeed, men in general are far more willing to give up their temporal possessions than to change their opinions; although it may be, that for their peculiar love of the latter, they are unable to assign any better reason than that they inherited them from their ancestors. Of this the reason has been already assigned; opinions are part of themselves; whereas, material possessions are mere adjuncts which may be lost, and yet identity be retained. It cannot therefore be wonderful, that Selfishness should exercise such absolute sway in this strictly personal sphere of its operations.

In view of the mighty influence that early education exerts in the formation of individual and national character, how vastly important becomes a correct system of common schools, and the universal diffusion of its advantages throughout the commu-

nity ; and how well founded the apprehensions of those errorists who loudly and characteristically deprecate the measures, so justly and prudently adopted by most of the States of our happy Union, to impart the fundamentals of a good education to every youthful member of the confederacy, without distinction of rank or sect !

The war of opinion, induced by Selfishness, is universal, perpetual and exterminating.

Notwithstanding the inveteracy of inherited and educational opinions, there are influences in existence and operation that avail to modify or alter them to a limited extent. Experience sometimes suffices to effect a change ; though, in innumerable instances, it is altogether impotent, and is even adduced in proof or justification of sentiments entirely adverse to its teaching.

Prejudice distorts facts, and self-interest robs them of their power, and not unfrequently makes them speak a language the opposite of their true meaning. Experience operates slowly, both in individuals and nations. Fifty years scarcely avail, in the most pliable subjects, to eradicate the errors of youth ; and the accumulated experience of centuries fails to conduct nations into the true path of peace and prosperity, because of the unconquerable Selfishness of both individuals and nations, of rulers and the ruled.

“At thirty, man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan:
At fifty, chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve—
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves and re-resolves—then dies the same.”—YOUNG.

And why “then die the same?” but that the voice of experience and conviction is overpowered by the pleadings of Selfishness, and thus fails to lead to the love and practice of self-denying truth and righteousness.

In cases where correct sentiments are imbibed in early youth, the native depravity of the heart often leads to their rejection, and to the adoption, in their stead, of others more congenial with the corruption that reigns within. Or if the sentiments remain, their influence is suppressed, at least for a time, by evil pursuits and carnal indulgences, and the individual labours hard to adopt a creed, or more properly speaking, a system of unbelief, more accordant with his sinful tastes, and that will permit him to pursue his carnal gratifications undisturbed by the admonitory voice of conscience.

Such is the origin of skeptical, infidel, and atheistical sentiments, with all the host of kindred errors that disgrace the Christian world and injure the cause of morals and religion. Emancipation from priest-craft and superstition may indeed be the motive as-

signed by many who regret the prevalent system of faith, and that motive may be admitted to be the real one wherever priestcraft shuts out the light of truth or superstition obscures its rays, but such motive cannot be genuine where the original sources of truth are open to every candid inquirer, and each person is at full liberty to follow out his personal convictions. The fact is, that those who are inclined to skepticism from pride of intellect or depraved passions, are little disposed or rather averse to the careful investigation of truth. They much prefer to adopt the opinions of others without examination, not only because that is the least troublesome way of forming a creed, but also from the concealed fear that a rational method might lead to unwelcome truth. In reference to such as build pernicious systems on the foundation of Revelation, their conduct is to be attributed in part to the same cause. Carnal reasoning and self-righteous pride and sufficiency oppose the humbling doctrines of the cross, and lead them to adopt or invent tenets purely anti-scriptural and diametrically opposed to salvation by grace, through faith in a crucified Saviour. Popery, Unitarianism, Churchism, and the entire system of ritual regeneration depend for their existence, continuance, and support, on the pride and Selfishness of the carnal mind, which is "enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

These systems, honestly and fearlessly carried out, would inevitably lead to the utter rejection of Revelation itself. Indeed, the distinguishing features of the Bible are unblushingly rejected by piecemeal, and nothing is left worthy of "earnest contention," and only just so much as may be necessary to support the advocates of error in their carnal gratification and selfish views.

The matrimonial and other family relations are found to exercise a potent influence in modifying or changing old opinions, and leading to the adoption of new ones, on all the variety of subjects that come before the mind. In the majority of cases, where there is an original difference of sentiment, the alteration takes place gradually and almost imperceptibly, without any honest scrutiny or candid examination, and where there is a show of argument or search after truth, it is little better than mere show, for the process is conducted under such a powerful bias, that the mind is unable to distinguish truth from falsehood. In what other way shall the fact be explained, that husbands and wives are so generally of the same opinion in politics and religion? In politics and other matters belonging to man's appropriate sphere, the husband generally has the most influence, and succeeds in converting his wife to his sentiments and practices, but the reverse is more frequently the fact in religion.

Two or three reasons may be assigned why the wife so frequently succeeds in converting the husband to her religious views: the first is, that females generally become practical religionists at an earlier period of life than males; the second, that their religious sensibilities are keener and more tenacious; and third, that man's more entire engrossment in worldly affairs tends to make him comparatively indifferent to creeds and forms of worship, so that he is inclined to conform to that which is most convenient, or which may hold out the promise of the greatest amount of domestic comfort. In cases where the creed of the wife has been practically embraced before marriage, and the husband's not, he finds it convenient and agreeable to yield to the gentle but persevering persuasions of one whom he justly regards as his best friend, and by accompanying her to her chosen place of worship, he puts himself under influences that will almost inevitably lead to the adoption of her creed, particularly, should he, in those circumstances, become the subject of renewing grace.

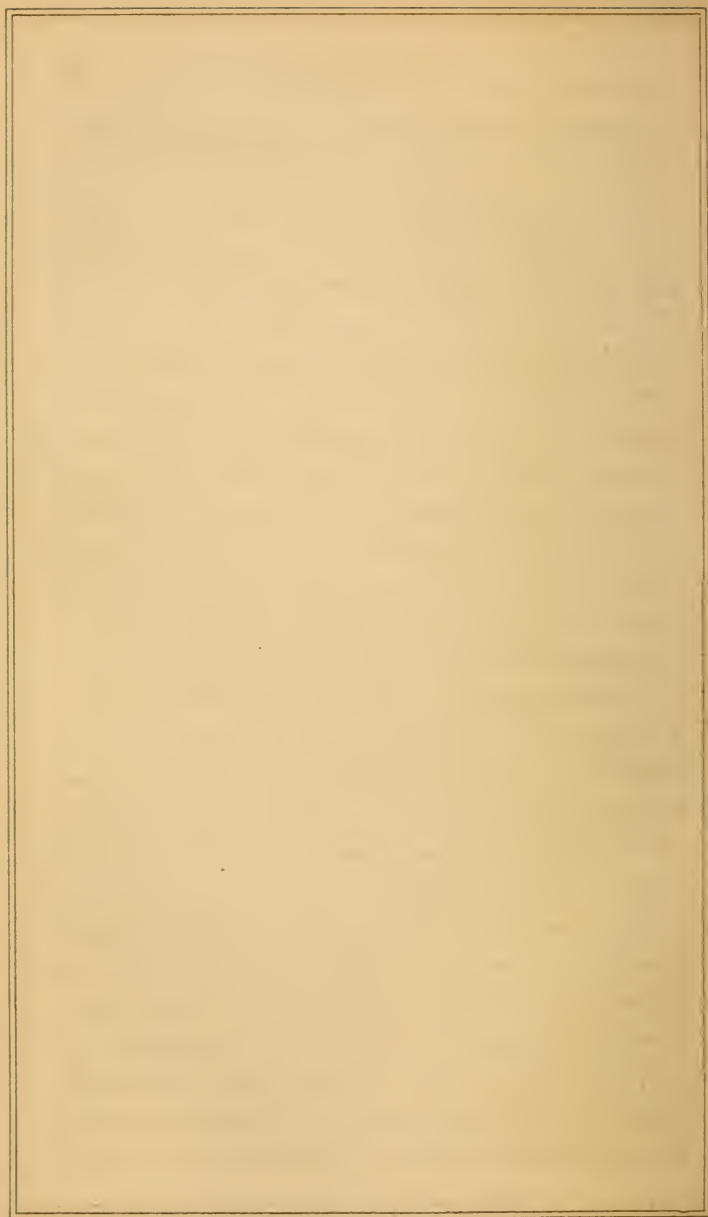
Instances in corroboration of this remark are not "few or far between" in those parts of the Christian world where perfect religious liberty is enjoyed, and all creeds are equally sacred in the eye of the law.

Political ambition is undeniably a powerful agent in changing the sentiments or opinions of men. Many individuals appear to have no settled or conscientious

convictions at all on political subjects. Their opinions are embraced or professed without careful and candid examination, and are retained or rejected as personal advantage may dictate. With such the party in power is always the right party, for with that is found the prerogative to confer places of honour and emolument. They change with every varying phase of the popular mind. They throw themselves into the strongest current, in the hope of being borne thereby to the accomplishment of their ambitious schemes. In their estimation, all political wisdom, uprightness, and patriotism, dwell with the majority, but the minority are fools, knaves, and traitors. They possess not a grain of the moral courage of the illustrious statesman who said, "*I would rather be RIGHT, than be President.*" It must, indeed, be admitted that change of opinion is not, in every case, to be attributed to improper motives. Enlarged knowledge and extended experience may produce a real and thorough revolution in the mind of an upright man, and this change will be acknowledged, although it may be attended with obloquy, and lead to much self-denial. Not to change for sufficient reason, would be as selfish as to change for no reason or a bad one. Whilst he who changes his opinions, because he conscientiously believes them to be erroneous, is worthy of double honour and confidence, disgrace and distrust are the rightful heritage of him

who professes to change, that he may obtain popular favour.

The one changes from honest conviction, the other for advantage. In the former, the change is disinterested; in the latter, it is purely selfish.



CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS AND DENOMINATIONAL SELFISHNESS.

Object of this Chapter. Example of Christ and Early Christians. Selfishness of the Nominal Christian World. Selfishness of Apostate Rome and other forms of degenerate Christianity. Protestant Churches and Denominations. Each has its proper sphere and should Labour in Love and Union. Spirit of Union and Love small but increasing. Sectarianism. Needless Multiplication of Churches. Separation from acknowledged Brethren. Jealousies and Envyings. Spirit of Self in Revivals. Selfishness would alter the Word of God. Spurious Zeal. Self-deception.

By "religious Selfishness," it will be readily understood, is meant the Selfishness, not of religion itself, but of religious people, in their character and conduct.

In this connection it is unnecessary to speak of those who adhere to false systems of religion, such as Heathenism and Mohammedism, for since the faith they profess is founded on error and carnality, it is natural to expect that their spirit would be selfish, their lives impure, and their conduct bigoted, intolerant, and cruel.

The sole object of this chapter is to detect and expose the Selfishness of that part of the human family which professes to believe and practice the holy, self-denying, and benevolent religion of Jesus Christ. That Selfishness, in the smallest degree, should be felt and cherished among real or professed Christians, is assuredly not owing to the nature and influence of their holy faith, but exists contrary to such nature and in spite of such influence, and is to be ascribed solely to the depravity and imperfection of human nature, the power of worldly associations, and the devices of Satan. In the incarnation, life, and death of the Divine Founder of Christianity, is seen an example of self-denial, self-sacrifice, and benevolence, supremely glorious, attractive, and powerful; and were that example permitted to exert its proper and transforming energy, the aspect of the Church of God would speedily be one of heavenly beauty and soul-subduing love.

The labours of love and self-denial that distinguished the Apostles and Martyrs of Jesus, as recorded in the Book of God, were a closer copy of those of their beloved Lord than any which have been generally witnessed in succeeding ages, and the failure in following them, as they followed Christ, is to be attributed to a lack of their faith and spirit in their successors. The doctrines and precepts of the Bible are utterly opposed to the spirit of self, and inculcate nought but

“Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will among men.”

Christians, then, should be self-denying and benevolent, and if they are not so, the fault is undoubtedly and entirely their own.

It needs no laboured argument to prove that there is a vast amount of Selfishness in the Christian world, not only among those who make no pretensions to vital godliness, but also in such as profess to have experienced its power, and, in the judgment of charity, are possessed of genuine piety.

The apostate religion of Rome is little else than a compound of error, Selfishness, and intolerance, as is abundantly manifest by her whole career of nearly twelve hundred and sixty years. The “Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” to promote her self-aggrandisement and perpetuate her power, has burnt holy confessors and reformers who had the Christian courage to declare God’s truth. She has lighted the fires of martyrdom, and sung “Te Deums” over the slaughtered followers of the Lamb. She has vitiated the Bible by her barbarous and incorrect translations, and imprisoned and tortured to death pious men and women, who, in obedience to the command of their Lord, have dared to “search the Scriptures,” that therein they might find eternal life. She has added to Revelation the silly and superstitious fables of men, and made her own traditions the rule

of faith and of paramount authority to the sure word of testimony delivered by inspired Prophets and Apostles. She ascribes regenerating power to her own senseless mummeries, and thus detrudes the Holy Spirit from his appropriate office in the work of salvation. She assumes the prerogative of God, in pretending to pardon sin, and by her system of indulgences, robs her votaries both of their money and their souls. She has invented purgatory, with the double intent of filling her coffers and riveting the chains of her slaves. And, to fill the measure of her iniquity, she inculcates the worship of the creature more than that of the Creator, and places a woman, whom she blasphemously calls "The Mother of God," on a higher seat of honour and power than that of the Divine Redeemer.

A clearer and more vivid illustration of Selfishness has never been seen on earth nor probably in the whole universe of God.

Other forms of apostate or degenerate Christianity in the old world are but little behind Rome in superstition and bigoted Selfishness, and would probably be equal to her in persecuting intolerance, did not God make use even of Mohammedan and other powers to restrain the wrath of ignorant and unchristian ecclesiastics.

The spirit of Selfishness in Protestant churches or denominations, though not equal in degree to that of

Rome, nor so terrible in its consequences, is nevertheless extensively prevalent and productive of serious injury to the cause of Christ, and is found to exist and operate in proportion to the degree of assimilation with Rome in form and sentiment which each church displays.

It is, beyond doubt, the duty of each denomination to labour zealously and constantly to promote the cause of vital piety within its bounds, and to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ in this ignorant and rebellious world.

God, in his providence, assigns to each family in the general household of faith its appropriate duties and domestic cares, and its principal energies should be directed to the advancement of its own spiritual interests and the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

So long as each division of the army of Immanuel labours in the common cause, and fights the common enemy in its proper sphere, and under its individual banner, in the exercise of harmony and good will towards all the rest, while the whole united host moves forward at the command and under the banner of the Great Captain of salvation, a spectacle of loveliness and power is exhibited, which makes the arches of heaven to resound with praise to God and shakes to its foundations the kingdom of Satan. But when, instead of combating the common foe, the soldiers of Jesus turn their arms against each other, a melancholy

scene is presented, over which all good beings mourn, whilst infidelity sneers and devils rejoice.

Is not the latter rather than the former the general aspect of the Christian world at the present day? And is not the absence of the Holy Spirit's influences, so generally acknowledged and deplored, to be attributed, in great measure, to the Selfishness, envy, and ungodly strife that are plainly manifest among the churches?

That a spirit of Christian union and love does indeed exist must be granted, and it is a ground of thanksgiving, joy, and hope to those who mourn the desolations of Zion and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, but it must be confessed that that spirit is very limited in extent, and occupies a very narrow sphere. At our Missionary, Bible, and Tract Anniversaries, and in the operation of these and other kindred societies, is perceived the dawn of the bright day of Christian union and love that is yet to come, but it, alas, is only the dawn; the sun is still below the horizon, and thick clouds obscure his incipient beams. For while, in one place, the notes of Christian harmony are sweetly poured forth, and strike a sympathetic cord in the hearts of thousands, in another place, and at the same moment, some selfish scheme is being concocted, which finds as ready a response in the hearts and makes a more lasting impression on the minds of equal thousands. The union seems almost to expire within the walls that witnessed its

birth, whilst the Selfishness survives the hour and becomes more vigorous by being carried into active life.

Whatever of love and concord may be felt once a year in the solemn and heart-cheering assemblies of the saints, these elements can scarcely be said to have begun to pervade the public and social life of the Church.

Christians rejoice together for an hour over the triumphs of grace, and combine their counsels in devising liberal things, but when they separate each seems to go forth into common life with the steady purpose "to look to his own way—every one for his gain, from his quarter." Or if a few carry with them and act upon the Christian emotions and principles which they have felt and approved, their influence on the mass of Selfishness, by which they are surrounded, is scarcely perceptible, and is often entirely neutralized by the acidities of party strife.

The sectarian cry of "The Church," or the "*This* or that Church," is perpetually resounding through the world, to the wearying and loathing of every liberal mind.

They who utter these cries would have it to be believed that they are actuated solely by a love of scriptural truth and apostolic order, but they themselves are the greatest dupes of their own infatuation, while all reflecting and unprejudiced minds clearly discover the cheat and repel the imposture.

The ostensible language of the bigot and exclusionist, of whatever denomination, is "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord," but Jehu is Jehu still, equally intent on his own elevation and glory, whether in the act of exterminating the wicked house of Ahab or in slaughtering the priests of Baal. When religious bigots raise the exclusive cry, "The Temple of the Lord—the Temple of the Lord are we," it is to promote the interests of their craft, and their language is as unmistakably selfish as was the confused clamour of the silversmiths when "all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!'"

But religious Selfishness is not satisfied with mere assertion and denunciation. It is an active and laborious principle, and its operations are in perfect unison with its diabolical nature. Many high professors of exclusive piety and superior sanctity, in order to advance their denominational views and interests, care not what havoc they make among other churches in the effort to build up their own. Their spirit is not that of the apostle Paul, who says, "So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation, but as it is written, 'To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.'" But, contrary to his example, they love to tear up foundations laid by other

men, and to build their own on the ruins of other churches. And some, in these selfish efforts, have gone to the length of commending the labours of a minister who preached doctrines which they abhorred, but who was not acceptable to his own people, and have offered to contribute to the support of such preacher, in the expressed hope that his unacceptable and inefficient services would soon result in the utter destruction of the Church over which he was placed.

Such instances of pure Selfishness may frequently occur in despite of the admission, extorted by public sentiment, that the churches they labour to destroy are as good as their own, and that the points on which they differ are not essential to salvation.

Much injury is also inflicted on the cause of religion by this sectarian spirit, in the multiplication of churches beyond the wants of the community and its ability suitably to support. The ambition of each sect is to have a church organized in each neighbourhood, however small; and with this view, they thrust themselves, on the slightest occasion, into fields already occupied and where Christ is faithfully preached, just as if they were purely missionary ground, now first to be broken up by the gospel plough. In consequence of such procedure, Christians are taxed beyond their means to support supernumerary labourers, the truly needy are left destitute, and the Macedonian cry of the Heathen is disregarded.

Another sad result of denominational Selfishness is seen in the case of many private members of churches, who, in the providence of God, are thrown beyond the sphere of their own communion and within the bounds of another. However unimportant the difference may be between themselves and the Christians among whom they reside, they are nevertheless judged sufficient to keep them aloof from the communion of their acknowledged brethren, and justify them in the almost total neglect of the public worship of God. The doctrines which they profess to love may be held and faithfully proclaimed, but because of a disagreement in reference to some outward rite or ceremony, they treat their fellow Christians as aliens, and finally, themselves become apostates from the faith once delivered to the saints.

From the same evil principle too, spring the frequent jealousies and envyings which Christians of one denomination feel and manifest at the prosperity of another.

They rejoice not, but rather grieve, when sinners are converted out of their fellowship; and the same envious feeling possesses their hearts, which did those of the Apostles, when, having returned from their mission, they said to the Lord, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." They expected to be commended for their presumption;

but he that knew their hearts better than they did, rebuked their Selfishness. And so does the spirit of the gospel that of all those who would seem to prefer that souls should remain under the power of Satan, rather than that they should be converted and saved out of the pale of their own Church.

In times of awakening and revival, in locations where there is more than one denomination, a fearful and highly injurious exhibition of the spirit of Selfishness is frequently given in the zealous and persevering efforts that are made by professors to proselyte new converts to their peculiar creed. The sentiments of those who differ from them are often grossly misrepresented, and opinions and doctrines ascribed to them which they utterly disavow and condemn. Family ties are disregarded and even denounced; and concealed attempts are made to alienate inexperienced youth from their pious parents and other friends. By such measures as these, many a work of grace has been arrested in the midst of its triumphs, and sad occasion has been given to the enemies of God to blaspheme his holy name, by ascribing the selfish conduct of Christians to the religion they profess, rather than to the depravity of the heart—its true and only source.

And, as if it would stop at nothing, however daring, denominational Selfishness, becoming rampant by success, has not hesitated to lay its polluted hands

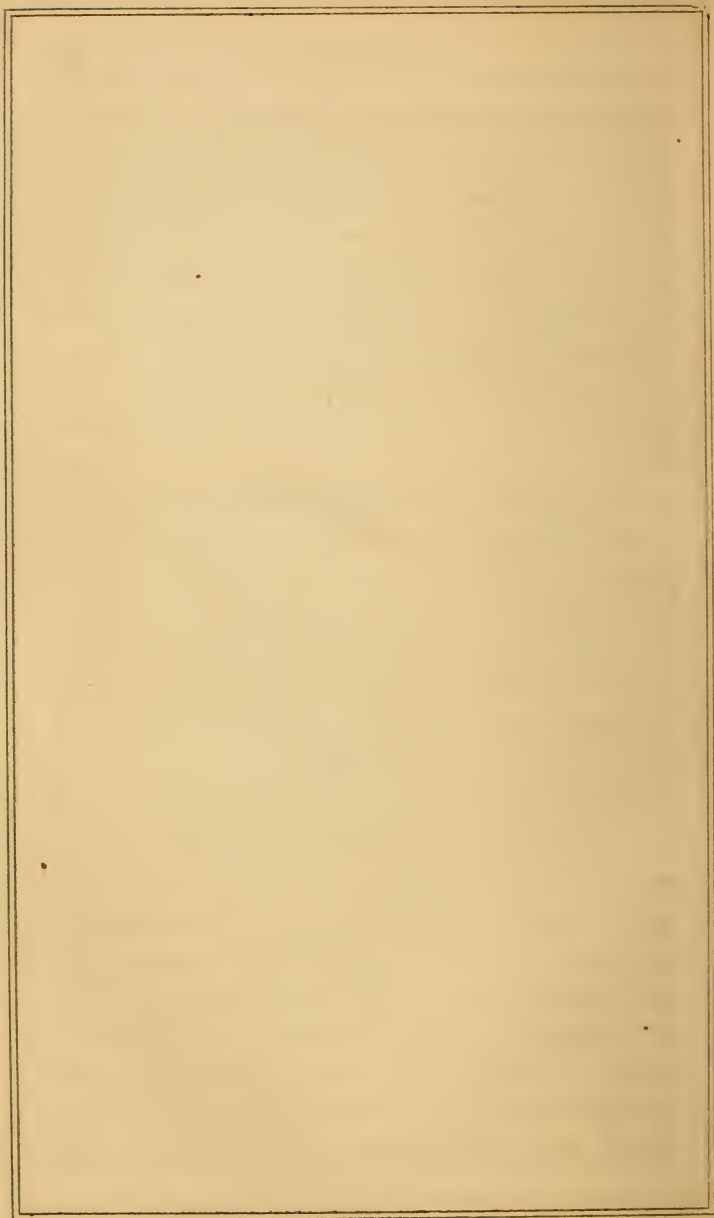
on God's sacred Word, and give a sectarian feature to the Divine Record—the common inheritance of his children who is the impartial and loving Father of all. Shallow learning and hypercritical stupidity have been employed in the vain attempt to amend a translation which has been universally considered unsurpassed for fidelity and beauty; and has been uniformly declared by the amenders themselves, to be clearly and decidedly in favour of their peculiar views.

In the conduct and measures just brought to view, as exhibitions and proofs of denominational Selfishness, and in all others of like character, it is indeed asserted by the actors that they are prompted and justified by zeal for God and love of the truth; but it should be borne in mind, that such has ever been the plea for persecution, error, exclusiveness, and for all manner of unchristian and anti-christian doings and evils, which have, for ages, afflicted the Church of God and hindered the salvation of the world.

That zeal which is accompanied by uncharitableness, hatred and envy, and issues in disunion, back-biting, slander and strife, is of spurious origin—or rather, is the legitimate offspring of self, begotten by the Father of lies, who, to deceive and destroy, so frequently transforms himself into an angel of light.

In nothing is the paramount deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart more clearly

manifest, than in religious self-deception, as well in the case of those who give satisfactory evidence of vital godliness, as in that of hypocrites and mere formalists. In the latter, it is in perfect consonance with their unregenerate natures; but in the former, it is in opposition to the principle of grace, and therefore the more deceitful and wicked.



CHAPTER X.

CLERICAL SELFISHNESS.

Position and influence of Clergymen. Originators of Good or Evil to the Church and the World. "Like People, like Priest." Romish Hierarchy. Protestant Ministry. The Apostles of our Lord. Gradual Growth of Selfishness in their Successors. Ministers of the present day. Early experience of the Young Aspirant to the Ministry. Preparatory Studies. Theological Studies. Choosing a Companion for Life. Choosing a Settlement. Selfishness in the Study and Pulpit. Christian Inter-course. Intrusion. Selfish Zeal. Ministerial Changes. Honours and Titles. Love of Power.

MUCH that has been said on denominational Selfishness is equally appropriate to the present chapter. The clergy are the leaders and prime actors in all that concerns the interests of each particular Church and of the Churches in general. They originate and carry forward, by their personal and official influence and labours, nearly all the measures which the Churches sanction and sustain, for the promotion of morality and religion, and for the propagation of the Gospel through the world.

Their learning, intelligence and morality, command the respect of the world, and their general character for piety secures the love and confidence of the Church, and, consequently, they are qualified to take the lead in all moral and religious schemes for the improvement of the human race. The Churches, and the public in general, expect them to be the pioneers in every good word and work, and cheerfully yield to them that deference which their character and position justify. In society at large their influence is deservedly great, but in the Church it is paramount. They control the sentiment of the Christian community, and impress the character of their own spirit on the heart and soul of those to whom they minister in Divine things.

The history of the Church in all ages and nations justifies the remark, that influence, whether for good or evil, generally, if not universally, descends *from* the ministry *to* the Church, and has very seldom, if ever, taken the opposite direction. With a corrupt and worldly ministry have originated nearly all the heresies which have disgraced and desolated the heritage of God, while, on the other hand, a pure and spiritual ministry have been God's chosen instruments in the revival of true religion and sound learning, and in the prosecution of those evangelical schemes which, under the blessing of God, are to enlighten and save the world. The piety and zeal of the

Church will never rise above that of the ministry, and her general character will be modelled after the pattern held up by the consecrated hands of the New Testament priesthood. Thus, the prophetic adage, "Like people, like priest," will ever be verified; that is, the people and the priest will be alike, because the people will follow the priest, adopting his sentiments and closely copying his example. If the position just taken be correct, it will necessarily follow that much of the Selfishness that prevails in the Christian world is to be attributed directly to the teaching, example and influence of the professedly Christian ministry, both nominal and real.

What has been said of the Selfishness of apostate and anti-christian Rome, strictly and properly belongs to her ungodly, proud, and selfish hierarchy. The people are systematically excluded from all participation in the legislation and government of the Church of Rome. The people are not permitted even to read the Scriptures without special license from their spiritual rulers, and when that is obtained, they must understand God's Word according to the interpretation given by those who assume to be its only authorized expounders. They must believe as the Church believes, which means, just as the Pope and his hierarchy dictate, who assume to be emphatically "the Church." Consequently, the Selfishness of Rome, in her exclusive dogmas, uncharitable ana-

themas, fierce denunciations of heretics, and fiery persecutions of the saints, together with all that characterizes her in faith and practice, is to be ascribed to her priesthood, as the head and fountain of the whole system of abominations. And in respect to that head and fountain, neither the Word of God nor the history of the Church afford the least ray of hope that it will be enlightened and purified. The "man of sin," the "wicked one," is doomed to be destroyed, not converted, "by the Word of the Saviour's mouth and the brightness of his coming." The language of inspiration is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues," and no intimation is given from any quarter that men who deem themselves infallible in their Selfishness will ever be other than what they are and always have been.

In reference to the Ministry of the Protestant Churches, there is no more reason to deem them entirely free from Selfishness, than there is to charge them with being supremely under its control. The truth lies between the two extremes. There is a mingling of self in much that they say and do; and it would be an unwarrantable affirmation to say of any individual, that he speaks and acts, on any occasion, from perfect purity of motive. Some are more and others less selfish, according to constitutional temperament, or the degree of sanctification possessed by each; and it would be arrogant presump-

tion in the successors of the Apostles to plead exemption from a principle which so frequently showed itself in the twelve chosen followers of the Lord.

What but Selfishness excited the strife among them, "which should be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" What else prompted two of them to prefer the request, "that one might sit on the right hand and the other on the left of their Lord, in his kingdom?" To what other spirit must be attributed the wrath of those who wished to bring down fire from heaven on a village of the Samaritans, or the jealousy of others who forbade one to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because he followed them not? Nor was this spirit restricted to the period of their comparative ignorance, previous to the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but showed itself on numerous occasions after they were more fully enlightened and sanctified by the teaching of the Comforter, whom their Lord had promised to send, to guide them into all truth.

Hence Peter erred, when "fearing them which were of the circumcision," he withdrew from familiar intercourse with the gentile believers at Antioch, and "separated himself;" for which he was pointedly rebuked by Paul. And hence also, the sharp contention that arose between Paul and Barnabas, in reference to Mark, which caused them to "depart asunder, the one from the other," in a very unchris-

tian spirit and manner. After the death of the Apostles, the spirit of self, in their successors, grew with great rapidity, and produced innumerable heresies and contentions during the first six centuries, till at length it became concentrated and personified in the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, whose strife for the supremacy speedily brought Antichrist to maturity, and enthroned the "man of sin" in the temple of God.

It were a work of supererogation to attempt to depict the Selfishness of the pretended successors of the Apostles during the dark ages; suffice it to say, that, with comparatively few exceptions, self-seeking and self-aggrandizement were the study and employment of a corrupt hierarchy, and continue to be the fact to the present day.

But to return from this almost unavoidable digression, who does not perceive the existence and evil fruits of this carnal spirit, in the most spiritual and devoted of Christ's ministers in this enlightened age? Nay, who does not detect it in his own heart, and feel compelled to cry out in the language of Paul—"O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" If there be one period above another, in a minister's life, when his motives may be said to be spiritual and free from self, it is probably the time, when first, under the influence of love to his Redeemer, he resolves to consecrate him-

self—body and soul, time and talents—to the service of God and salvation of souls. Whose heart does not throb with emotion, when he calls to mind the first transforming and transporting view that he obtained of Jesus as his Saviour; and remembers the constraining influence of his love, when, on his knees with tears of gratitude and joy, he offered his services to his beloved Lord in the ministry of reconciliation; and when his heart-felt language was, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!” But, alas how soon are his warm affections cooled, if not chilled, by carnal ambition; how sadly is the gold dimmed and the most fine gold changed, by selfish feelings and views, during the work of preparation for the ministry, in the study, in the pulpit, and in his general intercourse with the Church and the world. In his preparatory course, communication with worldly and ambitious youth corrupts his Christian manners, and turns him aside from the simplicity that characterized his first act of self-consecration; and the love of self prompts him to labour for the applause of his teachers and fellows, and for the obtaining of academic honours.

He may not be fully sensible of the nature of his motives, or aware of the evil consequences of his course, until diminished spirituality and impaired bodily health reveal to him his true condition—call

to self-examination, humility and confession—and urge to a more determined consecration of himself solely to the glory of his Lord.

Mourning over past coldness and worldliness he looks, it may be, with ardent hope and high expectations, to the school of the prophets, where he shall engage in studies and pursuits more congenial with his spiritual tastes, and where, in intercourse with the sons of the prophets, his affections may be warmed by the fire of Christian communion, and his zeal stimulated to purer and greater devotion to the service of his Master.

But here, too, he frequently meets with sad disappointment. He finds that sacred studies themselves can be pursued with cold affections and selfish views; and the communications of his associates are not always, perhaps not generally, of a spiritual cast. The conversations are too frequently concerning the mere externals of the sacred office which they have in view—its honours and emoluments—rather than its appropriate and holy design, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Their preparations for future service are composed too much with an effort at elegance and a desire for popularity, rather than simplicity and usefulness. And in reference to a location in the Lord's vineyard, the language of anxiety is apt to be, "Where can we be most pleasantly situated?"—

rather than, "Where can we be most profitably employed?"

Nor, in this connection, must the remark be forborne, that the social intercourse of theological students with society at large, gives frequent occasion for the rise of other emotions, and the pursuit of other objects, more clearly and decidedly selfish, in the circumstances of the case, than any of the preceding. That these sons of Adam, equally with their primogenitor, should have helpmeets in the arduous station to which they are destined, must indeed be admitted by all evangelical Christians; but it cannot be granted, that it is their duty to seek them at a time, when other duties should engross their attention, and when that pursuit is so directly calculated to distract the mind and alienate the affections from things Divine.

The Saviour they profess to love and desire to serve, demands the practice of self-denial in all his followers, and especially in those who are to serve him in the Gospel; and that self-denial must necessarily be exercised in reference to pleasant besetments and temptations that would interfere with the discharge of present duty. That self-gratification is the general motive in the conduct condemned cannot be doubted; but to gratify self, in the indulgence of feelings proper in themselves, at a wrong time and in detriment to mental improvement and spiritual progress, is Selfishness without alloy or apology.

Greater evils, than loss of precious time and diversion from present duty, often result from this improper course.

The wise man says, "A prudent wife is from the Lord," and the implication is, that counsel should be asked of him in reference to the important acquisition. Let the consciences of those concerned say, whether that obvious duty was performed at all, and if formally discharged, whether it was not with a disposition and even resolution to find answers where none were given, and to interpret apparent providences in favour of preconceived impressions?

In consequence, may not the Lord have given them up to follow their own selfish desires; so that, instead of getting prudent wives, they often get the opposite, instead of getting a helpmeet, they get those who hinder them in their peculiar and responsible work? And may not this be the reason why carnal attachments and matrimonial alliances have turned from the missionary field many a young man, who had been constrained to consecrate himself to that department of ministerial labour? A woman without religious experience and ardent piety, is no help to an ambassador of God; and it is no matter of surprise that such should have no relish for the sacrifices and duties of missionary life, or that the irreligious parents of such should oppose a measure that would disappoint their selfish views in reference to their child.

In the choice of a sphere of labour, the servant of Christ is under a strong temptation to allow selfish considerations to influence his mind; and that the temptation is not resisted, or at least, not overcome, can scarcely be doubted, when facts are duly considered. Candidates for the pastoral office are seen to linger long and patiently around the old and wealthy portions of the Lord's vineyard, and seem to have forgotten the parable which represents the world as the field to be cultivated by the gospel labourer. Their ambition is, to build on another's foundation, to enter into another man's labours, to reap where they have not sown and to gather where they have not sowed; in opposition to the example of Paul, who loved to preach Christ where he had not been named, and to publish the glad tidings of salvation in "regions beyond" the churches gathered and established by his own labours. We do not believe, and, in what has been said, would not be understood to insinuate, that selfish motives direct the course and influence the decision in all cases; or that, in any case, good motives have no place or power; but, that in many instances, too much sway is given to the desire of obtaining a comfortable settlement, where, with a chosen companion, time may be agreeably and perhaps profitably spent. In the search for a field of labour, the inquiry by the young candidate should be after the most needy portions of the Church to which he be-

longs, or the desolate places of the land, where there may be a reasonable prospect of his efforts being blessed in the building up or extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. But is this the complexion of the inquiry that is generally made? Or is it not rather, "Where is the largest and most eligible church and congregation, and the richest stipend?" And when the opportunity presents itself of an election between two or more places, do not worldly considerations more frequently decide the choice.

After the assumption of pastoral duties, the young minister soon discovers that Selfishness has rather changed its ground than ceased to operate. He finds its annoying presence in the study, to which he has been accustomed to look as to a safe and happy retreat from carnal and worldly influences, and as the place, above all others, where he hoped to enjoy sweet communion with his God, and delightful meditations in his truth. Satan often enters this Eden, as he did the primeval one, and seeks, alas, how often successfully, to blast its beauties and destroy its fruits, by presenting selfish allurements to the unsuspecting mind. In his preparation for the sanctuary, the preacher is tempted to seek after novel and pleasing sentiments, to display rhetorical flourishes, to propound learned arguments and make ingenious disquisition, to indulge in metaphors and tropes and unprofitable criticisms, and, in short, to present the truth

with "excellency of speech" and "enticing words of man's wisdom," rather than with "the simplicity that is in Christ," and "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

To yield to the temptation in pursuing this course, the preacher would seek his own glory rather than God's, and be guilty of preaching himself not "Jesus Christ and him crucified." In the selfish display of his own taste to gratify that of his hearers, the inconsiderate shepherd "feeds on the east wind" and starves both himself and his flock.

"The fear of man, too, bringeth a snare," and in deference to the wealthy and influential of the people, the temptation is strong to keep back unpalatable truth, or to blunt the keen edge of the sword of the Spirit by smooth words and flattering speech, lest faithful plain dealing should alienate their affections from their pastor, or be an injury to him or the Church in pecuniary matters.

The spirit of self is not always left behind, when, on the holy Sabbath, the ambassador of God directs his steps to the sanctuary and enters the sacred desk, to lead the devotions of the people and deliver the message of his sovereign Lord.

It will be admitted by all, who understand the true design of preaching, that in no place and at no time is Selfishness more inappropriate and criminal than in the pulpit, and when precious souls are waiting to be

instructed in the doctrine of the Lord and learn the way of salvation. If in any place, and at any time, the minister should forget himself, and be completely and delightfully absorbed in the glorious work of recommending the only Saviour to lost sinners, he assuredly should, when he stands on the heights of Zion, to sound the gospel trumpet, for the purpose of warning the wicked to flee from the wrath to come, and take refuge in Christ, the ark of eternal salvation.

But what preacher is there of any experience and self-acquaintance who will not humbly acknowledge that selfish feelings are not only possible in such solemn circumstances, but that they are of frequent and painful occurrence? Who has not loathed himself on their account, and sighed over the depravity of heart, whence they spring, and felt constrained, at the close of his Sabbath labours, to humble himself before his God, and with tears implore forgiveness for his iniquity, and seek, for himself and his services, the efficacy of that blood which cleanseth from all sin?

With selfish fears and tremblings the man of God often performs his holy functions, as if his own honour solely, rather than that of his Master, were concerned, and if he has had no freedom and enjoyed no pleasure in the duty, if he has spoken with coldness and embarrassment, and, as he fears, with little ac-

ceptableness to the people, his mind is unsatisfied and dejected, and he feels ashamed of his performance, not so much from anxiety for the honour of the cause he advocates, as love for his own fame. On the other hand, when, under the Holy Spirit's influence, he has enjoyed unusual enlargement of soul and freedom of utterance, when truth has been feelingly and appropriately expressed, self-congratulation and boastful sufficiency have obtruded themselves upon his thoughts, tempting him to rob God of the honour and praise due to him alone, from whom all good and spiritual gifts proceed. The smile of complacency may be seen to play upon his countenance, should an injudicious hearer, at the close of the service, highly commend his labours as a brilliant display of learning, ingenuity, and eloquence.

In reproving sin and combatting error, and on more occasions than it is necessary to specify, improper feelings may arise in the heart, all of which either spring from the principle of self, or are in some measure connected therewith.

In intercourse with their brethren and with Christian society at large, ministers are not unfrequently exposed to the blighting influence of Selfishness. Envyings, jealousies, and contentions arise, not only between those of different denominations, but often between such as belong to the same Church, and are united by the strongest ecclesiastical ties. One un-

necessarily and uncharitably intrudes within the proper sphere of another, and such intrusion is repelled, it may be, in an equally unkind and selfish spirit. It should be a principle of action in all ministers, of whatever name, not to operate in any way within each other's acknowledged bounds to scatter or divide the flock. Yet this principle is scarcely recognized by those that differ in name, and not sufficiently regarded by those that agree, and if it be maintained in a selfish spirit, the consequences are as injurious to fraternal intercourse and the cause of Christ as though the principle itself were wrong. Right principles are often marred and nullified by being carried out in a wrong temper and for selfish ends.

The anxiety with which a minister guards his flock, and the displeasure which he is apt to feel at any intrusion within his bounds, are generally thought to spring from a pure zeal for the glory of God and becoming watchfulness for the good of the people among whom he labours, but a close attention to the workings of his own mind will sometimes reveal the fact that Selfishness has no little agency in the matter. Should danger threaten any other congregation than his own, his interest is scarcely awakened and his emotions unexcited, although the cause of Christ may suffer as much in the former case as in the latter. And in respect to his own charge, a change of relation may effect a mighty change in his feelings.

While he is their pastor, the least appearance of injury to them excites alarm; but if the relation be dissolved in no friendly manner, his anxieties for their peace and prosperity have entirely subsided, and he is even tempted to rejoice in his heart at any evidence of disunion among them, or lack of the Divine blessing in any of their affairs.

Many things are attributed to principle and zeal for God which truly belong to self, and right principles and justifiable zeal may be considered selfish when they have been adopted and displayed with a paramount view to one's own advantage. Indeed, so various are the phases which Selfishness assumes, and so deceitful and intricate its workings in the purest mind, that it requires no little experience and self-examination to detect its presence and counteract its tendency. It is a spirit that refuses to be exorcised by human art, and is of that "kind which goeth not out but by much fasting and prayer."

Another occasion for the manifestation and exercise of selfish views and feelings is found in the frequent changes that take place in the pastoral relation. These changes have become so frequent, especially in the American Churches, as to excite alarm and call forth severe animadversion. They certainly indicate that evil exists somewhere, either in the ministers or Churches, or rather, as facts demonstrate, in both. The evil however does not so much lie in the changes

themselves, as in the causes which lead to them or render them necessary. These causes are numerous, but two only will be found applicable to the majority of cases, viz: the failure of the Churches to give a competent support to their ministers, and the love of filthy lucre or worldly honour and advantages in the pastors themselves. To which of these causes removals are mostly owing can be known only to Him "who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men." It would, however, be no mistake or evidence of uncharitableness to believe that, with few exceptions, both combine in producing the result. In many cases, where a tolerably comfortable support is given, and where there is no lack of acceptableness or success, it is nevertheless a fact, that an invitation to a more inviting field and larger support is sufficient to effect a removal, which a call of an opposite character would fail to accomplish. So frequently is this a matter of observation, that the public seem to take it for granted, that when a minister removes, it is to a more comfortable location and for a larger salary, and no little surprise is expressed when they find that the facts in the case are of an opposite description. More charity, however, should be exercised in reference to many of these removals than is found to exist. Many circumstances may make it the duty of a minister to seek a different sphere of labour, such as the failure in health of himself or family,

arising from local causes, utter inadequacy of support, and unwillingness in the people to grant it, or a want of acceptableness to the Church and success in his labours. And in the latter circumstance, a minister may be as selfish in staying where his labours are no longer useful, as in leaving a field where his services have been attended with the favour of his people and the blessing of God. Cases sometimes occur where a minister, from some cause or other, is not generally acceptable to the Church and congregation, and when there is no reasonable hope of a change in his favour, it is undoubtedly his duty to resign his charge, and seek another sphere of labour, and if he obstinately persists in remaining, to the manifest detriment of the Church and injury to the cause of Christ, it must be from personal and selfish considerations. The case is greatly aggravated should it be the fact that the most pious and experienced Christians are the least satisfied with his labours. It is indeed a severe trial of a minister's faith to be called to cast himself and his needy family on the providence of God, when there seems to be no immediate prospect of his obtaining another situation; and it is a trial to which a Church should not subject its pastor until after long forbearance and ardent prayer. But in such a condition the faithful servant of Christ should not forget that the Lord encourages such to cast their care upon him, and promises that he will sustain them, so

that they shall have cause to sing of mercy as well as of judgment.

Although there may be some danger of motives being impugned, or of offence being taken where none is intended, yet a regard to truth compels the observation, that Selfishness may be exercised by ministers, in greatly desiring and diligently seeking worldly honours and titles. It is foreign to the purpose of this work to discuss the question, whether honorary distinctions in the ministry are consonant with the Saviour's injunctions and the spirit of the Gospel, or for the spiritual good and success of the titled themselves. Each one must be deemed fully adequate to investigate and settle the question for himself. It is certainly possible to accept honour with a Christian and proper spirit, and to employ it as an occasion of greater usefulness. The Saviour himself frequently was addressed by Jewish titles; and in no instance, it is believed, did he condemn the titles themselves or rudely rebuke those that bestowed them. The love of them he did indeed condemn in the Pharisees, and forbade, in his disciples, the exercise of authority on their account, and both these concomitants of titles, wherever found, will be equally condemned by every one possessed of the spirit of Christ. That the selfish love of them is possible, the example of the Pharisees proves, and that they are still loved and sought after for carnal pur-

poses, who that knows human nature will be inclined to deny? While then there seems to be no clear evidence that the conferring and the receiving of titles are sinful in themselves, there is sufficient proof that the love of them for their own sake is so, because tending to the exaltation and gratification of self.

Finally, in the love and exercise of power, the Selfishness of man's nature has been and still is remarkably displayed. This is seen as well in the Church as in the world, and is as prominent in the clergy as in the laity. Indeed, from the very nature of the case, it may be expected that if the love of power and its improper exercise manifest themselves in the Church at all, they will commence with, and be prominent in, those whose office and duty it is to govern the Church ministerially, and who, from their learning and position, must have great moral and spiritual power. Accordingly, the history of the Church reveals the fact, that power has been greatly loved and abused by ecclesiastics, and no one acquainted with the state of the Church at the present day will doubt that it is so still to a lamentable extent. Wherever undue power is confided to and wielded by fallible man, it can scarcely fail of being exercised and abused to selfish ends. Man naturally loves power as well as honour, nor are the best of men proof against the temptation by which it is always accompanied.

In whatever way power has been acquired, it is with reluctance that it is surrendered. The plea for its continuance will be made long after the occasions that may have rendered it necessary have ceased to exist, and happy would it be, for the peace and prosperity of the Church, if her ministry were always ready to relinquish arbitrary power, and yield to the people their just share in their own government. But this, alas, seldom has been, and is not now the fact, for, although the ever-increasing intelligence of the present day makes the people more and more acquainted with their inalienable rights, and renders them capable of their exercise and enjoyment, yet there is apparent a determination to resist the just demands of the people, and to retain power at all hazards. For such a course, in the present state of the world, it is scarcely possible to conceive of any other than a selfish motive.

CHAPTER XI.

SELFISHNESS OF PROFESSORS AND CHURCHES.

Individuals give Character to Associations. Lack of Spirituality of Professing Christians. Selfishness the First Cause. Terms of Discipleship. Self-denial still required. Where is it to be found? Talents, to be Improved, not Thrown Away. Rule of Benevolence. How Christians Spend their Wealth. Rule of Giving adopted by many. Giving for Ostentation. Giving Nothing. Excuses. Covetousness the Prevailing Sin. Post-mortem Benevolence. Not Money, but the *Love* of Money, the Root of all Evil. Covetousness Hinders the Conversion of the World. Difficulty in Sustaining the Gospel. Ability of the Churches. Doing What We Can. On what Principles do Christians Act? Many Precepts of Christ Disregarded, especially those inculcating Benevolence.

It is not necessary, in this place, to speak of the envyings and jealousies which congregations of different names feel towards each other, or of the selfish strife which they frequently display, since these mournful exhibitions of carnality have probably been sufficiently dilated upon in a former chapter

Attention must now be directed to points which

belong to individuals and congregations in themselves, without regard to others by whom they may be surrounded. And here is to be found the foundation of the whole matter. Congregations receive their character from the majority of the individuals composing them, and denominations, in like manner, partake of the general spirit of the societies which they embrace. Congregations are the fountains of influence to the associated body, and the state of the Christian world must be judged of by that of its component parts.

Whatever evils, then, are found to exist in Christian society at large, may safely be predicated of the majority of Christian congregations and individuals. A lack of spirituality and Christian devotedness is a general complaint at the present day, together with the consequent withdrawal of the Holy Spirit's influence in the conversion of sinners. But these evils are themselves but the effects of a pre-existing cause, and that cause is to be sought for and found in the prevalent Selfishness of individual Christians and Churches.

The terms of discipleship, as propounded by the Master himself, are, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," and "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." This was emphatically true in the primitive ages of Chris-

tianity. Disciples were then required, literally to forsake fathers and mothers, wives and children, houses and lands, and, comparatively speaking, to hate them all when brought in competition with Christ. The Bible and authentic history testify that thousands of thousands, under the influence of love to their Redeemer, cheerfully made the sacrifice, and joyfully suffered the loss of all things for his sake. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves, that they might finish their course with joy, and reach the mark of their high calling of God in Christ.

Jesus requires self-denial in his disciples, as a part of their conformity to himself, who, "though he was rich, for their sakes became poor, that they, through his poverty, might be rich;" and the Apostle exhorts that the same mind should be found in Christians, which was also in Christ Jesus, "who, being in the form of God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

It is admitted by all who profess to be Christians, that self-denial, even unto death, is still required of all who are called to suffer persecution for Christ's sake; and they satisfy themselves with the thought and assertion, that they too, if called to do so, would cheerfully lay down their lives for the honour of

their Lord. But they say, and with truth, that God has delivered his people generally from the sword of persecution, and does not now require them to make the sacrifices and endure the sufferings to which the primitive Christians and martyrs were exposed.

It is not true, however, as would seem to be inferred, that self-denial is no longer required of the followers of Christ. The form of the requirement may have changed, but the spirit of it is still the same, and never can cease to be a part of Christian duty.

It seems to be generally supposed that all the self-denial that Jesus requires at the present day is, that an individual should repent of and renounce sin, give up his own righteousness, and receive Christ, as made unto him, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and that taking up the cross and following Jesus, means submitting to outward forms and confessing the Saviour before men.

To forsake sin and self-righteousness is indeed a difficult duty, as all Christians can testify; but it is a duty, the performance of which brings peace and joy to the soul, and does not subject to bodily suffering or to worldly loss and shame.

To confess Christ before men may, in a few instances, involve the loss of friends and worldly expectations, but, in the general estimation of worldly people themselves, it is an honourable position, and

secures for the confessor the confidence of the public and many earthly advantages. Were it otherwise, there would not be so many hypocrites and formalists in the Church, as we have reason to fear there are, men who have put on the cloak of profession to cover their secret iniquities, and who say, "Lord! Lord!" merely for the sake of more easily accomplishing their carnal designs.

Where, then, it may be asked, is self-denial to be found among the Christians of the present day? Is it in the general strife after wealth, that is as clearly visible in the Church as in the world? Is it in the almost universal conformity of professing Christians to the fashions and customs of this world? Is it in the luxurious living and sensual indulgence which spread, like a wasting pestilence, through all ranks and conditions of Christian society? Alas, in all this self-denial has no place, while Selfishness reigns supreme.

Where, then, it may again be asked, is self-denial? Is it banished from the earth, and is its place not to be found among men?

No, praised be the God of grace, it is not yet an utter stranger. Though rarely seen in its full beauty and strength, it still lingers in the bosoms of God's children, and is sometimes brought forth, with thrilling effect, by the touch of God's holy providence and Spirit. It is seen in those who are imprisoned and

exiled for Jesus' sake, and for the word of his testimony. It operates in the heart of the lonely widow or desolate orphan, who sometimes cast into the treasury of the Lord all that they have—even their whole living. It has a place in the souls of those who leave father and mother, and all the endearments of social and refined life, to preach among the heathen the "unsearchable riches of Christ." It is exemplified, to some extent, in the labours of those who renounce worldly prospects, that they may devote themselves to the "ministry of reconciliation." With these and similar exceptions, how little is to be seen of Christian self-denial, while of worldly self-denial, for worldly ends, there is a superabundance, as the innumerable lovers of gold and seekers after wealth sufficiently prove.

Do you ask, "What would you have us to do?" "Shall we give all our substance to religious purposes, and leave ourselves and families destitute of the comforts of life?" No, you are not to do that. The talents which your Lord has committed to you are to be retained, and employed in his service in the best manner you can. You are neither to hide or abuse them, nor to surrender them to others, till your Master calls you to give an account of your stewardship. It is freely conceded that Christians are not required to give all they possess to objects of Christian and general benevolence, yet it is insisted

that a just proportion of their income should be thus faithfully and conscientiously devoted, and nothing but pure Selfishness hinders them from so doing. The gold and silver are the Lord's, and he can give them to whomsoever he pleaseth. And he has promised that the "liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." The fear of loss then ought to have no place in the believer's mind when he contributes liberally to the Lord's cause, for he knows that "God is able to make all grace abound toward him, that he always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

In answer to the inquiry, "What proportion of their income should Christians devote to pious uses?" it may safely be said that it should be, at least, no less than that which God enjoined on the children of Israel—one-tenth of the products of their property and labour. Sufficient reasons might be assigned why Christians should exceed, rather than fall short, of that proportion. One consideration alone would justify Christians in devoting a fifth of their income to the service of God, and that is the new commandment which was not promulgated on Sinai, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." But does one in a hundred of professed Christians devote even one-tenth to the Lord? Thousands may be found who spend on one evening's en-

tainment of their friends more than they give in a whole year to the cause of Christ. Can any thing be more selfish? Is not that preferring their own honour and respectability in society to the claims of Christ and a perishing world? Many, nay the vast majority, lavish more in unnecessary and hurtful luxuries and carnal indulgencies than they contribute to the work of promoting their own spiritual interests and the salvation of others. If this be not Selfishness where shall it be found? Select a few articles of every day consumption, and such too as are not only unnecessary to health and comfort, but are pronounced by physicians to be generally injurious, and who is not convinced that the Christian community spends more on such deleterious luxuries than they contribute to the support of the Gospel and all benevolent objects combined? In favour of their general use, no substantial reason can be adduced, and scarcely any thing is ever presented in justification but universal custom or depraved taste. But these are entirely selfish considerations, and should never be pleaded by any conscientious individual, and much less by any sincere and candid Christian. Let but the amount wasted, and often times worse than wasted, on unnecessary indulgencies, be cast into the treasury of the Lord, and what a glorious impulse would be given to the cause of human salvation! Our benevolent societies would be no longer oppressed with

debt, or restricted and cramped in their Christian efforts, and instead of the pleading and pressing which it is necessary to employ to keep the work of the Lord from standing still or retrogressing, the word would soon go forth, as in the days of Israel's youthful love in the wilderness, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make," and so the people would have to "be restrained from bringing" until new schemes of doing good were devised, or a ten-fold increase should be made of agents to expend the free-will offerings of the Lord's people. May God speed the day when such a state of things shall be fully realized, for then shall the Redeemer's spouse "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners;" and then shall Isaiah's triumphant summons reverberate around the ransomed world, "Break forth into joy—sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem; the Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

But Selfishness, in the matter of benevolence, is not only seen in the smallness of the sum contributed, but is equally manifest in the considerations by which the amount of the pittance is regulated. It is not an uncharitable surmise, but a fact of painful experience,

that individuals very frequently give, not according to their own ability, but in proportion to what their friends and neighbours bestow. When asked to contribute of their abundance, even towards an object that has in view their own spiritual welfare and that of their families, many are not ashamed to inquire what others have given, and to graduate their offerings accordingly. The question is not "What does God require, and how much can I consistently give?" but "How little can I bestow without subjecting myself to the charge of penuriousness, and the scorn of my neighbours?" They are ashamed to fall below those of less or equal means with themselves; and to get off as easily as possible, are apt to underrate their own wealth and overestimate that of others.

On the other hand, some may contribute more than others, from the love of applause and the ambition of obtaining a name in society for unusual piety or benevolence; and in both cases, whether shame or ambition influence the mind, the motives are selfish, and consequently sinful and displeasing to God, who requires truth and purity of heart. A still worse feature of the selfish principle is furnished by the example of those professors of religion who give but little for their own religious edification, and nothing at all to purposes of general benevolence. The excuse given by such for withholding their aid is, that there is something wrong or untimely in the object

proposed. When home objects claim their support, they say they would rather give what they have to spare to send the Gospel to the heathen, who are entirely destitute, and therefore in greater need than those living in Christian lands; and when asked to help to send the Gospel to foreign and heathen lands, then they discover that "charity begins at home," and they feel bowels of compassion for the heathen in their own country and neighbourhood. This thing is not well timed, or that society is not well managed, and there is always some imperfection or error attached to every scheme or proposition that would call forth their sympathies, or extract the gold from their coffers. To say that such persons act unworthily of their standing as professing Christians, and their dignity as men, would be to use the mildest form of expression that such conduct merits; and it would be well for them seriously to consider what may be their condition at the judgment of the great day, when they shall stand before the Judge of all, who has commanded each one to "love his neighbour as himself," and who will say to those who have refused to relieve his suffering disciples, "Inasmuch as ye have not done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me; depart from me, I know you not."

There is another in the conduct of professors of religion, that is probably still more indicative of a sel-

fish spirit than any of the preceding, and that is covetousness, or the love of wealth. That this is a prevalent sin at the present day, in the Church as well as in the world, can scarcely be doubted by any attentive observer, and indeed it is difficult, if not impossible, to discern any difference, in this respect, between those who do and those who do not profess to be the followers of Jesus Christ. That there *should* be a very great difference as to this thing between the two classes, will surely not be denied by any who acknowledge that Christ's disciples should obey his commands, since obedience is the Divinely prescribed test of true discipleship. One of the Saviour's commands is, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," etc., "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," etc. How shall the almost universal neglect of this injunction be accounted for?

The conduct of Christians in regard to the desire and strife after wealth, could not be different, were the command precisely the reverse of what it is. Is it entirely overlooked and forgotten, or do Christians covet the treasures of earth in open defiance of a precept remembered and well understood? Or do they think that the law has been abrogated, and that they are now at perfect liberty to love and seek wealth, without being subject to the charge and guilt of idolatry? Or do they deceive themselves with the plea that their motives are good and form a sufficient

justification of their course? Do they think to escape the guilt of disobedience by saying, that they are laying up treasure, not for themselves, but for their children: or that they intend, when they die, to leave splendid legacies to religious and charitable objects? Whatever their professed motive may be, they are equally guilty of violating the precept; for it is as absolute and irrespective of motive as the commands which forbid adultery, murder, lying, stealing and drunkenness. To plead motive for doing what is absolutely forbidden, is as clearly rebellious as though no motive were thought of or assigned. The motive then, is a vain pretext, and in most cases is a miserable afterthought, adduced in extenuation of conscious guilt. "A deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, is there not a lie in our right hand?" The real motive is "love of money," as is manifest from the fact that the beloved gold is generally retained until death forces it from their grasp. If benevolence were the object, why does not the possessor apply it to that purpose as soon as it is acquired? Why deprive himself and others of the pleasure and benefit of using the Lord's money for his glory? The injunction, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," as much implies the actual doing of deeds of benevolence, as it forbids the performance of them for the sake of ostentation; and he does not

escape the sin of Selfishness, who, by large bequests seeks to obtain a post-mortem reputation for piety and benevolence; nor is that praise merited or well bestowed, which is usually given to dead persons, who have dealt out a tardy liberality of the wealth which it was impossible for them any longer to retain.

Industry, temperance and economy are Christian duties, and these will usually, in the providence of God, be attended with temporal prosperity; nor does the command, "not to lay up treasures on earth," forbid the just acquisition of wealth, though it does forbid its being hoarded up, on any pretext whatever. Christians may lawfully accept wealth as a talent to be employed for God's glory; and while it is thus employed, there is no sin in the possession of it, or in the effort to obtain it. Not money itself, but "the *love* of money is the root of all evil," and it is the coveting after it that "pierces the heart with many sorrows," even in this world, and will pierce it with many more in the world to come. It is not then the possession of wealth, but the trusting in it as a source of respectability, comfort and happiness, that renders it almost impossible for a rich man to enter heaven. It is not they that *are* rich, but they that selfishly "*will* be rich," that "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Covetousness is, beyond question, the easily beset-

ting and prevalent sin of the Church at the present day. This, more than any other cause, hinders the work of God, and delays the conversion of the world; and, until this foul idolatry is banished from the hearts of God's people, there is little ground of hope, that the joyful shout will soon be heard, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Christians mourn over the senseless idolatry of the heathen, but at the same time tolerate in their own hearts an idolatry, which, though it may be more refined, is equally as senseless, sinful and destructive, as that which has for its object a stock or a stone. They lament the obstinate attachment of the Pagans to their dumb idols, whilst they themselves are as obstinately attached to their own, no less dumb and equally bewitching; and were the Pagans fully aware of our refined idolatry, might they not retort our exhortations, by saying, "Cast out the beam from your own eyes, before you attempt to pull the mote out of our eyes." The chief obstacle to the conversion of the present races of Pagans, is not their besotted love of their gods of gold and silver, wood and stone. Were not the idolators of Greece and Rome as mad upon their idols as those of the present period? and yet how gloriously the cross of Christ triumphed over them in the Apostles' days. And why did the cross then triumph, but because the Spirit of God accompanied the faithful

labours of Christ's servants, and because the Church was supremely devoted to the honour of her Lord? Is not the Spirit still the same, and as ready to bless; and what hinders the blessing more than the worldliness and Selfishness of a carnal church?

It is this covetous and selfish spirit that forms the chief difficulty in sustaining the ordinances of the Gospel in Christian lands. Many churches and congregations abundantly able to support the Gospel, announce themselves as "feeble" and "unable," without foreign aid, to support a minister; and money, to a large amount, is contributed to their assistance. Feeble indeed they are; but their feebleness generally consists in the weakness of their faith; and their inability is nothing but an unwillingness to deny themselves for Christ's sake.

There is scarcely a Christian congregation in our land, composed of fifty families, that could not easily support the Gospel among themselves, and do something also to send it to the heathen; and that, without sacrificing a real necessity or comfort of life, and much to their own spiritual improvement and joy. Complaints from feeble churches would never or seldom be heard, if Christians lived less to themselves and more to God. What would it be for small congregations, either in city or country, to support their pastors, if they fully did their duty in this matter? Would it amount to one-tenth of their pecuniary

gains? or even one-twentieth? Many complain of poverty in reference to Christian effort, who are possessed of thousands, dwell in sumptuously furnished houses, and "heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay." When many churches say, "We have done all we can, and must have help," their language must be understood with many qualifications. They may have done all they can without exceeding their former measure. They may have done all they can without denying themselves some carnal gratification; but they have not done all they can as regards their real ability or the claims of their Lord and Saviour. Much more is implied in the phrase, "doing what we can," than is generally supposed. Jesus said of the woman that anointed his head with precious ointment, "She hath done what she could," but in breaking the alabaster box and pouring the "very precious ointment of spike-nard on the Redeemer's head, she had probably exhausted all her resources and spent her last mite. Of the poor widow Jesus said, "She has done more than they all," because, in casting her two farthings into the Lord's treasury, she had thrown in her whole living. But who, unless it be such-like Marys and widows, can truly say, "We have done what we could, to testify our love for him who died for us?"

So long as professing Christians spend more of their Lord's money in unnecessary and hurtful luxu-

ries, than they contribute to the support of the Gospel among themselves and its propagation abroad, should they not be ashamed to say, "we have done all we can," while the cause of God languishes and souls are hungering for the bread of life? Comparing the covetousness of Christians with the inspired declaration, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," and contrasting the little they give, with their ability and the claims of the Saviour, it is difficult to know what judgment to pronounce on the majority of those who are called by the name of Christ. But if the tree may be known by its fruit, it would not be uncharitable to say, that there is but little love for the Saviour or his cause among present Christians, and but little regard for their own souls or the souls of their neighbours. If the costliness of Mary's ointment was a proof of the greatness of her love, as the Lord himself declared, then, on the same principle, the littleness of Christian sacrifice must be regarded as clear evidence of a lack of affection; and if so, then how little above absolute nothingness, must be the love of thousands who profess to regard Jesus Christ as the "chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely?"

Comparatively small and feeble congregations may try to excuse themselves by the plea, that they do as much in proportion as larger and more wealthy churches. While this is freely admitted, it is also

true, that none fully satisfy the claims of duty in this behalf; and therefore the example of some can be no correct rule for the rest.

This "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves" is not wise, and is fraught with much evil to the churches and the cause of Christ. They will not be judged at the last day by what others have done; but, according to their own ability and the claims of their Lord, who hath bought them with his own precious blood, and therefore requires that "whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they should do all to his glory."

Contemplating the penuriousness of Christians generally, in connection with the doctrines, commands and promises of God's Word, it is difficult to decide on what principle or motive they act in regard to supporting the institutions of religion, and the extension of Christ's kingdom in the world. They cannot think that the glory of God is a matter of small moment, or that but little is required of them for its advancement; for they have solemnly acknowledged God to be supremely excellent, and that it is the duty and honour of all intelligent beings to make his glory the highest object of their constant aim. They cannot regard their Redeemer as having a claim to but a small share of their affections; for they have repeatedly declared that he is infinitely worthy of

their whole hearts, both on account of what he is in himself, and what he has done for their salvation. Do they regard their souls as but of little worth? This cannot be, for they profess to believe that an infinite price was paid for their redemption, and that they must exist hereafter in a state of endless duration. Do they suppose that they are under no obligation to labour for the salvation of others? How can they think so, in the hearing of that voice which said on Sinai: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," or of that which speaks from Zion: "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you?" "Do good to all men and especially to them who are of the household of faith." Have they forgotten the declaration which saith, "There is that giveth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Or do they doubt the fulfillment of the promise, "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself?" And again, "he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Do they think it their duty, above all things, to provide for the perishing body and lay up treasures on earth? If such be their thought, then have they not forgotten or do they not contemn the command of their Lord, who says, "Seek ye first the

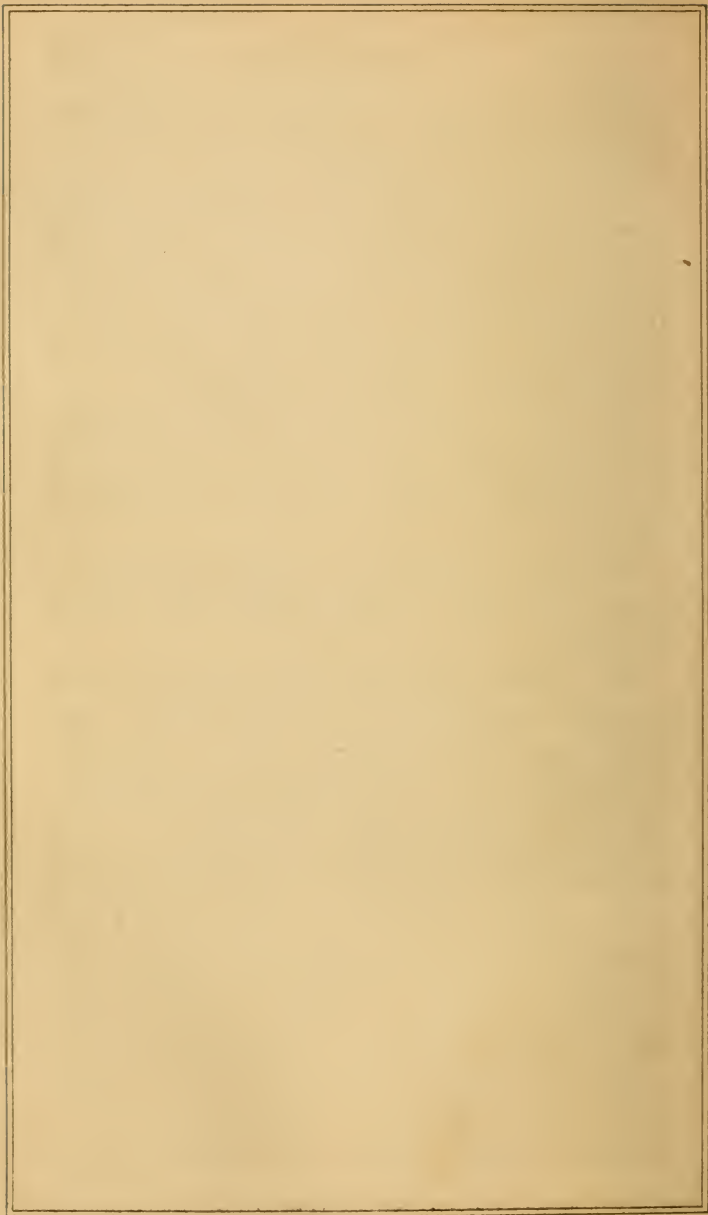
kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you?"

If none of these hypotheses contain the true explanation of the difficulty, and what Christian would dare to advance them, to what cause shall it be ascribed; and what is it that hinders the tribes of Israel from "coming up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty?"

Whatever it might be that practically nullifies the Divine commands and promises, certain it is that they are almost a dead letter on the statute book of Heaven.

Few seem to remember or understand them, and fewer still yield to them cheerful and uniform obedience.

The Apostle Paul said of many in his day, "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." They sought their wealth, honour or ease, to the neglect of the interests of Christ's kingdom; and if this be not the sin of multitudes in the Church now, then may they plead "not guilty" to any other accusation.



CHAPTER XII.

PECUNIARY SELFISHNESS.

Avarice Prevalent at the Present Day—Pervades all Nations and Classes. Avarice Tramples on Law, Right, and Humanity. All Seek their Own. Proofs of the Selfishness of Seeking to be Rich. Deference Paid to Wealth. Covetousness of the Church. Motives considered. Trusting in Wealth. Divine Admonitions Disbelieved or Disregarded. Piety Languishes. Prosperity of the Primitive Church. Promises and the Mode of their Fulfillment.

A MOMENT'S reflection will be sufficient to convince the reader that Pecuniary Selfishness is, perhaps, the most prevalent form of the vice at the present era. The love of money and pursuit of wealth pervade all the nations of the earth, and especially those that are distinguished for civilization and refinement. From the prince to the peasant, the desire to amass riches is the all-absorbing and controlling emotion.

The millionaire, whose coffers groan with hoarded treasures, is nevertheless heard to utter the horse-leech cry, "Give, give," and the demand is reëchoed

by the toiling day-labourer, who sweats and groans through life, for the pleasure of leaving behind him when he dies a few hundreds or perhaps thousands, to be quarrelled over by ungrateful heirs. The princely merchant, whose ships traverse every ocean and visit every clime, continues his traffic until he himself is called to launch into the ocean of eternity, and visit a region whence there is no return. The frugal husbandman continues, to extreme old age, to drive his plough, in the hope that his broad acres will extend for miles around his final and narrow resting place.

The restless and aspiring politician schemes and fawns, flatters and promises, that he may enjoy the honours and emoluments of office; and the professional man sedulously prosecutes his business, that he may draw golden opinions from those who employ him. The man of science and literature explores the secrets of nature and trims the midnight lamp, that he may discover hidden treasures, and by enlightening the minds of men, may illuminate his own condition with the splendours of wealth.

In a word, so universal, in all ranks and conditions of men, is the love of money and rage after wealth, that it is difficult to find a single individual who does not seem to make getting rich the grand object of life. This might be the less regretted did all men confine themselves to the lawful means of accomplishing their aim, and did they pay due regard to the

welfare of others. But such is far from being the fact. Tens of thousands care not what misery and ruin they bring upon others by their covetous Selfishness. The trafficker in intoxicating drinks regards not the tears and sufferings of broken-hearted wives and starving children, nor the moans of the widow and destitution of the fatherless. The gambler remorselessly strips his victim of his last cent—laughs at his frantic self-upbraidings, and answers his ardent entreaties for mercy with the most profane and insulting language.

And even where there is no unlawful invasion of right, or cruel trampling on the peace and happiness of society, there is, nevertheless, a criminal indifference to the general good, which practically nullifies the Divine injunction, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Indeed, this precept seems to be understood, as far as it is regarded at all, in a sense exactly the reverse of its true meaning. The term "wealth," supplied by the English translators, was intended to express the meaning of "profit" or "welfare," and consequently the command is, "Let no man seek his own welfare exclusively, but every man the welfare of another." In direct violation of this wholesome law, the general practice is for every man to seek, exclusively, the augmentation of his own wealth, by the transfer of that of another to his own possession, either by the

common and legal operations of trade, or by the exorbitant profits of dishonest transactions.

Many considerations avail to prove that the general desire of, and strife after wealth, are of a purely selfish character, among which may be enumerated the obvious facts, that riches are principally devoted, by their possessors, to self-gratification in luxurious living, worldly distinction, and family aggrandizement; and that the claims of philanthropy, patriotism, charity, and religion, are fitfully and grudgingly responded to by the vast majority of men of wealth. Another fact contributes strong proof on the same point, which is, that wealth is sought beyond what is sufficient to secure comfort, respectability, or distinction in society, and even beyond what is requisite to enable children to commence the business of life with comfort and the fairest prospects of success, and this, notwithstanding the frequent admonitions of God's word and providence, that vast wealth is generally a temporal and spiritual curse to its possessor, and when left to children, too frequently proves the ruin of their morals and happiness.

The deference, too, that is almost universally paid to wealth, is proof how deeply the love of money is seated in the human heart, and how extensively it pervades the sentiments and forms of society. Multitudes who, beyond their wealth, have no claims to distinction or esteem, are nevertheless treated with

the most "distinguished consideration," and find no difficulty in making their way to the "chief seats" of honour, and occupying the "uppermost rooms" in intelligent and refined society. While, on the contrary, the virtuous and honest poor are frowned upon and neglected even by their own relatives, and esteemed unworthy to take a seat at the footstool of those to whom, in point of moral character and usefulness, they are vastly superior. Wealthy strangers are more respected and caressed than a poor brother, born to adversity, or thereto providentially reduced.

It were a great relief to the dark picture which the covetous disposition of the world presents to view, could the professed followers of the self-denying Saviour be exempted from the charge of avarice; but, alas, truth compels the assertion, that, in this respect, there is little or no perceptible difference between the Church and the world. The foul leprosy has deeply infected the visible members of Christ's mystical body, and extends its paralyzing influence through the whole.

Beyond the ranks of the ministry, how few are found who are consecrating their time, talents, and superfluous wealth to the glory of God, in the support and extension of his kingdom in the world. If covetousness be idolatry, as the Word of God declares it to be, then is the visible Church full of it, and there is no need to seek for it among the unchristianized heathen.

As there appears to be the same anxiety after wealth among those who profess piety as among those who do not, so there seems to be as much tenacity among the former as among the latter to retain what they possess.

As a general rule, people of the world are as much disposed to support Christian and benevolent institutions as members of the Church, and are equally liberal in their contributions. Indeed, the Gospel and Christian schemes of benevolence are, to a great extent, supported by those called worldly men, and were their aid to be withdrawn, without a corresponding increase of effort in the Church, it would be scarcely possible to sustain the means of grace in Christian lands, or do any thing for the salvation of the world. Houses of worship would be diminished one-half in number or size, and if the Christian ministry did not lack bread as well as employment, it would be owing to a miracle similar to that which fed Elijah at the brook Cherith. The desire for riches receives its true character from the motive by which it is prompted, and that motive is revealed by the general disposition that is made of riches when acquired. If the motive be selfish or merely avaricious, then is the desire sinful and idolatrous; but if the motive be the glory of God, and the temporal good and eternal salvation of men, then is the desire a righteous one, and perfectly consistent with the Christian faith.

The desire for riches, therefore, and the labour to acquire them, are not in themselves sinful and to be condemned, but, on the contrary, praiseworthy and Christian, when the motive and aim are of the right kind.

The evil and danger of riches lie in the love of them for their own sake, or for the carnal advantages and gratification which they secure. When the disciples were "exceedingly amazed" at the Saviour's declaration, "that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," and "that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God;" and when they anxiously inquired, "Who then can be saved?" he explained his meaning and partly removed their surprise by saying, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God;" "with men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible."

The disciples, being yet children in understanding and grace, had not learned the distinction between possessing riches, and trusting in them and loving them, and the process of reasoning, through which the Lord would conduct his followers, is this: "It is hard for a man to have riches, and not to trust in them or love them; but the love of riches is idolatry, and no idolator hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." And hence the peculiar dif-

ficulty in the salvation of the rich, and the obvious fact that few rich men are vital Christians, or even of exemplary morals.

In regard to the distinction just spoken of, is there not as great a lack of understanding at the present day as in ancient times? Or, the distinction being understood and the danger comprehended, do men deliberately prefer the treasures of earth to those of heaven, and carnal enjoyments to the favour of God, which is life and better than life?

Men are now as eager for riches, and as tenacious of their possession, as if the great Searcher of Hearts had never uttered his warnings on the subject, or as if they verily believed that riches would not only secure earthly bliss, but would form a golden key to unlock for them the heavenly paradise, instead of forming an adamant bar against their entrance, only to be broken through by the special and almighty grace of God. What utter disregard of Divine admonitions, what practical disbelief of sacred truth are witnessed at the present day, and generally prevalent, not only among the unregenerate portion of mankind, but also, to a fearful extent, among those who otherwise bear the marks of God's children, and give hopeful evidence of a living faith! While such is the fact, is it a matter of surprise that the influences of the Holy Spirit are restrained, and that, consequently, the work of God languishes or proceeds

but slowly, and that worldliness and formality are so extensively prevalent?

In proportion to the general and religious intelligence of the present day, and to the amount of the means of grace, true conversions to God and vital piety in the Church are lamentably deficient; nor has the Gospel had that success in the heathen world which should be regarded as at all commensurate with the amount of means expended and of labour performed. A comparison of the last three centuries of the Christian era with the first three, should lead the Church of God to prayerful self-examination and deep humility. In three centuries from the death of Jesus Christ, the Gospel had banished idolatry from a great part of the Roman Empire, and obtained signal triumphs in other nations of the world. Its converts were a vast multitude, which no man could number, whilst, at the same time, its martyrs were reckoned by hundreds of thousands, who counted not their lives dear to them, for the love that they had to their crucified Lord and his glorious cause. In explanation of the difference between that day and the present, it may be said that that was an age of miracles and of the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While this is indeed true, yet much of the power of the Christian faith in the primitive ages is to be found, under God, in the self-denying and holy lives of the first confessors of Jesus, who renounced wealth and

honour, and devoted themselves to the salvation of a lost world. They lived, not to themselves, but, when converted to God, brought their wealth and laid it at the Saviour's feet, and cheerfully endured poverty and suffering that they might enter the kingdom of Zion's King, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, incorruptible and that can never pass away.

The fact that Christians were then continually exposed to persecution and martyrdom, had the effect to render them indifferent to the seductions of wealth and honour, and animate them in the service of their glorified Lord. But as soon as persecution ceased, the native depravity of the heart obtained the ascendancy, and the love and pursuit of wealth and honour became general; and when the Church began to say, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," then the converting and sanctifying influences of the Spirit were withdrawn, and the Church, in spiritual things, became "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The declension of religion in the ancient Church was produced by the same cause that operates to the same effect in all ages. Christians being industrious and prosperous in worldly things, became rich, but, instead of devoting their wealth to Christ, they used it for their own carnal purposes, and left it to their children. They, in consequence, were formal and worldly, and thus, in a few generations, vital piety

almost became extinct, and bigotry and superstition generally usurped its place.

Another consideration deserves serious attention. Relying on the promises and predictions of the Word of God, do not Christians expect and pray for more glorious displays of Divine grace in the latter day, than even those of the first Pentecostal season? But is there any scriptural hope of the realization of those promises and predictions, without a vast increase of Christian self-denial and liberality? While there is so much love of money and worldly conformity in the Church, in vain will it be to look and pray for the coming of the latter day glory. The spirit of Paul must be that of believers in general: "For me to live is Christ;" and they must feel and exemplify the truth, "Ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his."



CHAPTER XIII.

SPECIAL SELFISHNESS.

Meaning of the term "Special." Ages and Nations have their Special Traits. Ancient Rome. Declension of Rome. Middle Ages. Age of the Reformation. The Present Age. National Traits. Love of Self Predominant in All. The common boast in reference to the Nineteenth Century not to be commended. Special Traits of Neighbourhoods. Whence they may spring. Family Selfishness. Individual Selfishness. Children frequently Inherit the Mental Traits of their Parents. Questions Proposed.

THE term Special is here used in its common acceptation. Thus, a special favour is one unusually large or granted under peculiar circumstances. A special reward is one not included in the original contract. Special benevolence is that which is large in degree, exceeding expectation, and beyond the absolute claims of necessity. Special cruelty is that which is more than ordinary. And any thing special, is that which is out of the general course of things.

So by special Selfishness is to be understood that which constitutes a peculiar feature or marked char-

acteristic of an age, race, or individual, and may be special in manner or degree. Different ages of the world have their special or peculiar traits. That of ancient Roman greatness and power, was an age of military glory, ambition, and love of conquest and territorial acquisition. That of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was distinguished by the repeated irruptions of the northern barbarians, and the convulsive throes of a nation made imbecile by luxury and lust. The middle ages were characterized as ages of literary and moral darkness, religious superstition, bigotry, and persecution, and blind enthusiasm and feudal commotions. The succeeding age was one of the revival of learning and true religion, accompanied with a more correct understanding of the nature of civil and religious liberty, with a determination to assert and maintain the inalienable rights of man. The present is an age of increasing learning, intelligence, invention, progress, and enterprize, and should it be added, of preëminent Selfishness, it is believed no injustice would be inflicted on the present race of mankind, either in a national or personal respect. Nations too have had, and still have, their peculiar features, which may, in some cases, be modified by time, or entirely changed by a change of circumstances. The old Romans were illustrious for personal bravery and love of liberty, for national magnanimity and ambition, whilst their degenerate

successors appear to be as largely possessed of pusillanimity and submissiveness.

But as the mentioning of names might be considered invidious, let it suffice to remark, that stoical apathy, religious intolerance, and immovable inactivity, may prevail in one nation and district. Deep learning, metaphysical acuteness, and skeptical speculation, may be the boast of another. Musical taste and excellence in the fine arts may be the almost solitary redeeming qualities of a third. Cruelty, avarice, and superstition, may disguise a fourth. Another may be frivolously gay, religiously skeptical, scientifically acute, artistically and mechanically ingenious, and politically changeable. Another, almost as rough, cold, and stationary as a mountain of ice. In another, plodding industry and careful economy may prevail. In a neighbouring people, learning, intelligence, piety, self-sufficiency, benevolence, and self-aggrandizement, may be mingled in almost equal proportions. And, lastly, another may share largely in all the qualities last mentioned, with, perhaps, a greater degree of liberty, activity, and progress. All, however, may participate in nearly equal measure in the love of self. Many of the traits enumerated above, however various or opposite they may seem, naturally and truly resolve themselves into the same depraved and predominant principle of fallen humanity which has been considered the fountain of vice and foundation of evil,

for Selfishness is equally manifest in dull apathy and restless excitability, in military courage and love of glory, and in shrinking pusillanimity, in the boast of patient investigation and logical quickness, and in cold indifference and staid barbarity and ignorance, and in cruelty, avarice, love of pleasure, changeableness, self-aggrandizement, and love of wealth.

It would consequently be a very difficult task to determine in what age or nation Selfishness has most abounded, and the task shall not be attempted in that aspect. It will be sufficient, in this respect, that it has been already intimated that the present age will probably be regarded in future as superabounding in civil, pecuniary, and religious Selfishness.

The consideration of special Selfishness is more successful and satisfactory when directed to neighbourhoods, families, and individuals. Particular neighbourhoods and larger sections of civil society are sometimes, it might be said frequently, observed to assume and long retain a special trait or mark of character, and this is more apparent in rural districts than in large cities and towns, because that in the country all the contiguous families are intimately acquainted with each other's state and doings, and more or less connected by kindred ties; besides, their frequent and long-continued intercourse and mutual influence tend to perpetuate sentiments and customs from generation to generation.

One neighbourhood or district may be pervaded by an avaricious and parsimonious spirit, another may be distinguished for prodigality and wastefulness; one may be marked by sobriety and morality, another by intemperance and profligacy; piety and correct Christian deportment may prevail in some, while infidelity and religious laxity may predominate in others; the spirit of improvement and enterprise may be active in one place, while another is oppressed by slovenliness and lack of thrift.

To a careless observer, these special characteristics may appear to spring from entirely different principles, but this is not the fact, with the exception of those which have their origin in Divine grace. In reference to these peculiar traits, it is much easier to trace them to their common source than to ascertain their exciting cause. Could the several communities be clearly traced to their original formation, it might appear that one or more prominent individuals or families have influenced their own generation, and transmitted their spirit to succeeding ones. Political and religious opinions and practices are thus propagated and perpetuated, and so may be the motives and spirit by which they are actuated and directed.

An individual may be avaricious, and, as the head of a family, may easily infect his whole household with the same spirit. His children naturally imbibe

his sentiments and pursue the course which he has marked out, and they, in turn, become the parents and instructors of others, and thus transmit whatever of good or evil belonged to their own character to future generations, with probably increasing power as the sphere becomes enlarged.

But an individual's influence is not and cannot be restrained within the bounds of his own family. He must and will, according to circumstances, exert more or less power over his neighbour's sentiments, motives, and pursuits. If he be, comparatively, a man of wealth, or talents, or learning, he will be regarded with deference by those around him, and his sayings and doings will be considered oracular and proper by those less favoured and gifted than himself.

The inquiry is not so general, "what is right and proper in itself?" as, "what does such a one say or do?" And the mass of mankind are prepared to adopt the measures of one who has been successful in the acquisition of wealth without regard to the moral character of such measures.

Some families are observed to be peculiarly infected by the selfish spirit, through nearly all its branches, and for successive generations. They appear to be almost incapable of regarding any thing as worthy of attention or esteem, except as it may have some connection with themselves, or have a bearing on their own honour and prosperity. Every

thing they possess is the most excellent of its kind; and every thing they do, is done in the best manner, and is the perpetual subject of their conversation.

Their afflictions and trials are thought by them to be the heaviest ever endured by mortal man, and they wonder that others show so little sympathy for them, whilst they were seldom if ever known to manifest the least feeling for the woes of their neighbours or of the human race. They exact the utmost respect and deference from those beneath them, but are unwilling to grant the same to their superiors. They are ever striving to elevate themselves, and care not how many they may trample under foot. To advance their own honour is their constant aim, whilst they rejoice in the disgrace of others and do what they can to increase it. To promote their own interest and prosperity, they will not hesitate to inflict injury on others, when they can do so with impunity. The different members of such families, are generally as selfish towards each other, as they are to strangers, with the exception that when any thing affects the honour of the family, and consequently of each individual, they forget for a moment their differences, and unite in mutual defence.

Individual examples of special Selfishness are so numerous, that almost every neighbourhood is possessed of one or more. A person of this character is

easily distinguished from others, and is well known to all his acquaintances, though unknown to himself.

He conceals his own disposition from himself by giving a wrong name to his peculiar infirmity; and seems to think that others have not penetration enough to discover the cheat. His avarice, in his own estimation, is merely a proper anxiety for his own good or that of his family. His penuriousness he calls economy, his unsociableness he styles independence, and his illiberality he represents as impartial justice. He will stoop to almost any thing, either to make or save a shilling. He is in favour of improvements when they promise to improve his revenues, but is irreconcilably opposed to such as would abstract any thing from his coffers, though manifestly calculated to promote the public good. He finds fault with schemes of benevolence, that he may have a pretext for withholding his aid; although at the same time he will talk by the hour on the duty and pleasure of benevolence and liberality. The fear of losing a little of his idolized wealth, will make him easy to be offended with his best friends, nor will he be reconciled until the danger is past. He will quarrel with truth itself, if she makes any demands on his purse; and even his religious creed will be regulated by the principle of economy. Acknowledging no rule of conduct but the love of self, his changes in politics and religion are apt to be frequent and sud-

den, and he is always a bigot, to whatever party or sect he may belong. He may occasionally perform what seems to be a generous or liberal act; but it is either from ill will and spite towards a forsaken cause, or to gain applause with new associates. If he be a professor of religion, a stranger, to hear him talk on the subject of Christian duty, might suppose him to be a saint recently come from heaven; but his brethren in the Church are fully persuaded that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing. In his attempt to conceal from others his true character, he is unsparing and bitter in his denunciations of the very faults of which he is guilty, and cordially hates those who most resemble himself. He is positive and dogmatical in his own opinions in proportion to his ignorance, and, as Solomon says of the sluggard, "he is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason."

He is obstinately attached to his own habits and practices, and censorious in regard to those of others; and denounces, as fools, all who presume to differ from him.

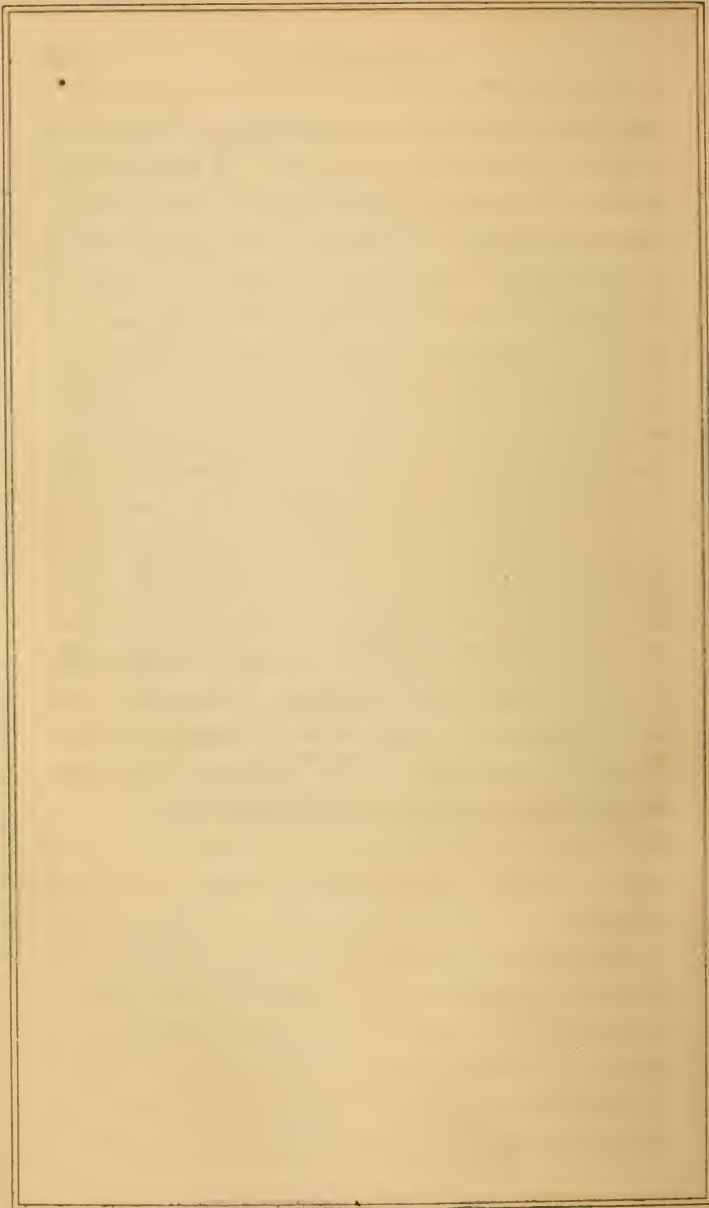
He can see no reason in the habits he dislikes, and no absurdity in those he loves. If he be of a courteous disposition, he will habitually deny himself many of the comforts of life, to increase his gains; but is unwilling to make the smallest sacrifice for the good

of others, or to promote the cause of truth and righteousness.

If he be fond of animal delights, he is liberal to excess in the gratification of his own appetites and desires, but regards every penny as worse than wasted that is spent in the gratification or improvement of others. In a word, the supreme love of self is the key that enables us to decipher the intricate problems of his character, and readily explains acts that seem almost inexplicable, and shows that they spring from the same source, however antagonistic they may seem to a casual observer.

That children very frequently inherit the peculiar mental traits of one or both parents, is a matter of daily observation, and is a subject worthy of the close attention of the psychologist and physician. Such questions as the following readily suggest themselves to a reflecting mind. Whence originate national traits of character and disposition? Is it from climate, soil or food, or from some remote ancestral stock? In regard to personal disposition, is the cause to be sought for in the mind itself, or in the body? If in the mind, how does it descend from parent to child for many generations? If in the body, in which of its parts or organs is it located? Is it in some peculiar convolution of the brain, or in a deranged state of some other organ? In the case of irascibility of temper, is it owing to some peculiar taint of the

nervous system, or is the excitability of the nerves caused by some morbid secretion? So also in reference to covetousness, envy, jealousy, and similar depraved emotions, are they to be traced to some specific cause in the mental or bodily organization of the individual? Or, finally, is disposition, whether national or personal, merely the result of education, example and habit? The power of these latter agents over individual and national character, is confessedly great; and yet it is not sufficient to explain the difficulties in the case, since children are observed to possess the disposition of their parents, long before the work of education has been commenced, or example and habit have exerted their power. But, as it is not the design of this work to investigate the remote causes of constitutional temperament, this whole subject, with the queries proposed, must be referred to those whose proper business it is to study and explain the physical organization of man.



CHAPTER XIV.

PERSONAL SELFISHNESS.

Meaning. Danger of Overlooking Yourself. Importance of Self-Examination. In Others see Yourself. A Family Likeness. True Question. Selfishness Manifested in Pride, Vanity, Anger, Resentment, Envy, Jealousy, Contention and such like. Seek the only Efficient Remedy.

By Personal Selfishness, dear reader, is meant that of your own mind and character. After reading all that has been said on the subject, there is great danger that, in looking abroad for examples in others of this hateful vice, you may be tempted to overlook yourself. In such a case, the writer's labour would be almost in vain; and altogether so in reference to yourself.

Should each reader overlook or exonerate himself, injury, instead of benefit, may result from the exposition that has been attempted; since a censorious spirit, the offspring of Selfishness itself, might be thereby increased, and nothing be effected towards an eradication of the evil. It is therefore of the first

importance that you should be led candidly and in the fear of God, to examine your own soul, and fervently pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit, that you may discover and feel the plague of your own heart, and seek the proper and only remedy.

As face answereth to face in a glass, so doth the heart of man to man; and whatever you may think of others, be assured that you yourself are labouring under the universal distemper. The question is not, whether you are as selfish as some others, but whether there be not enough in yourself, when properly apprehended, to create self-loathing and humiliation before God. And certain it is, that, if you are faithful in the search, you will find work enough for a lifetime in resisting the spirit of self in your own soul, and seeking to have implanted and invigorated that of true benevolence.

Do not then pass over this chapter or carelessly peruse it, as one that does not concern you; but seriously and prayerfully read on, while some of the symptoms of the mental disease are presented to your view.

PRIDE

Is a protean vice, which assumes various names, under which it seeks to conceal its hateful nature. At one time it is self-complacency, or that pleasure which is felt when any one contemplates some real or

imaginary endowment of which he is, or thinks he is, possessed. At another time, it is decency or a becoming regard for external appearances. Again, it is self-sufficiency or that feeling of ability which may be requisite to the performance of duty, or the accomplishment of great exploits, without proper regard to the Divine assistance and blessing. Anon, it is highmindedness or haughtiness, accompanied with contempt of others who may be inferior in point of talents, acquirements, or possessions.

In some or all of these forms have you not often felt pride swelling and rankling in your heart? Corporeal beauty or attractiveness may fill your heart with pleasure, and cause you frequently to contemplate your charms and set them off to the best advantage, at the cost of much time and money, that you may attract the admiring gaze of all beholders. Mental endowments or acquisitions are frequently exhibited, that you may be complimented for your intelligence, learning, or wit. Your wealth may excite a feeling of independence, and tempt you to despise the poor, and require that deference from others which should be given only to high moral excellence and goodness. Or you may boast of your high and honourable connections in society, whilst you disregard the honour which cometh from God, and despise the true nobility that springs from honesty and benevolence. In these and other ways, almost innumerable,

selfish pride manifests itself, and works the will of the flesh and not the will of God.

VANITY

Is another form of Selfishness as prevalent as pride. When a person thinks too highly of himself, it is but natural that he should desire others to do the same. A few may possibly be too proud to be vain, and may care little or nothing for the good opinion of others. It is lawful to be gratified with the good-will of others, and to labour rightfully to obtain and keep it, but to make the praise of men our chief aim, and to shape our actions for that end alone, is certainly selfish and sinful. Have you not, times innumerable, anxiously desired to obtain praise for natural or acquired endowments, in reference solely to your own gratification and advantage, while to hear others praised for the same, would give you no pleasure, but rather the reverse?

ANGER,

Too, is mostly of a selfish character. "Be ye angry and sin not," is a Divine injunction, but of difficult execution. To be displeased with evil conduct, and to manifest that displeasure in a proper way, is the duty of all. But when a person feels displeasure at the evil conduct of another, because it afflicts himself, but is indifferent to it when others are injured, his anger is wrong and truly selfish. Have you not then

been frequently angry with others, not only for doing what you thought to be wrong, but even for telling you the truth or for speaking the truth to you? And have you not cherished this angry and malicious feeling for a long time, contrary to the command, "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath," and forgetful of the Saviour's words, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you?"

RESENTMENT

Naturally succeeds anger, and adds ten-fold to its guilt. To return evil for evil is utterly contrary to the spirit of natural and revealed religion, and is never justifiable. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay it," saith the Lord. "Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath," "Render evil to no man." These, and many similar precepts, reveal the true nature of resentment as a work of the flesh and the offspring of self.

Yet, have you not often sought to avenge yourself on those that you thought had injured you? Have you not rendered "railing for railing," and slander for slander, and been gratified when your enemies have been overtaken with misfortune or affliction?

Instead of praying for your persecutors, have you not wished, and therefore prayed, that God would curse them, and never forgive them?

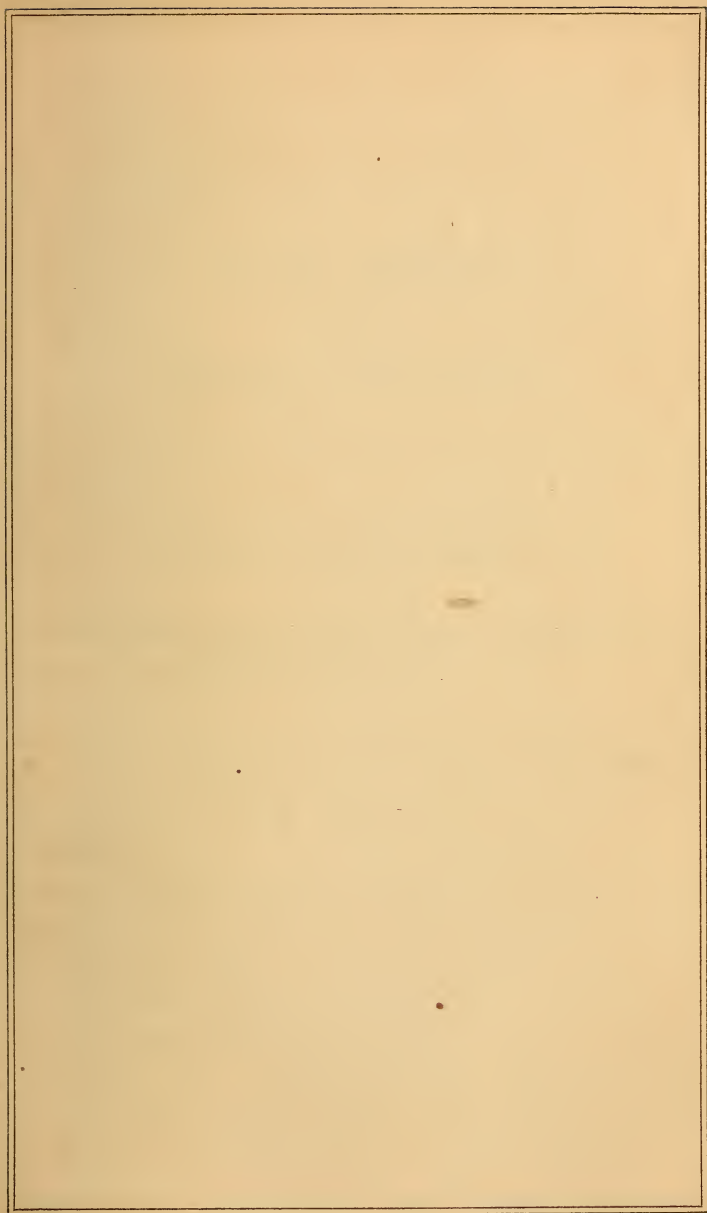
Envy, jealousy, contention, and similar ills, with which the world abounds, all spring from the same bitter root, and are productive of "evil, and only evil, and that continually." Are you not sensible that these feelings often predominate in your heart, and does it not require a great effort to resist and suppress them?

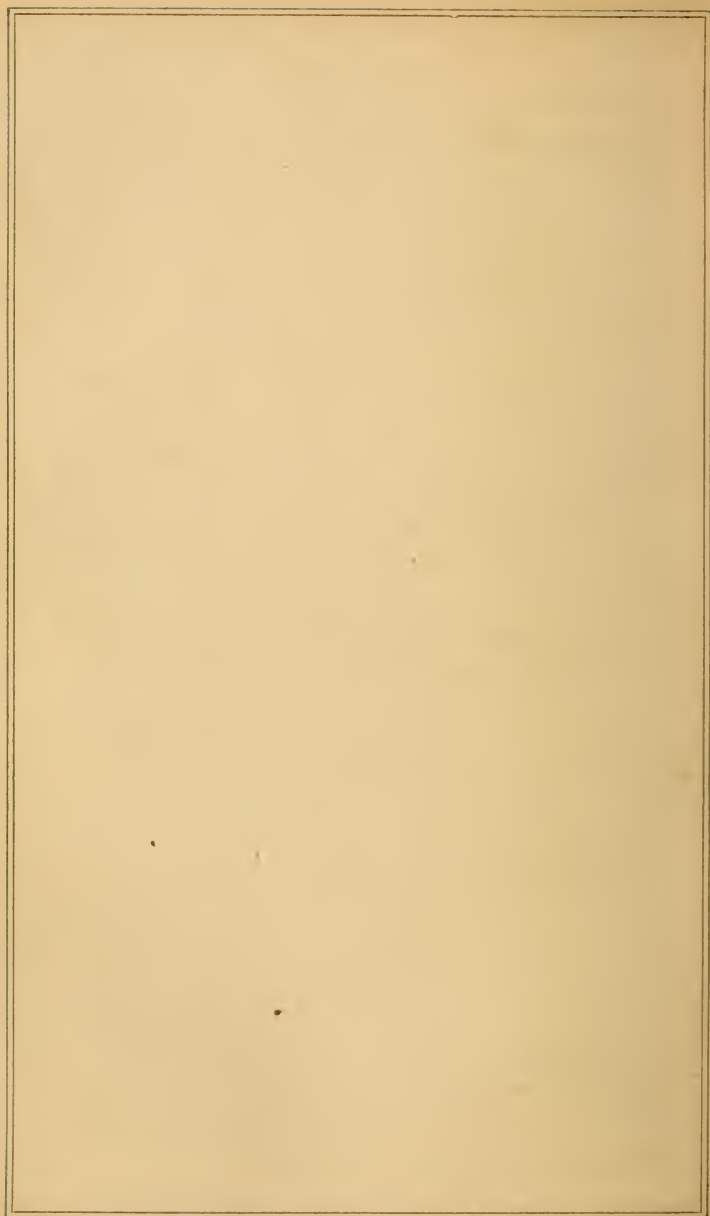
Whatever belongs to yourself is the object of your special regard, while that of others excites your envy. An injury done to yourself calls forth your marked disapprobation, whilst entire insensibility is shown to the injuries sustained by others. To speak evil of you is a high crime, but for you to speak evil of others is excusable and proper. Pride in others excites your disgust and condemnation, but in yourself, it is proper self-respect.

But to attempt to follow Selfishness in all its serpentine windings in the human heart would require more time and space than can be allowed.

Suffice it to say, that if you faithfully perform the duty of self-examination, you will discover Selfishness where you had not suspected its existence, and will have abundant reason to abhor yourself and repent before God in dust and ashes.

May God aid you in the work, and dispose you to apply to him as the only Physician, and to his grace as the sole efficient remedy.





PART SECOND.

Remedy of Selfishness.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

A Distressing Thought. Anxious Inquiries. God's Promises and their fulfillment through appropriate means.

THE thought of the indefinite continuance and universal propagation of the spirit of Selfishness cannot but be very distressing to every benevolent heart.

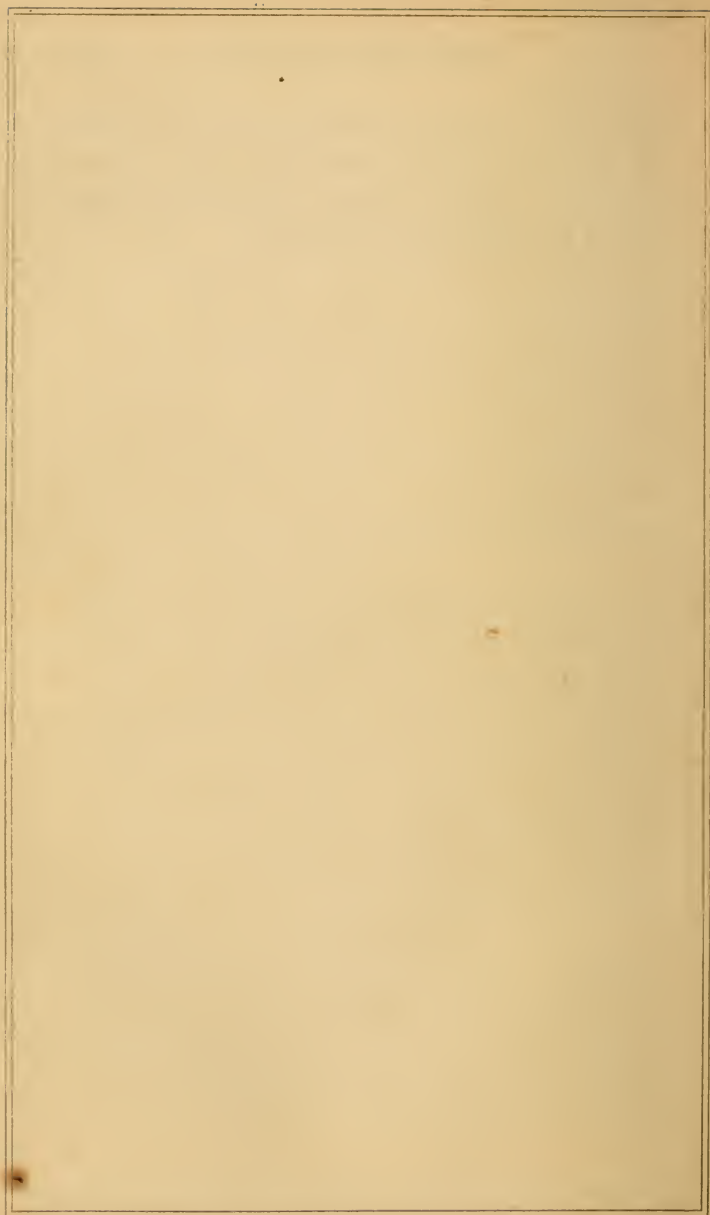
In contemplating the wide-spread and ruinous effects of the love of self, as exemplified in the history of this fallen world for nearly six thousand years, the soul of the Christian philanthropist is overwhelmed with amazement and filled with sorrow, and he is impelled to cry, "O Lord, how long!" How long shall this hateful principle desolate thy beautiful footstool, and fill the hearts of thy intelligent offspring with

covetousness, wrath, envy, and malice, every evil word and work, and bring lamentation and woe to the bosoms of the suffering and down-trodden meek of the earth? How long ere universal benevolence shall pervade the nations and arrest the progress of desolating war? How long ere Christian good-will shall dry up the streams of self, that in a thousand different ways have brought misery and desolation to the hearts and homes of millions of the human race? How long ere the families of mankind shall be united in the bonds of that heavenly love which shall convert this selfish, cold, and barren world into the blooming and fruitful paradise of God?

This consummation is devoutly to be wished and prayed for, but would scarcely be a hopeful one were it not that the God, who cannot lie, hath distinctly promised it in his unerring word, and thus given ample encouragement to the unceasing prayers and faithful labours of his believing people. The same God who predicts has pointed out the means of fulfillment, and calls, in his providence, on all the good of every name and nation to use those means in dependence on his almighty power and grace.

Yet, though the promises of God are a sufficient ground of hope, encouragement, and confidence, it must not be forgotten or disregarded that his promises are to be realized through the agency of appropriate

means, and that he has placed the remedy for the evils of Selfishness, as of every other form of sin, in the hands of parents, teachers, legislators, and especially of the Church of Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER I.

REMEDY IN THE HANDS OF PARENTS.

Position and Power of Parents. Parental Love, its Failure and Cause thereof. Selfishness to be Opposed. Like begets Like. Resemblance of Children to Parents, Physically, Mentally, and Morally. Diseases and Vices both hereditary. A Theory. Infant Selfishness not properly treated. Mother's Influence First and Greatest. United Influence of both Parents. How Difference of Views should be managed. Parental Consistency and Example. Parents should be what they desire their Children to be.

THE position which parents occupy in society is of the most honourable and important character, and the power which they wield for the good or injury of their offspring and of community in general, can scarcely be over-estimated, and has hitherto not been fully appreciated by the world or the Church.

It is an instinct of our nature that parents should love their children, and desire and labour for their permanent welfare; yet, in consequence of depravity and mistaken views, they altogether fail in innumerable instances, and comparatively but few meet with

even partial success. On inquiry for the causes of failure and disappointment, Selfishness presents itself as at once the most prominent and powerful.

If parents wish, as they all should, and probably most of them do, the real happiness of their children and the prosperity of society, they ought especially to guard against the indulgence of the selfish principle in their own hearts, and endeavour to prevent its perpetuation in their families. It is a rule of morals as well as physics that like produces like. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." So, to expect that selfish parents should have and rear self-denying and happy children, is almost as unreasonable as to expect an evil tree to bring forth good fruit.

Though inexplicable to man, there is, undoubtedly, something physical concerned in the moral resemblance which children bear to their parents.

It is as frequently the fact that parents transmit to their children their moral qualities as their physical conformations and features. Diseases are hereditary, and so are vices, and both descend from generation to generation with greater uniformity and certainty than the opposite good qualities, because any thing vicious finds a more congenial soil in depraved human nature than that which is good, takes root more speedily,

and is of quicker growth. Hence family traits, whether bodily, mental, or moral, are propagated for ages, and national characteristics obtain an almost indelible existence. If, then, parents wish their children to be selfish and covetous, and consequently unhappy, let them cherish these evil passions in their own hearts, and, if not infallibly certain, it is exceedingly probable, that they will impress their own moral image on their offspring ere they see the light; or at least, communicate a constitutional bias which will be as lasting as life. On the contrary, self-denying and benevolent parents may implant in the mental constitution of their children a predisposition to the same qualities, which by future culture, under the influence of Divine grace, shall bring forth fruit unto eternal life. If the theory thus briefly sketched be correct, then is it of vast and vital importance to all parents and to society at large, and well deserves a more careful and extended investigation than can be given it in such a work as this; and it is much to be desired that some well qualified individual may be induced to undertake the task.

As Selfishness is undoubtedly the first sinful passion or emotion clearly to manifest itself in the infantile mind and conduct, it is the first task of parents to mark its commencement, oppose its growth and overcome its influence, by the implantation of correct principles.

Few parents seem to be aware of the real nature of those emotions which often possess the soul of the little infant, ere it is capable of giving verbal expression to its thoughts and wishes ; but if closely scrutinized, its actions will clearly resolve themselves into the principle of self, and when parents are convinced of this, instead of laughing at the little one for its quickness and being pleased with its spirit, they should seriously and perseveringly check the evil by every appropriate means in their power. On the mother especially, devolves the duty of exercising the primary restraining influence on the selfish passions of her children, since she has the first opportunity of observing their rise, and of applying the gentle but potent corrective of a mother's love. Children's first years are spent almost entirely in the mother's presence ; she is their companion, instructor, physician, nurse and best friend, and therefore has a happy opportunity of correcting their waywardness, and of guiding their first steps into the right path. Under her proper influence the work of restraining and overcoming Selfishness in her children may become far advanced, before they shall be exposed to the evil influence of selfish companions or of general society ; and those truths may be inculcated and principles implanted, which no subsequent intercourse with the world will be able to obliterate ; but which, under the power of Divine grace, shall bring

forth the fruits of self-denial and eternal life. If the spring be pure, the waters that flow from it will be pure too.

The little rill may be easily dammed up and its course diverted; but the impetuous river sweeps away every obstacle and mocks at the puny efforts of man to arrest its onward flow. So, mothers! Providence has seated you at the spring, the fountain head of the stream of society; and much depends on your teaching and example in the nursery, whether that stream, in its gentle flow, shall fructify and bless the world, or whether its angry flood shall be marked by desolation and the wreck of human hopes.

In the inculcation of correct principles and rules of conduct, there should be a perfect union of sentiment and teaching in both parents. It often happens that the two differ widely from each other in views and feelings. One may be improperly tender and indulgent, and the other the reverse; and indeed it is seldom that both are perfectly unanimous and concordant in these respects. There is therefore the more need of self-denial and forbearance in husbands and wives towards each other, lest they should prevent the efficacy of good instruction and but increase, in their children, the evil dispositions which it should be their united efforts to destroy. Where differences between parents exist, as to instruction or correction, they should not be apparent to their children; nor

should one parent interfere with the other when correction is administered, or express, in the presence of children, disapprobation of each other's course. Open and angry disputation has its origin in the very Selfishness that is condemned, and can only tend to cherish in the minds of children the same feelings. If either parent finds it necessary to controvert the views and conduct of the other, it should invariably be done in the absence of their children.

There is another idea of vital importance in this connection, which is, that parents should be extremely careful that their conduct in business and general intercourse with the world do not present a direct contradiction to the instruction given to their children. Example is more influential than precept; and children are generally close enough observers of parental conduct, to discern whether the example differ from the precept.

It is a natural conclusion with both young and old, that an individual considers the course pursued of more importance than one merely recommended; and, therefore, it would be generally labour lost, to inculcate on others the principles of self-denial, while Selfishness is one's own ruling passion. Yet a vast amount of this inconsistency is found in general society, and even in that portion of it which professes practical religion.

How often do we see Christian parents endeavour-

ing to teach their children one thing, whilst their conduct is inculcating the very reverse at the same time! They say, verbally, to their children, "Religion is the one thing needful above all others;" and yet, practically, they declare the world to have prior and superior claims on their attention. They may, by words, teach practical benevolence, but with what prospect of success, when what they give in charity or for the support of religion is not worthy of being named in connection with what they spend in useless and worldly display? If the rising and future generations of mankind are to be self-denying and benevolent, then is it of essential importance that the tongue and life of those that rear them should be accordant, and on the right side. Let, then, parents ponder well the nature of the instruction they give to their children, and embrace the earliest opportunity of giving a right direction to their infant minds, keeping in mind the oft repeated adage, "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined;" or the inspired injunction, "Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." And let them especially see to it, that their conduct agrees with their teaching, that they themselves walk in the straight and narrow path of self-denial, that they may be able, in truth, to say to their children, "Follow us, as we follow Christ."

As an auxiliary to the influence of parents, that of

the elder brother and sister is powerful in the family circle. They claim and exercise a delegated and limited authority over their juniors; and it is of great importance that it should be of the right kind and maintained in a proper manner.

It is not an authority of absolute command, and should seldom, if ever, take that form. It is an influence which superior age, knowledge and experience give them, and should invariably be accompanied with gentleness and love. It is frequently the case that an elder brother or sister, in speaking to the younger, uses the same tone of authority and manner that parents alone have the right to employ. This is entirely wrong and is calculated to do much injury; for it begets resistance and self-will, and seems to authorize those so addressed to attempt the same towards those beneath them. Commands, when resisted, excite anger, and often lead to harsh and threatening language, and even to blows. Instead of saying, "Go, and do this or that," it were much better to say, "Be so kind as to do so and so;" and when there is a little reluctance to comply with the request, affectionate remonstrance will more generally succeed in producing compliance, than opprobrious language or physical force.

The first-born of the family, especially if a daughter, is in a position to give a right or a wrong tone of feeling to the rest of the children; and hence the

importance that such a one should exercise great circumspection over every word and deed ; and hence also the duty of parents to use special endeavours to have the first child a pattern for the rest, of all that is correct in principle, self-denying, gentle and loving in practice. There is scarcely a more beautiful scene in social life, than to see an elder sister exercising an almost maternal influence for good over her brothers and sisters, in being their instructress, counsellor, comforter and guide in all that is lovely and of good report ; whilst, on the contrary, it is a lamentable spectacle, when she is the tyrant and tempter of the household.

Young friend, if you are the elder of the juvenile household, cherish and practice the duty of self-denial ; and by example as well as precept, teach your brothers and sisters the happiness of a renunciation of self-will, and the duty of each one, by love and forbearance, to seek to promote the good and pleasure of all the rest. By so doing, you will have a blessed reward in the peace and joy that will fill your own bosom, and in the satisfaction you will feel, that you are contributing powerfully to eradicate that Selfishness which has so long been the greatest curse to families and nations.

Should you be selfish and overbearing in your conduct towards the younger children, you will not only destroy your own peace and happiness, but you may

inflict an almost inconceivable amount of injury on those whom you are bound tenderly to love, and whose real welfare you should promote by every means in your power.

God has placed you in a position, second in honour and importance to that of your parents alone, and he will hold you to a strict account for the manner in which you have acted in your sphere. Let your conduct be such, that your parents may thank you, your brothers and sisters love and imitate you, and God approve you.

CHAPTER II.

TEACHERS.

Teachers next to Parents. What Institutions of Learning should be. Temptations to Selfishness among Pupils. Failure of Teachers. Self-denial more important than Learning. What the Public demands of Teachers. General defect of Instruction. Instruction in regard to Selfishness should have a Prominent place in Schools and all places of Learning. Selfishness directly Encouraged and Promoted by the prevalent System of Rewards and Punishments. That System Radically Wrong. Correct Motives. Duty of Instructors.

NEXT to parents, the educators of youth have the greatest power to restrain and eradicate evil propensities, and the best opportunity of training the rising generation to self-denial, virtue and benevolence. The school, the academy, and the college are so many progressive steps from the nursery to the civil community; and in each, there should be a constant endeavour to instil those principles which will be needed in public life, and which shall make the future men and women obedient citizens, and the benefactors of their country and the world.

In institutions of learning, from the common school to the university or professional class, there will arise numerous temptations, among the associated youth, to the indulgence of selfish feelings, and consequently there will be many opportunities for teachers to point out the sin and evil of Selfishness, and to present the obligations and motives to an opposite line of conduct. But it is to be feared, that instructors in general do not feel the importance of this subject, or give it the practical attention it so imperiously demands.

To communicate habits of self-denial and benevolence, is much more necessary to the future welfare of individuals and society, than any one, if not all, of the usual branches of a liberal and accomplished education. It were much better for the youth to go forth into the world ignorant of much speculative science, and without those accomplishments on which refined society set so much value, than to commence public life with those principles of selfish ambition which have filled the world with strife and woe.

The public generally demand that the instructors of their children should be of a good moral character, and that they should endeavour to instil into the minds of their pupils morality and the first principles of true religion. But can there be morality and religion where the mind is under the unrestrained influence of pure Selfishness? To correct youth for lying, stealing, swearing and like vices, while Selfish-

ness, the root of the whole, is left unchecked, is but to lop off a few of the branches, while the nature of the evil tree is unchanged.

Young persons do not generally analyze the nature of their feelings, or endeavour to trace their evil propensities to their source; and hence the inefficiency of that instruction which teaches them that vice is improper and in the end hurtful, whilst Selfishness, the fountain of all, is unnoticed and unproved.

Teachers, then, of common and inferior schools, should give instruction in the nature and evils of Selfishness a prominent place in their daily labours; and especially so, since, besides parents, they are nearly the sole recognized educators of the masses of mankind.

And should there be, in each of the higher seats of learning, a professorship of benevolence, having the subject of this book in special charge, it would not be means misapplied, or time and labour lost. Or, at least, if those who have the department of ethics committed to them, would give more prominence to the subject of Selfishness, it would, undoubtedly, be of great benefit to the youth and to general society.

Instead, however, of being discouraged and condemned, it is to be feared, that selfish feelings are directly cherished and augmented by a part, at least, of the policy of our schools and seminaries. Reference is here had to the system of rewards and honours

so common in those institutions. This system begins in the common school, and ends not, until the youth receives his collegiate diploma and highest honour. These are continually kept before the minds of the pupils or students as the most prominent objects to excite their application and secure their good behaviour. In the spelling class of the common school, the selfish ambition to be "Head," is generally the only principle appealed to, to stimulate the energies of the scholar; and in the higher schools, the glittering "gold medal" and the certificate of the "highest honour," are relied on to produce the same effect. Hence the gratification manifested, when a classmate misses the word, and the joy and pride with which the successful speller bounds to the head of the class. And hence, too, the envyings, disputes and quarrels, which too frequently follow. In the distribution of rewards and honours, it is almost impossible to decide, so as to give no occasion to disappointment, dissatisfaction and envy, in the unsuccessful competitors, or their parents and friends. The advantages attending this system by no means counterbalance the evils that flow from it. You may have stimulated the energies of a few, and but a few; yet this has been done by the presentation of a wrong, yea, a sinful motive, and at the risk of establishing for life, in some minds, a principle of conduct which reason and revelation both pointedly condemn. The

system, therefore, is essentially vicious and peculiarly baneful in its consequences; and it is to be hoped that serious reflection in those concerned will lead to its speedy and entire abandonment.

There is the less excuse for the continuance of academic honours and rewards, since there are not wanting legitimate and noble motives, which ought to take their place. Among these are prominent, the honour of parents, the good of society and the glory of God. These are not only unselfish, but anti-selfish motives, which it is the duty of all instructors to press upon the hearts and consciences of their pupils. It may, indeed, be less troublesome and more agreeable to all concerned to appeal to the selfish principle rather than to the conscience; but ought trouble and labour to be regarded where moral and eternal interests are at stake? All the time and labour of a lifetime would be amply rewarded, if in but a single instance a right direction were given to an intelligent and immortal mind.

Let, then, instructors of youth, instead of appealing to the principle of Selfishness, point their pupils to the honour which their improvement and good behaviour will reflect on their parents and friends, and the pleasure which those they love will derive from their advancement in useful knowledge and virtuous conduct.

Let them endeavor to train up self-denying patriots

and benefactors of mankind; and especially, let them inculcate the scriptural sentiment, that "whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they should do all to the glory of God."

Then, and not till then, will they discharge their duty aright, or have a sure prospect of receiving the full and just recompence of reward.

CHAPTER III.

AUTHORS AND EDITORS.

Their Position. Instructors of Adults. Their Office. Influence of Writers. Popular Books. Works of Fiction mostly Apologies and Abettors of Vice. Selfishness and Self-gratification Pre-dominate in them. Writers of Good Books, Public Benefactors. Duty of Writers and Publishers; of Parents and Guardians. Position and Power of Editors. Steam Press. Political Editors. Power of the Press. Much Evil to be traced to Editors of Periodicals. Course to be Pursued and Benefits thereof.

AUTHORS and editors occupy, in adult society, a position similar, in many respects, to that which parents and teachers do among the youthful portion of the community.

They are the instructors of men and women, as well as of the young; and their sentiments have a mighty influence in moulding the character and directing the energies of states and empires. It is their office to supply the public with facts and correct principles, and to guide the minds of men in reasoning

therefrom, and aid them in arriving at correct conclusions.

Writers of books take hold at once of both ends of society—the young and the old. They wield a power for good or evil, scarcely, if at all, inferior to that of the oral instructor, and in some respects vastly superior.

A popular book addresses more minds than the most laborious oral instructor can possibly do, and may continue its influence through many generations.

Books possess, over many minds, an influence almost magical, and multitudes are ready to receive whatever is printed almost without examination or proof. Even works of fiction have the same power as though they were veritable histories, since the reader's imagination gives being to the fictitious heroes and heroines, and reality to their acts, however improbable and absurd. Hence it is that novels and works of imagination are so potent in shaping the sentiments and determining the character of the young and susceptible. Besides, works of this class are, in general, mere apologies for youthful vice and human error; whilst not a few openly and unblushingly caricature virtue, and portray vice in the most alluring colours. With them, the greatest sins are mere youthful indiscretions and the marks of a generous nature; or, at most, temporary blots on the character, which future reformation will be sure to wipe

out, and which are too frequently represented as preparing the way for respectability, wealth, honour and happiness.

Selfishness and self-gratification predominate in works of fiction, and therefore their main influence, if not their primary design, must be to foster and perpetuate those feelings in the minds of their readers. The writing and reading of such books cannot be too pointedly condemned or perseveringly discouraged. The writer of a good book is a public benefactor, and may continue to be such for many generations and even down to the end of time; nay, he ceases not to be such through eternal duration.

Let, then, writers and publishers of books realize their responsibility to God and man. Let them ponder well the character and probable influence of their labours, and choose rather to live unknown and die of starvation, than contribute a drop to increase that flood of Selfishness which continues to spread desolation and woe over the face of the earth. Let parents and guardians of youth discourage the indiscriminate perusal of works of fiction, not by authoritative and general prescription, but by pointing out the danger of the immoral class, and by making a judicious selection of such as have an undoubted tendency to promote sound virtue and practical religion.

Editors in general and conductors of periodicals,

whether secular or religious, or of a mixed character, occupy a post scarcely inferior in influence to that of authors. The steam press, with the consequent cheapening of printing and vast increase of readers, has put into their hands a lever with which to move the world; and they are using that lever with tremendous energy and untiring perseverance. Political editors may do much good to their country, by denouncing corrupt politicians, and exposing their selfish schemes to public rebuke and condemnation. If we may implicitly believe editors themselves, political management and party spirit are little else than the very quintessence of Selfishness; and if so, it becomes them to maintain a fearless and independent spirit, and to wield a truthful and caustic pen.

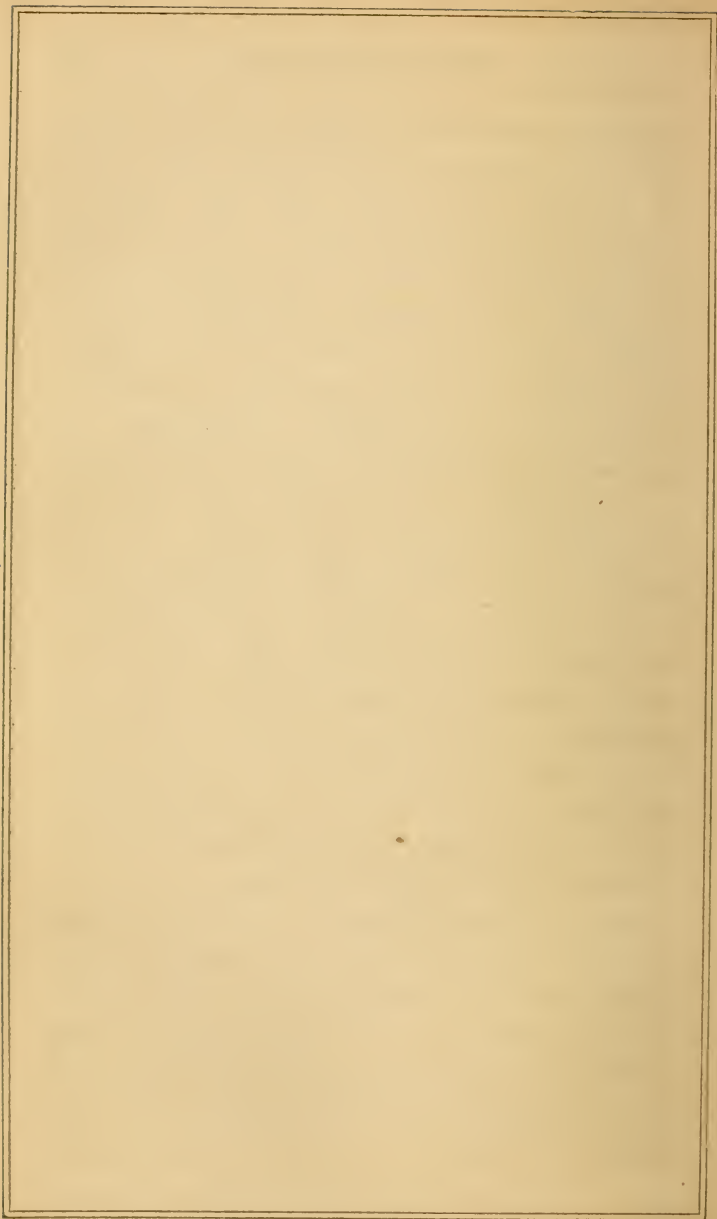
The press is the forerunner and controller of the ballot-box; and from the press, the elective franchise, for the most part, receives its direction. The press is almost the only instrument by which corruption in high places can be reached and overthrown.

The daily or weekly paper is the pillory of political criminals; and few men have hardihood enough to court an exposure therein to the public gaze.

It is not to be disguised, however, that very many of the conductors of the public press are themselves the abettors, if not the originators, of the Selfishness and corruption of which they complain. They are high-toned party men, and condemn every senti-

ment and measure which deviate from their views or from those of the party to which they belong. Nothing is right, unless they or their party enjoy the honours and emoluments of office. They confidently predict speedy ruin as the inevitable consequence of the success of their opponents; and though such predictions may have been a thousand times falsified, they are again and again reiterated, as though the authors of them were omniscient and infallible. Can such a course be attributed to aught but pure Selfishness; and while it is pursued, can it be wonderful, that self-seeking should be the prominent feature in political parties? Editors, then, as the guardians of public morals and teachers of political integrity, should pursue an independent course, and make it their constant and paramount object to promote the public good. Let them expose and condemn Selfishness of whatever kind and in whomsoever found; and commend and aid whatever is pure and patriotic, though found in those who may differ from them in the minor details of political economy.

Such a course would secure to themselves an approving conscience and the public respect; and contribute powerfully to purge the community from political Selfishness, and to advance the cause of true patriotism; whilst the opposite line of conduct would, as heretofore, cherish and tend to perpetuate the evils deplored.



CHAPTER IV.

LEGISLATORS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.

Nature of Legislation. Influence of Self-interest. Duty of Legislators and People. Selfish Legislators. Laws regarding Intoxicating Drinks. Executive Officers. Municipal Governments. Bribery. Party Spirit to be discarded. Strict Accountability. Ballot-box.

THE power to make the laws by which a community or nation is to be governed, is of the most important character.

It is fundamental in its nature and mighty for good or ill; and though, in free and popular governments, laws derive their force from, and depend for their continuance on, the public will, yet in practical operation, it is often found very difficult to abrogate bad laws or enact good ones, since self-interest frequently arrays powerful parties in direct opposition. However unjust a law may be in itself, and whatever evil it may produce in society, it will be approved and supported by those whose selfish ends are thereby promoted and however just and good, it will be

condemned and resisted by the selfish and vicious. Legislators should be free from selfish feelings and aims, superior to fear or intimidation, and above bribery. They should have in view the public good, and not their own honour and profit. The people should elect only such, or at least those who give creditable evidence of possessing that character.

Instead of this, however, party spirit sways the multitude in the choice of their public servants; and hence legislators are under a powerful temptation to please their constituents, in violation of their individual duty and solemn oath. If legislators were honest and upright, and would invariably seek to promote the public good, little would be heard of "lobbying," "log-rolling," and other corrupt influences in connection with legislation. But legislators are frequently selfishly interested in the laws which they propose and pass, or are in combination with those so interested. While this is the case, little hope can be indulged of a permanent reformation in law and government, beyond that which may be derived from the slow progress of intelligence and virtue in the public at large.

Selfish legislators may be induced to pass wholesome laws which they do not approve, if by failing to do so, they would be sure of losing the popular regard.

The main hope of amendment, therefore, is to be

found in the intelligence, independence and virtue of electors, and in the destruction of party spirit, which is little else than Selfishness itself. As an illustration of the difficulty that attends the enactment and execution of laws for the public good, may be mentioned the subject of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks. The evils of intemperance are surely as apparent, wide-spread and appalling, as those of gambling, and horse racing, and lottery vending, and other forms of public vice; yet these have been made illegal, without a resort to the ballot-box, while the desolating flood of alcohol is suffered to roll on unchecked, unless an overwhelming majority of the popular votes, imperiously demands the enactment of a prohibitory law. Can this be attributed to any other cause than the general prevalence of self-interest and vicious appetite in both legislators and their constituents? There is little or no hesitation in passing laws for the suppression of gambling and other vices already mentioned, because, a comparatively small portion of the community are concerned in the matter, and there is no danger thereby incurred of the loss of popularity, whilst there is an almost unconquerable reluctance to attempt the suppression of drunkenness, on account of the numbers and wealth, not to say respectability of those who are supported and enriched by it, and because of the political in-

fluence they possess who pander to the appetite of the vicious multitude.

Legislators are elected, not to promote their own honour, emolument and popularity, but for the public good, in the framing and passing of laws for the suppression of vice and injustice, and for the advancement of the people in intelligence, virtue, prosperity and happiness. Should legislators, then, keep steadily in view the design of their appointment, and fearlessly discharge their duty, much personal and social Selfishness might be eradicated or diverted into channels, where, instead of destroying, it would increase the peace and welfare of society. The executive department forms the right arm of the government, and on its unflinching faithfulness depend, in a great degree, the honour and efficiency of the law. If governors, judges, magistrates, and inferior officers, are men of integrity, patriotism and virtue, good laws will be sustained and accomplish their intent; but, if these officers are selfish and ambitious men, laws, however just and beneficial, may be rendered null and void, and oftentimes perverted to mischievous results. Hence the correctness of the principle, that executive officers should, to a considerable extent, be made independent of popular clamour, prejudice and fanaticism; and that their tenure of office should rest on their faithfulness and efficiency. Many loud and oft-repeated

complaints are made of mal-administration and corruption in the municipal government of large cities. The occasion of these complaints is almost solely furnished by the practical carrying out of the principle of Selfishness. A bribe may be offered and accepted for a particular purpose; but such a corrupt proceeding would not be risked or tolerated if public functionaries were known to be honest and disinterested men. Nor would such a proceeding be entered upon even by dishonest men, if there were a probability that their iniquitous conduct would be visited by merited punishment and the loss of popular favour. The root of the evil, then, lies in the Selfishness of party spirit, by which men are elevated to stations of honour, power and trust, without suitable mental or moral qualifications, and even in spite of characters notorious for profligacy. The remedy for the evils complained of is in the hands of the people. Let them discard party spirit in the election of their officers, and hold those elected to a strict accountability. Let them insist on the public trial of such as may be impeached, and punishment of those who may be proved guilty, and very soon a salutary change will be effected, and if Selfishness be not eradicated from the heart, it will, at least, be kept in check and prevented from leading to shameful acts of bribery and corruption.

Many honest and virtuous members of community

are fairly chargeable with aiding in the election of bad men to office, by neglecting to perform their duty at the ballot-box. They frequently become disgusted with the Selfishness of party politics, and therefore abstain from exercising the elective franchise. The necessary consequence is that the wicked and selfish accomplish their designs and perpetuate their power.

Instead of this, were good men invariably to perform their duty at the polls, and give their vote for good men, irrespective of party, they might be found to hold the balance of power between contending factions, and finally succeed in purifying the government from unworthy and selfish men.

The Selfishness and corruption of party politics, instead of being a valid reason why good men should not take part in political elections, is, when rightly considered, a substantial reason why they should do so, in the fear of God and for the public good; since their omission of duty makes them co-workers with the wicked in their selfish schemes, and participators in the guilt of their nefarious transactions.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

1. The Ministry. Nature of the Office. Love, the Essence of True Religion. Selfishness Opposed thereto, and Inconsistent with a Profession of Christ. The Ministry should be Self-denying.
2. The Sabbath School. A Powerful Instrument for Good. Its Principal Object. Reasons of its Inefficiency.
3. Church Officers. Their Position and Influence. Evils of their Conduct when Selfish. Their Duty.
4. Church Members. Results of Selfishness in them. Forbearance and Forgiveness. Imitating Christ's Example.
5. The Grace of God, the Only Efficient Remedy. The Christian Religion, the Only True and Saving One. Outward Profession not Sufficient. God's Holy Spirit the Only Sufficient Agent through the Gospel. Necessity of Regeneration. Things that should not be Forgotten.

1. THE Ministry. Ministers of the Gospel hold a position of paramount influence in the Church and in the world. It is their duty to give instruction to the people in morals and religion. In doing so, they must necessarily endeavour to discover the hidden springs of vice and irreligion, and portray the desolating influence of those poisonous streams that flow

therefrom. Morality, being conformity of conduct to right law, and especially the law of God, cannot be properly and fully explained and enforced, unless that which is diametrically opposed to it be clearly and frequently pointed out.

Supreme love to God, and equal love to our neighbour, constitute the essence of true morality and religion.

In reply to one who asked our Saviour, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" he replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22: 35-40. Or, according to the Apostle James' beautiful definition, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

In opposition to this heavenly principle of love and benevolence, Selfishness presents an ever-present and most powerful obstacle. It works vigorously, both in the secret recesses of the heart, and in the outward life. Its hateful presence is oftentimes unsuspected, and when it becomes visible, it mostly fails to receive the condemnation it merits, either

from the one who cherishes it, or from him who beholds it. As long as Selfishness characterizes the heart and life of a man, he cannot be the true disciple of Christ, for he hath said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me;" "And whomsoever doth not bear his cross, and follow me, cannot be my disciple." If then a man cannot be a Christian, or even a truly moral man, unless he renounce the principle of supreme self-love, the minister of the Gospel cannot faithfully discharge his duty unless he frequently inculcate this truth on the understandings of his hearers.

But, however faithfully the minister may preach the truth, his labours will be comparatively inefficient, unless his conduct be a living exemplification of self-denial.

Some of the forms and occasions, in which Selfishness manifests itself in ministerial conduct, have been pointed out in the chapter on "Clerical Selfishness," and need not be here repeated. Suffice it to say, let those who bear the sacred office scrutinize narrowly their motives, and pray for grace to cast out the beam from their own eyes, and then shall they see more clearly how to cast out the mote from their brother's eye.

How can a minister expose and condemn, truly and faithfully, that in his hearers, which he may be

justly accused of cherishing in his own heart ! Much injury is undoubtedly inflicted on the cause of religion by the general impression that clergymen are nearly, if not quite, as much under the influence of covetousness, as the generality of their Christian brethren.

It is the general remark, that the removals of ministers from one to another congregation, are, with few exceptions, from a small to a larger salary. And that even the exceptions to this rule, do not clearly prove the existence of a self-denying spirit. The exception may be from some unpleasant necessity and a constrained willingness to accept a half loaf rather than have no bread.

While such surmises, in many cases, may not be without foundation, there may be, nevertheless, much uncharitable censure in reference to motive. They would not, probably in most cases, remove for even a larger temporal consideration, if they did not see, or think they saw, a fair prospect of more extended usefulness. At all events, ministers should be very careful to give no occasion for the evil surmising and evil speaking on this point, which has obtained such extensive prevalence. They should labour assiduously to remove the reproach under which their character and the cause of their Master suffer ; and this can only be done by a high degree of self-denying devotion.

2. The Sabbath School. Next to the preaching of the Gospel and the family circle, the Sunday school presents, probably, the most hopeful sphere for the inculcation of the principles of Christian self-denial. The object to be constantly kept in view in this benevolent institution, should not be so much to give instruction in the art of reading or even of memorizing scripture truth, as to impress that truth on the heart and conscience, and lead the young to the practice of those heavenly charities on which the Bible lays such strong and frequent emphasis. Many occasions present themselves in the intercourse and conduct of the scholars, for the teacher to point out the evils of Selfishness and the blessedness of a self-denying and loving spirit. And especially in the history of our blessed Lord, how many facts and deeds are recorded, which the teacher may powerfully apply to the tender minds of his youthful charge. The Saviour's self-denying love, who, "though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich," his filial obedience and submission, his patience under reproach and persecution, his sympathy and kindness to the afflicted, his sorrow for the wicked and obstinate, his readiness to forgive the penitent, and his laying down his life for the sinful, are soul-subduing facts, to which the attention of the young should be

frequently called, until they shall be indelibly imprinted on the imperishable texture of the soul.

It is indeed true, that these truths frequently come to view in the ordinary routine of reading the Scriptures or reciting the scripture lesson ; but for the most part they fail to make any lasting impression, or any impression at all, unless the voice of the teacher fixes the attention of the heedless child. After the reading of a portion of the Scriptures, let the teacher ask his class, what facts or truths are therein contained, and probably, in nine cases out of ten, he will fail to receive a satisfactory reply. This will convince him that while the scholars perused the words, they failed to comprehend or feel their meaning. But that they may understand and apply what they read is, or ought to be, the grand object of Sabbath school instruction ; and hence the necessity of repeated questions, explanations and remarks.

Sunday schools have now been in general operation in the Christian world for nearly half a century, and though it must be gratefully acknowledged that they have accomplished much good, yet it cannot be denied, that they have failed of effecting all the good which their originators and supporters confidently anticipated, and which they themselves are admirably calculated to produce ; especially in reference to the Selfishness of the human heart. The defect is not in the institution itself, but in the manner in which it

is usually carried out. In the first place, teachers themselves, in a multitude of instances, are not imbued with the self-denying spirit of Christ, and therefore, secondly, they fail in the practical application of Divine truth. They regard their employment rather as a literary task, than as a moral and religious obligation. They are satisfied with the improvement of their pupils in the art of reading and acquisition of knowledge, and feel little or no anxiety for their advancement in grace and holiness. And especially, they fail in seeking earnestly, by prayer, that aid from above which is essential to spiritual success.

3. Church Officers. In connection with the Ministry, the other officers of the Church hold an important place in the Church, and have it in their power, both by precept and example, to contribute much to the promotion of self-denial and benevolence. They are regarded as leaders, and their opinions and conduct are very frequently referred to by others, and are freely censured or readily adopted, as to each one seems proper. In their deliberations on church affairs, how frequently do selfish feelings arise to disturb their peace and break up the harmony that should characterize Christian brethren who profess to make the glory of God and the welfare of the Church their paramount object. Nor are the evil effects confined to their own limited circle; but the contagion spreads abroad, and acquires strength by its progress,

until a whole church and society is inflamed by bitter partisan contention, and vast injury done to the cause of truth and righteousness. Almost endless strifes and divisions have resulted from the obstinate Selfishness of one or two individuals who have been unwilling to yield their own sentiments and measures, even on non-essential matters, to the majority of their brethren. This tenacity of purpose is not according to the meekness and gentleness of Christ, but like the wisdom that is from below, "is earthly, sensual and devilish." "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

Let, then, church officers endeavour to realize the important position they occupy, and ever keep the example of the Saviour before their eyes; and then shall many of the evils which Selfishness inflicts on the Church and society at large be prevented or eradicated.

They are ordained as helps to the preachers of the Gospel, and therefore should labour constantly, by their pure and self-denying conduct, to give additional power to the influence of the pulpit, and spread among the people the leaven of Divine truth. It is almost impossible for the preacher, however zealous and faithful, to accomplish much good, unless those associated with him in the oversight of the Church, are "burning and shining lights" in their proper sphere. They are the Aarons and Hurs, whose peculiar duty

it is to hold up the hands of God's ambassadors, and encourage their hearts, when almost ready to sink at the prospect of their powerful foes, and under the burden of their spiritual toils.

4. Church Members. However consistent and self-denying may be the teaching and conduct of ministers and other office bearers of the Church, no permanent or general good will be effected, unless each member of the Church is actuated by the same principle and steadily pursues the same line of conduct. If under the promptings of Selfishness, brother overreaches brother in pecuniary transactions, or is obstinate and uncharitable in his sentiments or language, in vain may the Gospel be faithfully preached or the discipline of the Church impartially administered. Heart-burnings and bitter words, if not unlawful deeds, will continue to exist, interrupting Christian fellowship and destroying the peace of society. And it is impossible to estimate the injury that is thus produced to the cause of Christ and the souls of men. It was such a state of things, existing in the Church at Corinth, that called forth the repeated and tender admonitions of the apostle Paul: "It hath been declared to me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was

Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" 1 Cor. 1 and 3 chaps.

And again he saith, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints." "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren." 1 Cor. 6: 1-8.

And what saith our blessed Lord in reference to this subject? This he saith, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy

brother, and come and offer thy gift." Then came Peter to him and said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him, till seven times?" Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven."

These passages teach the endurance of wrong rather than the taking of vengeance, and the indefinite forgiveness of those who injure us. Another passage points out the mode to be pursued by any who consider themselves aggrieved by the conduct of a brother: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican." Instead of obeying these directions, which are so plain and explicit as to require no illustration, the most of professing Christians take an opposite course. The offended person, instead of dealing privately with the offender, publishes abroad the

fault of his brother, and by keeping aloof, denies an opportunity of explanation or confession.

The poison of ill-will rankles in the heart, and spreads abroad its deadly contagion; and if the wound be ever healed, it is with great difficulty, and it may be, after years of guilt and suffering. A few words in private, with the Divine blessing, might have removed the offence; but pride and Selfishness prevailed, and prevented a reconciliation. Ye disciples of the long suffering and forgiving Redeemer, how can ye despise his injunctions and condemn his warnings? How dare you cherish in your hearts a spirit which will exclude you from the kingdom of heaven, which is a kingdom of peace and love?

Most of the evils in the Church, and in society, would be speedily removed, if the followers of Christ would indeed imitate his example and constantly obey his precepts. The preaching of the Gospel, and the means of grace generally, would be the power of God unto salvation; and the influence of the Holy Spirit, in copious effusions, would descend upon the Church and the world, and abide in the hearts of men.

Love and gentleness would take the place of hatred and contention; and the earth, so long a desolate wilderness, would be converted into a garden of the Lord. Christians, will you, by Selfishness and contention, hinder this consummation, so devoutly to be

wished; or will you not rather, by laying aside all envy, malice and evil speaking, contribute your mite of influence to hasten the great and glorious day of the Lord, when there shall be nothing to mar the peace and happiness of the human race?

5th. The grace of God, the only sufficient remedy.

Whatever may be the external means employed for the removal of the evils of Selfishness, it must be evident to every one acquainted with human nature in its present depraved condition, that nothing but the converting and sanctifying grace of God can produce a radical and permanent change; and that grace is exerted only through the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

All other forms of religion, not only leave the heart unchanged, but add intensely to its Selfishness. The outward profession of even the Christian faith, reaches not the seat of the malady, and has scarcely availed, in the least, to mitigate its awful ravages. Forms of Selfishness, as virulent and destructive as any in the heathen world, are to be found in the past history of professedly Christian nations, and even in their character and conduct in this nineteenth century of the Christian era.

The spirit of self, therefore, cannot be eradicated by either intelligence, refinement or religious forms; for intelligence merely alters its direction, refinement but lends it a mask, and religious form too frequently

renders it more stubborn and implacable. The only rational hope, then, of the world's moral improvement, is to be found in the power of God's Holy Spirit, in the subduing and renewing of the soul of man, through the instrumentality of the faith of Christ, as is abundantly and clearly set forth in the Scriptures of truth. Our Divine Lord, in his conference with Nicodemus, insists on the necessity of being born again from above, by the Spirit of God ; and elsewhere represents the inefficiency of external forms by declaring, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." And the apostle Paul affirms, "For, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love." With this teaching all the prophets and apostles agree, and this important truth is written, as with a sunbeam, on every part of the Divine Record. Some, like Nicodemus, may not understand this sublime and blessed truth, and may incredulously inquire, "How can these things be?" And others, full of carnal pride and self-sufficiency, may sneer at the doctrine of spiritual regeneration, but while the Bible retains its hold on the faith of the Christian world, the work of the Spirit of God must be acknowledged as an unchangeable verity by every sincere and humble inquirer after truth.

The necessity of Divine influence and teaching has been acknowledged by some of the most virtuous and enlightened of even heathen sages, and ought to be apparent to the minds of all who rightly consider the uniform and repeated failure of all human schemes for the regeneration of society, both in ancient and modern times, and in every part of the savage or civilized world. Let it then be kept constantly before the minds of Christian ministers and people, that outward forms are but the preparation and the means for effecting that spiritual renovation of the soul, which consists in a restoration to the Divine image, and willing obedience to the law of purity and love. Let them realize, that when they have made a proselyte to their creed or forms, they have, in reality, effected but little, if any thing, towards the eradication of evil principles from the heart, or the implantation there of good ones; and may possibly have made their convert tenfold more a child of hell than he was before. The object of religious activity and zeal is, or ought to be, not to substitute one form of Selfishness for another, but to save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins.

We may lawfully hold the sentiments and pursue measures we approve, as we may think them more scriptural than others, or better calculated to do good; but this should be done in love and the exercise

of that charity "which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

To prefer a system, even if it be a true one, because it is OURS, is rather a proof of Selfishness, than of love of truth. Yet how few make the distinction, or suspect that their burning zeal for their own interests is wholly different from a pure and holy zeal for God and truth. Jehu like, they impose a falsehood on their own souls; and, by courting notoriety, seek that approbation and praise from men, which God denies to their selfish aims. How melancholy the reflection and humiliating to human pride, that when God shall weigh the actions of men in the balances of the sanctuary, a vast amount of the professed zeal for the truth and right, shall be found to have originated in pure love of self; and, in its influence, to have been "evil, and only evil, and that continually."

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

DEAR READER: The subject of the preceding imperfect essay is before you; and it is hoped, that you are not disposed to deny its importance to yourself and your fellow men. Do not dismiss it from your thoughts as soon as you lay the book aside; but meditate thereon, and pray over it with frequency and fervour, that a lasting and salutary impression may, under Divine influence, be produced on your own heart and life. It has been shown, as we trust, to your satisfaction, that Selfishness is the parent of sin itself, and the bitter fountain of those innumerable evils, whose desolating streams have swept over the world for nearly six thousand years. Its destructive course may be distinctly traced through all ages and among all nations. It is alike powerful and fruitful of mischief in all states of society, whether barbarous or civilized, ignorant or enlightened, pagan or Christian. It invades and pollutes every department of life, public and private, social and secret; and, like a

monstrous hydra, encloses in its poisonous and crushing folds, the forum of Cæsar and the altar of the living God.

Shall this tyrannical and destructive principle be permitted to pursue its evil career undisturbed and unchecked; or will you not rather contribute your influence, however feeble, to arrest its progress and exterminate its power? Say not and think not, that your individual effort will be but as a drop to the ocean, and that therefore you will be excusable in withholding your aid. Remember that the ocean itself is composed of drops, nay, even of particles invisible, when separated from the rest. The shower that fructifies the earth, descends in drops, and is the more beneficial because it so descends. The mightiest results frequently flow from the smallest beginnings; and this, in the providence of God, is one of the most powerful incentives to individual exertion. You know not, but that your example and labours may have as beneficial, wide-spread, and permanent an influence as those of Copernicus or Newton, of Bacon or Franklin, of Luther or Washington. Are you a philanthropist? Suffering humanity calls loudly for your timely succour; and shall it call in vain? Are you a civilian? Oppressed nations stretch forth their shackled limbs and demand your aid to break off their fetters and introduce them into the possession and enjoyment of rational liberty; and shall their

agonizing cries reach your ears in vain? Are you a moralist? The victims of vice direct their weeping eyes and trembling voices to you, imploring your help to dry up the streams that are bearing them swiftly onward to disgrace and ruin; and will you stand idly by and see them pass beyond the reach of your saving arm? Are you a Christian? Sinners, the world around, are waiting for you to help to save them from the power of Satan and of sin; and can you not only disappoint their only hope, but will you cherish the enemy in your own heart, even while the Captain of your salvation is calling you to the rescue of an enslaved and dying world? But were you sure of not benefitting a single soul besides your own, will it be little or nothing, that you have saved yourself from the curse of Selfishness? nothing, that you are added, as another jewel, to the crown of the Saviour's glory? nothing, that you have obtained an inheritance in heaven, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away? Will it not be an ample reward for every self-denying effort, when the great Judge of the world shall say to thee and others, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world?" Consider then that your own happiness is essentially concerned in this matter. You cannot be truly blessed, while you live in the indulgence of selfish feelings; for it is the unalterable law of Jehovah,

that Selfishness, being sin, shall be attended with misery, whatever your state and wherever your conscious being may exist. But forget not, that your own happiness only, is not the chief end of your creation; but that your being was given you that you might glorify God and promote the happiness of your fellow beings.

Imitate the example of holy and benevolent men, who, by self-denial and works of love, have won the approbation and plaudits of the world, and obtained "glory, honour and immortality" in the life to come.

Above all, imitate the example of "our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich in grace here and glory hereafter. If you have not his spirit of self-denial and benevolence, you are none of his; whatever may be your profession or station in the world or the Church.

Finally, dear reader, whoever thou art, whatever thy name, rank or creed, rouse thee from thy selfish apathy; free thy soul from the chains of Selfishness and party spirit; gird on the panoply of righteousness, truth and love; follow the chariot of redemption in its triumphant progress round the earth; and lay not down the weapons of the heavenly warfare, until Selfishness is banished from the world and universal love shall commence its everlasting reign.

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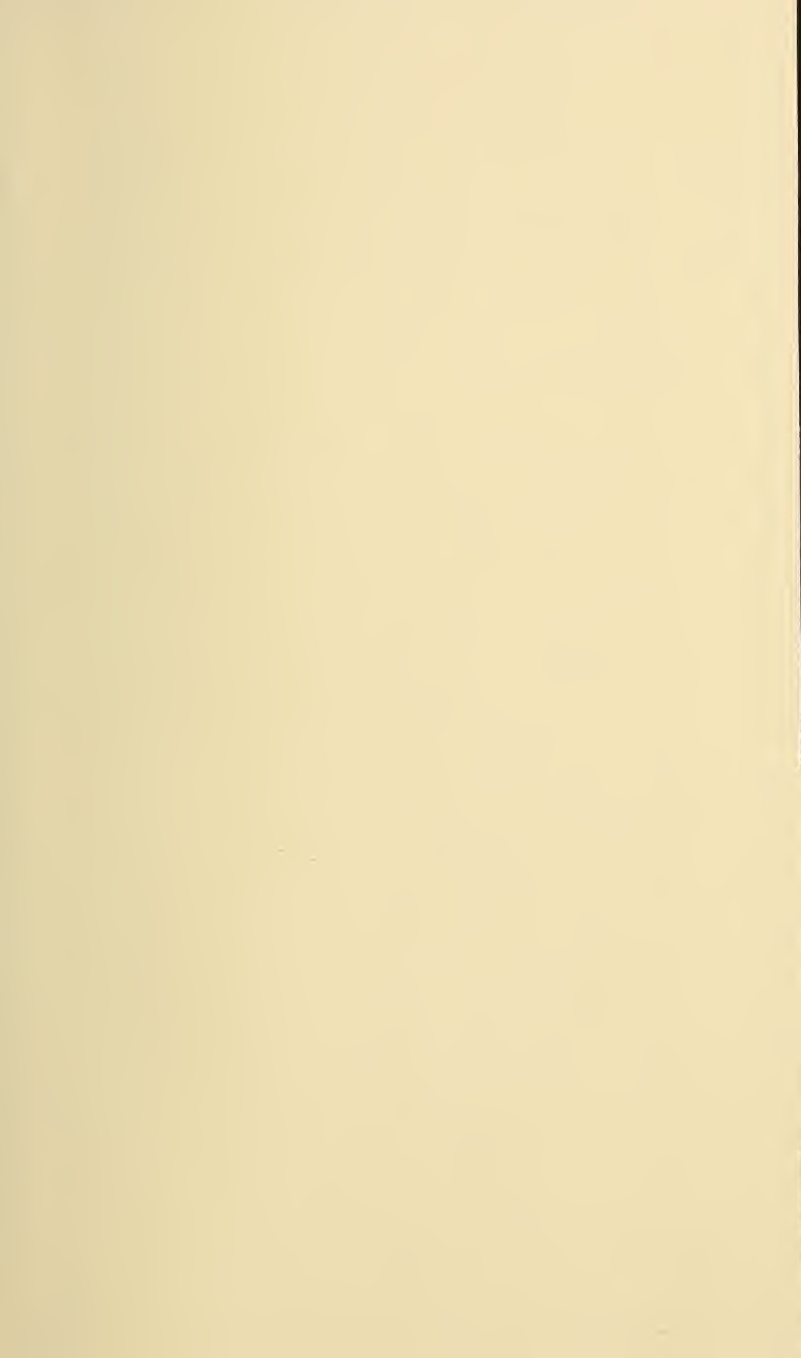
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