

ADVICE to the YOUNG

WITH AN

ADVICE to the OLD.

By WILLIAM MILLER.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

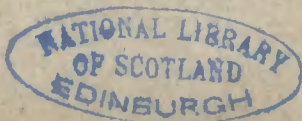
MEMOIRS of the LIFE of the AUTHOR.

STIRLING:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

By C. RANDALL.

1812.



Memoirs of William Miller.

AT DEANSTON WORKS.

TO a refined and liberal mind, it must, and it has always given great pleasure to observe, the progress and advancement of knowledge, and good sense in the lower orders, whose leisure is little, and whose access to Books is circumscribed; how much greater satisfaction must it give, to observe that progress manifested in an age, generally reckoned unfit for mental exertion.

William Miller, the subject of the present memoir, and author and compiler of the following tracts and extracts, was born at Pendrich Mill, situated at the base of the mountain called Dalmiet, near Stirling, on the 9th February, 1800, of creditable and honest parents, whose straitened circumstances in the world did not enable them to give their son such an

education as they could have wished. He never had the benefit of a public school, except one quarter of a year.

For the last four years he has been employed at Deanston Works, near Doune, Perthshire. During the summer of 1812, he wrote the following tracts and extracts in the evenings (in which manner, by perseverance, and constant application, chiefly acquired that degree of learning which enabled him to do so) after the labours of the day were finished. A convincing proof that youth trained up early to habits of industry, even at public works seldom fail to rival and excel in virtue; those, who, possessed of wealth and independence, too often squander their time in the haunts of idleness and dissipation.

The vein of genuine Christian piety which runs through the whole is certainly highly creditable to a boy only eleven years of age:

A Friend to Learning.

Deanston, 28th Nov. 1812.

Advice to the Young.

The inhabitants of Nilus are deaf by the noise of the waters; so the world makes such a noise in men's ears, that they cannot hear the things of heaven.

Sicily is so full of sweet flowers that dogs cannot hunt there; and what do all the sweet contents of this world, but make us lose the scent of heaven.

Be sure to take God, the Father, to be your chief God, and highest End. Be sure to take God, the Son, to be your Prince and Saviour. Be sure you take God, the Holy Ghost, to be your Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide and Comforter. Be sure to take the word of God to be your rule in all your actions. Be sure to take the people of God to be your people in all conditions. Do likewise devout and dedicate to the Lord your whole self—all I am, all I have, and all I can do; &

this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever.

Early sobriety, early knowledge of religion, and early habits of piety, are the most probable means of securing the favor of God.

As every flower hath its sweet favour, so every good word carries meat in the mouth, and comfort in the performance of it.

By painting sin in virtuous colours Satan knows that if he should present sin in its own nature and drest, the soul would rather flee from it than yield to it; and therefore he presents it to us painted and gilded over with the name and shew of virtue, that we may more easily be overcome by it, and take more pleasure in committing it. Pride, he presents to the soul, under the name of neatness and cleanliness. Covetousness, to be but good husbandry. Drunkenness, good fellowship. Rioting, under the name of liberality; and Wantonness is a trick of youth.

I have many books that I cannot

fit down to read; they are indeed good and sound; but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to a little amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth them all, called the Bible; and this is a book of Bank notes.

“The Christian Sabbath,” says Mr. Hervey, “is an inestimable privilege to the church of Christ; it is a pledge of God’s distinguishing love; and preparing us for our everlasting Sabbath.”

The Sabbath-day was anciently called the day of Light, also the queen of days; the primitive church held this day in high veneration: it was a great body of their religion; for when the question was asked, “Keep-est thou the Sabbath?” the answer was, “I am a Christian, and dare not omit the celebration of the Lord’s day.”

That great man, Judge Hale, thus speaks of the Sabbath. I have, says he, by long and sound experience,

found that the due observance of this day, and of the duties of it, hath been of singular comfort and advantage to me. The observance of this day hath ever had joined to it blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that hath been so begun, hath been a blessing, and prosperous to me; and on the other side, when I have been negligent of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful, and unhappy to my own secular employments, so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes the week following, by the manner of my passing of this day: and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately; but upon a long and sound observation and experience.

It was a custom of Mr Grimshaw to leave his church while the psalms were singing, to see if any were absent from worship, and idling their time in the church-yard, the street, or the ale-houses; and many of those

whom he so found, he would drive into the church before him.

He endeavoured likewise to suppress the generally prevailing custom in country places, during the summer of walking in the fields, on a Lord's Day, between the services, or in the evening, in companies; he not only bore his testimony against it from the pulpit, but went to the fields in person, to detect and reprove them.

The following is an instance of this kind, which shews both his care of his people and his great ascendancy for them. There was a spot at some distance from the village, to which many young people continued to resort; although he had often warned them in his preaching against this custom; at last he disguised himself one evening, that he might not be known till he was near enough to discover who they were; he then spoke and charged them not to move. He took down all their names with his pencil, and ordered them to attend him on a day and hour which he ap-

pointed. They all attended as punctually as if they had been served with a judges warrant. When they came he led them into a private room, when after he had formed them into a circle, and commanded them to kneel down, he kneeled down in the midst of them, and prayed for them with much earnestness for a considerable time, and concluded the interview when he rose up, by close and affecting lecture. He never had occasion to repeat this friendly discipline; he entirely broke the custom; and the place has never been resorted to on Sunday evenings from that time to this present day.

It is said of the pious Mr. Gauge, that he forebore providing Suppers on the eve before the Sabbath, that servants might not be kept up too late. He would never suffer any servant to tarry at home to dress any meat on the Lord's day, for any friends, whether they were mean or great, few or many.

It is evident there never has been a-

ny abrogation of the Spirit, meaning, or end of the law, as to the devoting the seventh part of our time to God. What then will they have to answer for, who set apart this day for travelling, and worldly amusements: what an awful account many professors will have to give, who violate this day, by working, putting their books, keeping their servants unnecessarily at home to dress dinners and things which might have easily have been obtained on the preceding day. Let all such remember how incompatible this is with the law of God.

You are now in the prime of your age and vigour, and may be in favor, and business; but all this will leave you; and you will one day better understand and relish what I say to you, then you will find that there is more truth, comfort, and pleasure in retiring and turning your heart from the world to the good spirit of God, and in reading the Bible, than all the courts and favor of Princes.

It is supposed that the Scriptures

are read by the poor and illiterate only, and that there is nothing in them worthy the attention of the great, the wise, and the learned; but this is a mistake: It is their particular excellency that they are calculated for the benefit of the most sagacious philosopher, as well as the most humble peasant.

There is no book in the world so admirably adapted to the capacities of all men: It is so sublime in its language, so noble in its doctrine, yet plain in its precepts, and excellent in its end; that the man must be ignorant, and deprived, indeed, who lives without reading it.

Queen Elizabeth spent much of her time in reading the best writings of her own, and former ages, yet she by no means neglected that best of books the Bible; for proof of which take her own words. "I walk," says she, "many times in the pleatant fields of the Holy Scriptures; where I pluck up the godlifome herds of sentences. By pruning, eat them; by reading, digest them; by musing and laying

them up at length in the high seat of memory, by gathering them together; So that having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of Life."

Titus, the Roman Emperour, throughout the whole course of his life, called himself to account every night for the actions of the past day; and as often as he found he had slipped any one day without doing good, he entered upon his dary this memorial, "I have lost a day. This may every man say who suffers a day to pass without doing something for God for his soul, or for his fellow-creature.

An Italian Philosopher, says Dr. Johnson, expressed in his motto that Time was his estate; an estate, indeed, which will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and satisfy the most extensive desires if no part of it be suffered to be wasted by negligence, to be overrun with noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than for use.

How little do we reflect on the use and value of time! it is in every body's mouth

but in few peoples practice. How circum-
spect we ought to be in the right manage-
ment of our time for God never gives us
two moments together; he gives us only
the second as he takes away the first, and
keeps the third in his hands, leaving us in
an absolute uncertainty, whether he will
give it us, or not. Time is precious, life is
short; and consequently not a single mo-
ment should be lost.

Archbishop Leighton was a most exemp-
lary character. Bishop Burnet says he had
the greatest elevation of soul, the largest
compass of knowledge, the most mortified
and heavenly disposition that I ever yet saw
in mortal. He had the greatest parts, as
well as virtue, with the most perfect humi-
lity, that I ever saw in man; and had a sub-
lime strain in preaching, with so grave a
gesture, and such a majesty both of thought
of language and pronunciation, that I ne-
ver once saw a wandering eye where he
preached; and I have seen whole assemblies
often melt in tears before him: and of whom
I can say with great truth that in a free &
frequent conversation with him for two &
twenty years, I never knew him say an idle
word, or a word that had not a direct ten-
dency to edification; and I never once saw

him in any other temper but that I wished to be in the last moment of my life.

For some years before Mr. Hervey's death he visited very few of the principal persons in his neighbourhood. Being once asked why he so seldom went to see the neighbouring gentlemen, who yet shewed him all possible esteem and respect; he answered, 'I can hardly name a polite family where the conversation ever turns upon the things of God. I hear much frothery, and worldly chit chat; but not a word of Christ and I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my master as well as myself.

Such was Mr Hervey's strict piety, that he suffered no moment to go unimproved. When he was called down to tea he used to bring his Hebrew Bible, or Greek Testament with him; and would either speak upon one verse, or upon several verses, as occasion offered. This, says Mr Romaine, was generally on improving seasons. The glory of God is very seldom permitted at the tea table; but at Mr Hervey's drinking tea, it was like being at an ordinance, for it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Secretary Walsingham, an eminent courtier and statesman, in Queen Elizabeth's time, in his old age, retired into privacy, in

the country. Some of his former gay companions came to see him, and told him, he was melancholy. No, said he, I am not melancholy I am serious; and it is fit I should be so. Ah! my friends, while we laugh, all things are serious; God is serious, who exerciseth patience towards us; the Holy Ghost is serious in striving against the obstinacy of our hearts; the holy scriptures bring to our ears the most serious things in the world; the holy Sacrament represents the most serious and awful matters; the whole creation is serious in serving God; and as all that are in heaven and hell are serious, how then can we be gay.

He gives the following plain, but suitable advice to his Son, on this head. It may not be amiss for you to have two heaps, a heap of unintelligibles, and a heap of incurables; every now and then you will meet with something or other that may pretty much distress your thoughts: but the shortest way with the vexations will be to throw them into the heap they belong to, and be no more distressed about them.

I endeavour to walk through the world as a physician goes through Bedlam; the patients make much noise, pester him with impertinence, and hinders him in his busi-

ness; but he does the best he can, and so gets through.

I feel like a man who has no money in his pocket, but is allowed to draw for all he wants upon one infinitely rich; I am therefore, at once both a beggar and a rich man.

Luther being one time in some wants, it happened that a good sum of moneey was unexpectedly sent him by a nobleman of Germany, at which being something amazed, he said, I fear that God will give me my reward here, but I protest I will not be so satisfied.

It is a precious truth, never to be forgotten that Duties are esteemed not by their acts, but by their ends. The end moves to doing; keep thyself within compass, and have an eye always to the end of thy life and actions.—The more I have been among vain men I returned home less a man than I was before.

Mr Greenham, when called before the Bishop of Ely to be questioned concerning his non conformity, he gave a noble proof of his prudence and boldness. The Bishop representing unto him the great schism that reigned in the church, asked, Where the blame was to be cast? whither upon those who conformed to the church of England,

or upon those who did not? Greenham instantly replied, that the blame might lie on either side, or it might lie on neither; for, added he, if both lived and respected each other as they ought, they would cheerfully perform all the duties of social kindness, & so maintain mutual love and harmony; by this conduct the blame would fall on none of the parties; but on the contrary, whatever party neglects the mutual offices of kindness and charity, that party rends the church, and schism is chargeable upon that party only. The bishop was so pleased with this reply, that he dismissed him in peace.

Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil; I observe: there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it; and with his I begin and end.

Advice to the Old.

I exhort therefore, that prayers and giving of thanks be made for all men, for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour.

And now, if thou pleasest, read the following work, and receive his counsel from

me. First, thou must know that every man cannot be excellent, yet may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door of a golden treasure; yea iron can do some things that gold cannot do.

Secondly. Remember it is not hasty reading, but seriously meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul; it is not the bees touching of the flowers that gathers honey; but her a-biding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet; it is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian.

First, I believe that there is a God; an incomprehensible perfect being, a Spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and truth; having his being of himself, and giving being to all things.

2dly, I believe, that the living and true God is but one; and that in the unity of the Godhead there is a Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that these three are but one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. This is the revealed mystery, which I do believe, but cannot comprehend.

3dly, I believe that this God, who was

God from all eternity did in the beginning of time, create, or make out of nothing, the world, the heaven, and earth and all visible and invisible; and this he did by the word of his eternal power in the space of six days and all very good. And that the same God doth, by the same power uphold and maintain the creatures in that being which he at first gave them. By him all things subsist; from the highest angel to the meanest worm. And that this God, in the right of creation and preservation, is the supreme absolute Sovereign and Rector of the world, ruling and governing all his creatures, and all their actions, according to the wise, holy, and eternal counsel of his own will, to the praise and glory of his own name.

4thly, I believe that God, as the governor of the world, hath given a law to his rational creatures; according to which they are to walk, in order to their glorifying him. And that to the present sons of men the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are given, as the only rule to direct them both in faith and practice. That this book of Scripture was given by inspiration of God; holy men speaking and writing as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And that this is the foundation of all revealed re-

ligion, and a perfect sufficient rule of direction to the children of men.

5thly, I believe that God made man upright, in his own image consisting in knowledge, righteousness, holiness, with dominion over the creatures; and that he made a covenant of works with him, promising life upon condition of a perfect and perpetual obedience; threatening death upon disobedience, and giving him a command or trial, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death.

6thly I believe that Man being left to the freedom of his own will, at the instigation of the devil, sinned against God, in eating the forbidden fruit and to fall from the estate of holiness and happiness, and he being a common person, and his posterity fell with him, into an estate of sin and misery. That all the sons of men are born children of disobedience, wanting original righteousness, and under corruption of the whole nature slaves to the flesh, the world, and devil, and consequently children of wrath, obnoxious to the justice of God, and the condemnation of the law; and that no creature is able to deliver them out of this condition. That God, having from all eternity, of his mere good pleasure, elected a remnant of mankind to everlasting life, did, in

infinite wisdom, find out a way to save and deliver them out of this sinful and miserable estate, and to bring them into an estate of salvation; and that was by giving his only begotten Son to be their Redeemer; who, being God, and one with the Father, according to the determinate counsel of God, did, in the fulness of time, take upon him our nature, a true body and a reasonable soul, and became man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and called Jesus.

7thly, I believe that this Jesus was the true Messiah, promised to, and expected by the patriarchs, under the old Testament. That he lived a holy and sinless life, and fulfilled all righteousness, being made under the law, that he underwent the miseries for sin, a cursed death upon the cross, thereby satisfying divine justice for the sins of men, and so reconciling us to God, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness. That he was buried, and that, having conquered death, he rose again the third day; and having commissioned his apostles and ministers to preach the gospel to all the world, he ascended into heaven, where he is, and continues to be God and man, our prevailing intercessor with the Father, and the glorious head over all things to the Church, in

all this, gloriously executing the three great offices of Prophet Priest and King.

8thly, I believe that in Jesus Christ there is a new Covenant of Grace, made and published in the Gospel, the tenor of which is, that all those who, in the sight and sense of their lost and undone condition by nature, come to Jesus Christ and truly repent of all their sins, and heartily renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all their own righteousness in point of justification, and, by a lively faith, cordially resign themselves to Jesus Christ, as their Prince and Saviour, covenanting to be his humble servant, though not in all manner of Gospel obedience: shall have all their sins pardoned, their peace made, their persons justified, their natures sanctified & their souls and bodies eternally saved.

9thly, I believe that the Holy Spirit doth effectually apply the redemption purchased by Christ, to all the Elect by working in them that which is required of them, convincing them of sin, enlight'ning their minds with the knowledge of Christ, renewing their wills, and not only persuading them but powerfully enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the Gospel: and that the spirit saime continues to dwell in them and to work all their works in them; weakening their corruptions, strengthening their graces, guiding their way, comforting their souls, witnessing their adoption, enabling them more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness, and keeping them faithful and stedfastly unto the end.

10thly, I believe that all true believers make

up one invisible sanctified church, which is the mystical body of Jesus Christ, receiving vital influence from him as from their head and having communion in the same spirit of faith and love. And that all those who by Baptism outwardly profess faith in Christ, as the true Messiah, make up the universal visible church of Christ on earth, of which Jesus Christ is the only ruling head, and as such, hath instituted ordinances for Worship and discipline, which are to be observed and kept pure in particular churches; and hath appointed the standing office of a Gospel Ministry, for the church; and hath promised to be with them always to the end of the world.

11thly, I believe that God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, who will raise the bodies of all men from the grave and judge them all according to their works, sending the Wicked, Impenitent, and Unbeliever, into everlasting punishment; and receiving the righteous into life eternal, to be together for ever with the Lord. And that then he shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father; that God may be in all to eternity: and that this is the foundation of all revealed religion and a perfect sufficient rule of direction to the children of men.

And again, I am to take Christ for my prophet, to be taught by him what is my duty; and in this case I desire to learn of him as the only master, what is the will of God, and renouncing my own wisdom, which I reckon but weakness and folly, I know and am persuaded, that I as a lost creature, that justice must be satisfied,

that I am not able to satisfy it, nor no creature for me, that Christ is able, and his death and sufferings sufficient satisfaction: on this I throw my soul with its full weight; my duties I believe the best of them would sink me to the lowest pit and must needs be washed in that precious blood can have no acceptance with God but through his intercession, I can have nothing to do with God out of Christ nor to converse with but only through Christ, I am sensible that I have nothing to commend me to Christ that he may take my cause in hand, if he should damn me, he should do me no wrong, but the cord of love is let out, even the covenant in his blood, I accept of it, and at his command lay hold on it and venture: this is faith in spite of devils, and my heart is pleased with the glorious device of man's salvation through Christ, carrying all the praise to free grace and leaving nothing of it to the creature.

My soul is content of him for my king, and though I cannot be free of sin, God himself knows he would be welcome to make havock of my lusts and to make me holy; I know no lust that I would not be content to part with my will bound hand and foot I desire to lay at his feet and though it will strive whether I will or not I believe whatever God does to me is best done. Lowliness of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature, but is planted by the finger of God in a renewed heart and learned of the lowly Jesus.

FINIS.