

ON MAKING HASTE TO BE RICH.

 I TIM. 6, 9, 10.

The obtaining wealth is an object of almost universal pursuit. For this men rise up early and sit up late; for this their minds are perpetually turning, first to the right hand and then to left, making frequent calculations whether this or that be the most profitable measure for securing the proposed end. In whatever direction we turn our eyes we perceive the proofs of this fact. Early in the morning it may be noticed how mercantile men press forward from their country residences to the cities or towns in which their business is conducted. Walk through the public streets of the principal commercial cities of Britain, America, or Canada, you will scarcely meet an individual who discovers a listless countenance. All are on the alert; the eye is fixed upon the object; every nerve is stretched, and no gladiator of ancient times could discover more anxiety, or make more exertion, than is manifested by those ardent pursuers after wealth. But from whence does all this ardour flow? It is from a strong impression on the minds of men, that it is a very desirable thing to be rich; that riches furnish numerous means of obtaining happiness, and that the more we can accumulate, the more happiness we can possess. This is the predominant sentiment and feeling of men of business. But it is not the language of experience; it is not the language of divine revelation, which warns us against such mistaken notions. The word of God brings to our view the emptiness and the unprofitableness of riches, except so far as they are means of glorifying God, and of doing good to our fellow men. Let the ardent pursuers after wealth read attentively the following passage;—"There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; this is vanity, and it is an evil disease."

It would afford pleasure to every genuine Christian to perceive, that the desire of wealth in professing Christians is kept within those limits which are wise, and compatible with the obligations which they are under to God, and the regard which they should cherish for the honor of pure and undefiled religion. Instead of which, it is lamentable to see them determining to obtain wealth at all hazards, even at the expense of every high christian principle, and of almost every personal, relative, and religious duty, even sacrificing a good conscience and hazarding the everlasting salvation of the soul.

The passage of scripture which has suggested these reflections, exposes that dangerous line of conduct which all real christians should carefully avoid. It is also manifest, from many fatal examples, that those who "will be rich" pursue a course of action extremely sinful, and which must be productive of many and awful mischiefs to the soul. I shall state some examples of this kind, and I pray God that they may not be exhibited in vain.

That man certainly "makes haste to be rich" who sacrifices either religious duties or religious privileges to the prosecution of his great object of procuring riches. How frequently have I heard the neglect of reading the scriptures and prayer, both in the family and in the closet, thus apologized for:—"I have a family to support, and my business engrosses so much of my time, that it is next to impossible to attend to these things at present; I hope soon to get forward a little in the world, and then I shall have more leisure, and will then undoubtedly give more attention to these things." Such persons forget the wholesome advice, or, I might say, the solemn injunction of the Great Teacher. In summing up an interesting discourse upon the duty of trusting Divine Providence, and guarding against all sinful anxiety respecting temporal things, he says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Eagerness to accumulate wealth is discovered also by the neglect of the public worship of God, and the institutions of the christian sanctuary. Our Lord has beautifully and powerfully portrayed those who fall into this sin, and think to excuse the neglect of their souls and things eternal by the obligations they are under to attend to the duties of their temporal callings. It is in the parable of the great supper, Luke 14, 18. &c. The master is represented as having made an ample and a rich provision for a large body of guests, and, at supper time, he sent forth his servants to announce his kindness and liberality, and invite the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind; the most unworthy and insignificant were not exempted; and the messengers were to say, "Come, for all things are now ready." But how was the message received? "They all began with one consent to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. The second said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And the third said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." The first two of these were too intent upon getting money to attend to the things of God, the soul and eternity. It was no sin to buy a farm, or to buy five yoke of oxen, to plough the land when bought; it was no sin to marry a wife; but when these things interpose between God and our souls, cherish a worldly spirit, and obstruct the performance of our most essential duties, they are our sin and our curse. It is a sad cmen, when God gives