

men." Practical godliness supposes consistent and open profession!

What remains to be said in view of these features of practical godliness must relate to its *supreme importance*. And at the outset it may tend to impress our minds more deeply on the subject if we ponder certain statements of holy writ. Saul, King of Israel, made a credible profession of religion, and bade fair as a man of God. He was zealous for the law, and rigidly adhered to the ritual of service and worship. But he lacked the inner life. Thoroughly formed principle had no place in his bosom, so that whenever it appeared *expedient* to transgress, he was ready to sacrifice true propriety. On one testing occasion he had done so, and the word of the Lord came unto him. 1 Samuel xv. 22 and 23.—“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord *as great delight* in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” Prov. xxi. 3. Listen to the beautiful soliloquy and appeal of Micah! Micah vi. 6-8.—“Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?—Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?—He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

And now it may be observed, concerning this practical godliness, that—

*It is the only religion that has evidence of genuineness.*—Most certainly that only can be a divinely appointed and sustained religion, that “loves righteousness and hates iniquity.” No other can have the impress of His approval “who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity.” What, it may be asked, is the *design* of a religion for man, if it be not to make him really holy now, and to fit him for a holy future? We may be very orthodox in faith; very evangelical in our views; very zealous in the maintenance and propagation of our sentiments;—we may be identified with a scriptural church, and live uncomplained of by its members or officers;—but if we are gay and pleasure-loving;—if we choose for our companions the fashionable and the trifling instead of those who fear God;—if we love the opera-house better than the house of prayer, and the hilarity and laughter of the careless, rather than the meeting for devotion;—if the service of God is *secondary* and that of mammon *primary*;—if we can indulge in evil tempers, detracting and backbiting conversation, tale-bearing, gossip, while we seldom speak of Christ, and do not seek to commend him to our fellow-men; then, reader, judge ye if this can be genuine religion. Was it to create this for man that the Father spared not His well-beloved? Was it for such a thing as this that Christ died? Can this be dignified with the name, *salvation*? Are there in this any of the features of the Holy Spirit’s work? Can these, with any propriety of speech, be called “disciples of Christ,”—“saints and faithful in Christ,”—“called and chosen and faithful,”—“the dear children of God,”—“pilgrims, strangers, sojourners in the world,”—“heirs of the inheritance which is incorrup-