

Do you allow your children to attend balls, parties of pleasure, plays, theatres, and such like? Remember the punishment of Eli's sons, and what was done because they made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Eli reproveth them, but that was not enough; he did not restrain them. Remember the fate of Absalom! Remember! "And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Endeavour to live in the fear of the Lord, and to teach, and by your example illustrate, the truths of the Bible.

Your children are doubtless dear to you. Do not neglect their religious education! Rather teach them to dress plain, to live plain, to be humble followers of Jesus, to live in the fear of God, to walk in wisdom's ways, to cultivate the mind, and to be ready for every good word and work, than to shine in dress, or jewels, or any of the vanities of the day. Let no false delicacy keep you from being faithful to those who have been trusted to your care; their eternal well-being is, in a measure, committed to you. If you as parents do not feel interested in their salvation enough to faithfully warn them of their danger, and point them to the great Physician, yourselves leading the way, wonder not if you are called upon to mourn the fearful consequences when it shall be forever too late. Time is short. Eternity is without end. Life is uncertain. Death is certain. The retributions of eternity are not far off, and you and your children will meet at the judgment-seat of Christ. O parents, clear your skirts of the blood of your children, lest you become their murderers, and their bitter reproaches ring in your ears to all eternity!—*Christian Advocate and Journal.*

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JAMES MARSHALL'S LETTERS.

That comprehensive and celebrated work, entitled—"An Earnest Ministry, the want of which is the cause of the present state of the Church," by the truly evan- gelical and Rev. John James, of Birmingham, published in 1847, and which in the next year, was republished by the Rev. John James, contains several passages, showing the high regard in which the author holds the work, and the value of its contents. Some remarks, however, may first be made regarding the qualifications of Mr. James, to form a correct estimate of the state of religion, generally; and also, as to the title of his book. Mr. James is a highly talented and esteemed, as well as useful Minister, in the large Independent Body, in the United Kingdom, and generally well known by reputation, throughout the Christian world. He has now been nearly fifty years in the ministry; and from the prominent and influential position he has long held in the Christian Church; and, doubtless, from his having had numerous and extensive opportunities and means of intercourse, with both ministers and members, in the other denominations; and thus ascertaining all the facts and particulars, requisite to the formation of a correct judgment regarding the religious or spiritual state of the churches in general, there is scarcely an individual to be found, who is more competent than himself, to form and express that judgment.— It cannot for a moment be supposed, that he would criticise wantonly, or lightly disparage, or seek to lower his brethren, *now* in the ministry; or endeavour to lessen their influence and usefulness; or wish to make the present state of religious principle and conduct, appear to be inferior to what it really is. Doubtless all his Christian desires and feelings would rather incline him to lean, as far as strict and evident truth would permit, towards the directly opposite course.— A warm and genuine desire for the revival of zeal and piety, and spiritual prosperity in the churches, and an imperative feeling, that we may be fully a sinner, in deed or in word, to write the bad; and to re- commend every pious and useful work, and every minister, in general, to the public eye, is particularly characteristic, and prominent, in his character.— An *Earnest Ministry*, is a title, which is well adapted to the subject of the work.

"Earnest Ministry" in the churches, at the present time. To illustrate, or explain in a concise or familiar way, that such is the meaning of the title of the Book, and of the Author, in giving it that title, we may just say, that if there were a sufficient portion or quantity of any article, or thing, either actually possessed, or ready at hand, in any community, no one would say, that there was a want of such article in that community. It must be taken, therefore, even from the mere title of the Book, that it is the deliberate and decided opinion of Mr. James, that there is not such an "Earnest Ministry" at the present period. But he has, in the work itself, spoken far more plainly, and quite at large on the point. The following, are some, among many other passages, concerning it. "If we go back to the time of Baxter, Howe, Owen, Bates, Manton, and Charnock, there can be little reason to believe, that the moderns preach with the same results, that these men did. As little can it be questioned, whether Whitfield and Wesley, with the men called out by their labours, both in the Church of England, and among Nonconformists, proclaimed the gospel of the grace of God, with more power and success, than the preachers of the present day. It is better, therefore, to limit the range of inquiry to the last quarter of a century; and to state the matter thus; does the preaching of the gospel *now*, taking all evangelical denominations into the investigation, appear to be followed with the same saving and sanctifying results, as it was then; and, if not, does there appear to be a progressive diminution of effect, still going on. This, it must be obvious, is a question which cannot be settled by very accurate statistics; and for the solution of which, we must depend pretty much upon general reports, and concurrent testimony. It may be asked, then, whether the want of efficiency is not matter of acknowledgment and lamentation by all evangelical bodies? True, it is, that to a certain extent, similar acknowledgments and lamentations have been made in every age, and by ministers of all denominations. But the inquiry now supposed, is made, chiefly by those who compare themselves, with themselves; and their success, at the present time, with their own success in past time. The confessions from the United States, by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists, is concurrent, that there is a *dearthness* over the Churches; that *revivals are rare*, and *conversions few*; while the power of godliness among professing Christians is *low*. The Methodist Body, in those United Kingdoms, reported last year, but an increase of about seven hundred members; and this year (1847) a decrease of five thousand. The evangelical clergy of the Church of England, lament the rarity of conversions, by their preaching; and confess, that the power of *Veni and Romaine*, and *Cecil* and *Newton*, seem wanting to their successors. The Baptists and Independents, have no better report to make. Dr. Chalmers, in a late article in the North British Review, in speaking of Scotland, and that at a time, when the disruption of the Presbyterian Establishment, might have been supposed to have given new activity to the ministry of the Free Church at least, uses the following mournful language:—"As things stand at present, our errors and confusions have become effect; and the Bible a dead letter; and the orthodoxy which was at one time the glory, by withering into the fact and lifeless, is now the shame and reproach of all our churches." This is strong language; and a startling opinion. But the most melancholy thing connected with it, is, *its truth*. Assuming, then, the fact, that the modern evangelical pulpit has lost, and is losing something of its power, in the way of converting sinners, and carrying forward the spiritual life of believers, it surely becomes us all to reflect upon the painful fact, with the deepest seriousness; and with the most intense anxiety, to endeavour to discover the cause." "The question for us to ask, in all seriousness and prayerful examination, is this: Does the divine power of the pulpit, as from a diminished adaptation of the pulpit to the needs of the people, or is the diminished efficiency, to be traced up, exclusively to the circumstances of the age, but that is now passing over us? Some have thought that the cause may be set down to the

In another part of the same Work, are the following passages regarding the churches generally;—"We behold a strange combination of zeal and worldly-mindedness; great activity for the extension of religion in the earth, united with lamentable indifference to the state of religion in the soul; apparent vigour at the extremities, with a growing torpor at the heart. Multitudes are substituting zeal for piety, liberality, for mortification, and a merely social, for a personal religion." "The Christian profession is sinking in its personal piety; the line of separation between the church and the world becomes less and less perceptible; and this is taking place, less through the elevation of the world, than through the depression of the church." In treating of Christian ministers, he says—"How else than by admitting a deficiency of our piety, can we account for the fact of a diminished efficiency in our ministry." In regard to the masses of the population, he writes—"There is room enough for all denominations, in the vast wilderness of our neglected and unchristianized population; and we have no need to look at each other's labours with jealousy and envy. Satan is raving souls faster than all of us, united, can save them." "In many places of worship, connected with the Establishment, even where the gospel is preached, but preached with feebleness, do we find small congregations, and few souls converted to God. Do we rejoice over this? On the contrary, it is for a grief and a lamentation. And is there a heart so envenomed with the gall of bigotry, as to rejoice in the confession that is now made, that many of our congregations are withering away, under the effete ministrations of incompetent men. Such a withering is indeed going on in many places. The fact cannot be concealed, it is notorious."

With reference to the upper and literary classes, the Rev. Author, in the same work, thus expresses himself;—"Having referred to the state of public opinion and feeling, with reference to religion, among the lower classes, it may not be amiss to glance at the higher and more educated portions of the community. Many of these are moving on two lines; or into a stream that divides into two channels; and flows into two diverging directions—the devout and imaginative pouring off to Puseyism; and a large part of the rest to a philo-sophical infidelity. A loose, un-systematised theism, is adopted by many men of letters; in some cases a new edition of the opinions of our English Deists of the last century; and in others, and in a still more numerous, class, bearing a strong affinity to the pantheistic, or mystic theory of the German Philosophy."

On the subject of spiritual influence, the Author remarks;—"It is quite perceptible that the necessity of Divine influence, is rather a dogma of faith than a principle of practice, both with ministers and their people. Did the people really believe it; was it matter of inward conviction; and there were the least real access of spirit in their religion; how much less dependence would there be upon men; how much less said about talent; how much less homage paid to genius and eloquence; and how much more looking up to God by intense and persevering supplication."

The facts and testimonies which have now been given, make too plainly evident, the deplorable truth, that religion, principle and conduct in the United Kingdom, generally, are, at the present period, extremely defective and low, when compared with the only inflexible standard, of the divinely revealed requirements.

It will be appropriate, and probably useful, to exhibit and explain the principal causes which have operated to produce that great and affecting evil. Some of those causes have been prevailing through many successive ages, and others are of but comparatively recent origin. Among the first, and indeed, by almost universal admission, as the greatest and most destructive of all the causes of infidelity is the interest of religion, not to be regarded, the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating liquors. Any very minute or casual exposition on this point, surely, could now be requisite, when the whole truth concerning it has, of late years, in various works, been so extensively and so ably exposed. It is, therefore, only necessary to say, that the present state of the church, and the present state of the

and authorities which have been already given, in previous letters, expressly regarding those ruinous subjects. Some of the general, or most comprehensive facts, showing the deep and extensive injuries to our holy christianity, from these sources of profanity, and crime, will, however, be quite appropriate here. They will serve, it is hoped, to convince even a careless reader, or one sceptical on the point, that there is not the slightest exaggeration in asserting, that intoxicating liquors, in various ways, and in every thing relating to them, and through very many ages, down to the present time, have proved more preventive of the extension of religious truth, and more deeply injurious to the spiritual interests of mankind, in all the departments and operations of the church, than all the other causes which have injuriously affected those interests. To commence then at the origin of this ruinous cause, the reader may briefly be informed or reminded, of the following general or principal facts on the subject.—Namely, that about sixty millions of bushels of good and wholesome grain, given by the gracious Creator for food, are annually destroyed in the United Kingdom, in the manufacture of intoxicating drinks—a destruction evidently contrary to the duties of religion, benevolence, and common humanity; and this too, while many in the same Kingdom, are perishing, and others are pining with want. And, further, which drinks, so far from being at all needed, are constantly causing crime, disease, and death, pauperism and wretchedness, and all the other evils which it is the design of genuine religion to prevent, or to mitigate,—that upwards of 100,000 persons desecrate every Sabbath in the year, by doing some work in the manufacture of those liquors; that nearly two millions more, also desecrate the same sacred day by the sale and use of those liquors;—a large proportion of whom, as well as of the manufacturing profaners, are members, and not a few of them, office bearers in churches;—that by such use, about six hundred thousand drunkards, are constantly to be found in the Kingdom; of whom, probably, fifty thousand, or more, annually die, through intemperance; that there are, as computed, nearly two millions more, of inebriates of intemperate persons, of different degrees, from the same cause; being, in all, according to a probable estimate, more than one fifth of the whole adult, or habitually-drinking population of the entire Kingdom. And, further, that nine tenths, or two millions eight hundred thousand cases of pauperism, in the United Kingdom, are generally admitted to arise from the use of those liquors; and which cases may justly be regarded as one of the injuries to the interests of religion, both with reference to such paupers themselves, and those who are burthened with heavy taxation for their support. By reason of such taxation, these last cannot spare or employ the pecuniary means which they would otherwise have it in their power to contribute, for the promotion of the interests of religion, either with reference to themselves or others. But there is, next, the still more extensive and afflictive injuries to those sacred interests, by the commission of the enormous number of crimes, annually perpetrated in the United Kingdom from the same cause, being, as is truly estimated, and generally or universally admitted, nine in ten of the whole number, or about one million eight hundred thousand crimes in every year, from this cause alone. The statements of the Rev. Author of the prize essay on Juvenile Depravity, may here be mentioned,—that crime, in general, has increased five fold since the commencement of the present century; and that juvenile and female crime and depravity, especially, have been rapidly increasing, during recent years. The foregoing are only some of the greater injuries to religion, from intoxicating liquors, as relating to the population of the Kingdom, generally. Should any feel disposed to say, that these numerous and flagrant facts and instances are not sufficient, of themselves, to show a low state of religion, generally, by reason of their relating chiefly to the very lowest and most degraded classes of society; a few further and well authenticated facts and statements may be mentioned, by way of answer; and to show the more direct injuries to the church itself, from the same pernicious and desolating source. The following are only some