

fection ; they call up their corresponding imagery, or bring into play their corresponding feelings. The more these are called to the mind, the more they become connected with other trains of ideas, and with accidental circumstances of time and place. Thus they are introduced where otherwise no connexion would have existed ; and being thus indulged and strengthened, the imagination becomes disordered and debased, and what to the pure mind would be pure, then furnishes food for unhallowed thoughts, cherishes, unhallowed desires, and often strongly excites to licentious actions. — Can it then be asked, “ Where is the harm ? ” In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, this will be the result in some shape or other : — but take the hundredth ; surely it must be admitted that holiness cannot reside in so impure a habitation. Gusts there may be of devotional feeling ; but settled habitual piety cannot exist in a heart so debased. Every holy feeling must be checked, almost annihilated, by those opposing desires. Both classes cannot rule ; and those which submit, will soon cease to be the regulating motives of the conduct, will soon lose their vividness and their vigour.

I am confident I do not overcharge the picture. There is no call for exaggeration : the consequences are so obvious, that those who are alive to duty’s call, who listen to the still small voice which speaks within them, will obey the warning and shun the first lure of vice however harmless its appearance. I shall be grateful, if what I say should reach the heart of one young person who has not yet seriously thought of the necessity of keeping the heart with all diligence ; should preserve one from listening to or sharing in licentious conversation, from reading licentious books, or those which have the felt effect of exciting irre-