

REVIEW.

Hints on the Proper Employment of Human Life. By the Rev. WILLIAM TAYLOR, Montreal, L. C. 12mo. price 2s. 6d. Campbell & Becket, Greig, Armour & Ramsay, and M'Leod. 1838.

Our estimable brother has done well in giving these *Hints* to the public; and his readers, who we hope will be very numerous, will do well to mark and ponder them with deep attention. They are evidently the result of much thought, close and extensive observation, correct views of the destinies and duties of men, and an ardent desire to promote the glory of God and the best interests of society at large. There is no error into which man is more liable to fall, and which is attended with more fatal consequences, than that of mistaking the legitimate object of his chief pursuit, and the best means of obtaining it. Mr. Taylor sets himself in earnest to correct this error, which is alarmingly prevalent both in the world and in the church, and to ward off or remove the evils which necessarily flow from its influence on human conduct. The substance of the volume was preached to his congregation last winter, in a series of sermons on the subject of which it treats; and in complying with a request to publish them, he very properly enlarged and improved them till they assumed the form in which they now appear. If it be true, and we have no doubt of it, "that but few of our race display a proper knowledge of the end of their being," an attempt to enlighten the public mind on this important subject is worthy of regard, and every benevolent man will wish for its success. The work before us, after a suitable Introduction, consists of eight chapters, all of which, in regular succession and arrangement, are brought to bear, more or less directly, upon the main object of the writer.

The great question is, for what purpose God has placed us here, and endowed us with the faculties we possess—and how we may best answer his design. Mr. T. commences his investigation of this problem by "examining the nature of man," and thus to "learn something" with regard to "the objects which all his energies should be spent in acquiring." He proceeds, therefore, to consider man as corporeal, social, intellectual, and moral, and above all as immortal; and pursuing this classification of powers and properties, he shews not only what man ought to be, and to do, but also that the generality of men have failed to answer the ends of their creation, and that Christians individually, and the Church at large, have too much symbolized with the world in this debasement of purpose and dereliction of duty.

"A brute will naturally desire something that is capable of gratifying its *brutish appetites*; such an object would be suitable to its nature. A merely *intellectual* being, it we may conceive of such, will desire something that is capable of gratifying his thirst for knowledge; his nature would not feel the want of any thing more. But a *moral* creature, whose chief glory consists in loving what is *good* and hating what is *evil*, if he acts from *nature* and not from *depravity*, will desire above all things, a field for the exercise and display of these godlike perfections. He will desire that sin should be everywhere put down, and that righteousness should be everywhere triumphant: and its benignant influence diffused on every side, producing at every step its blessed and appropriate effects, till it shall be co-extensive with the empire of the Almighty, and shall make the whole universe a heaven. Such an object as this would alone be suitable to his nature; every thing else would be too low."

Again :

"It ought to be recollected that the nature of man is *immortal*: from which it is evident that, if the object which we spend our lives in acquiring, does not possess the same attribute of immortality, and is not capable of furnishing *for ever* the gratification and enjoyment which our nature will *for ever* require, it is unsuitable to us; and the time and labour which we spend upon it are lost. I do not wish to be understood as uttering any thing so chimerical, as to teach that the faculties of man ought never to be exercised in the pursuit of any temporal object. . . . But, what we condemn is, making the acquisition of any temporal object the *business* of our life,—devoting to it so much of our time, and thought, and active exertions, as to justify others in accounting it our paramount employment. For although, in this case, all our plans were to be completely successful, they would issue in a result which could be of little advantage to us. To spend our lives in the pursuit of an object which we can only enjoy for a few years at farthest, instead of raising our aim to 'a better and an enduring substance,' which will co-exist with us in eternity, and continue for ever to realize the expectations which we form from it, is a folly so great that words have not power to describe it sufficiently. What an outrage upon our nature! what a gross perversion of the design for which God created us, and placed us here! We just now referred to the cruelty of the parent who offers a stone to his hungry child instead of bread; but the folly equals the conduct of the *madman*, who refuses the bread, and attempts to appease his own hunger with a stone!"