

administers the remedy and the consolation, is not his. His is a spurious grief, the violent outpouring of a murmuring and repining soul; and with him the believer must not mourn—can never weep.

Nevertheless, to the heart of the Christian, the apostolic injunction commends itself as just and becoming, as one of the legitimate and natural developments of the Christian life. *Discriminating between the true and the false, and between the real and the unreal, we must rejoice with them that do rejoice, we must weep with them that weep.* Affliction, when it conveys the conviction of demerit, when it suggests aspirations towards a purer and holier state of being, when it subdues the angry tumult of the passions, when it mollifies and sweetens the temper and the life, is the successful minister of God, and works the peaceable fruits of righteousness. It is adversity which proves and confirms our testimony; it is sorrow which, like the knife of the anatomist, dissects the character and lays bare the hidden springs of action; and it is when men are thus tried that they are known. By the calm, sober, undemonstrative, unostentatious grief ye shall discern the mourners in Zion: by the head bowed, but not in despair; by the countenance dejected, but not cast down; by the lips interjecting prayers with sobs, praises with lamentations; by the eye upturned towards heaven, and glowing through its tears with a mysterious lustre; by the words of mildness, of resignation, of love to God and good will towards man; by the whole aspect, so meek, so tender, so pensive, so subdued. And inseparable from this sorrow, blended with it in all its processes and manifestations, is a joy purer, more profound, more enduring than any mere earthly joy—the joy, the peace of believing. Hope and trust and faith in the Christian take the place of despair and wrath and distrust and rebellion in the unbeliever: hope and trust and faith are the ministering angels which pour the balm of consolation into the raw and recent wound, assuaging the pain, sweetening the temper of the sufferer, and filling his heart with comfort and courage. It is not a vain imagination, it is not a paradoxical fancy, but a just apprehension and acknowledgment of a striking fact in the Christian life, which leads the painter to express on the features of the saint in the hour and agony of martyrdom, a deep and holy calm, a serene and placid joy, imperturbable by the pangs of a tortured frame and the prospects of a speedy death. There, on that truthful canvas, glows the splendid triumph of the believing soul. Not the huge flames which crackle and roar and lash themselves into fury around his limbs, and volume up high over head, can disturb, by all the pains they inflict, the equanimity of that countenance, can dim the radiance of that eye, can ruffle the majesty of that lordly brow. For him the grave has lost its sting, death has been swallowed up in the rapturous ecstasy of victory. “Welcome this trial and this hour,”

he exclaims; “farewell sun, moon and stars; come Lord Jesus, come quickly;” and the arms are expanded as if to invite the more rapid advance of the fierce and fiery death, and the spirit is triumphant over the flesh, and that mighty anguish is lost and merged in that still mightier joy, and the whole aspect is that of the saint and the martyr, happy in the midst of his affliction, singing with his whole heart psalms of praise amidst the racking pangs of so furious a torture. And this is the manner in which tribulation is borne by all the children of faith and hope: this is the ultimate of every trial, and disaster and bereavement: this is the antidote for the bane, the balm for every sore. Tears may flow in copious streams; the voice of weeping and lamentation may be heard; wrinkles of care and anxiety may furrow the cheeks and seam the brow; oftentimes may the spirit bend beneath the burden and the yoke, but never will religion desist her office of hand-maiden and minister; never will she cease to suggest those powerful consolations, which, like oil poured upon the raging waves, will quell the tumult of the soul. With those who thus sorrow and thus continue to love and hope, the apostle commands us to sympathize—to mingle our grief with theirs.

Among those who rejoice too, we must select and discriminate. The laughter of the fool is a vain and empty laughter, noisy as the blaze of crackling thorns, and equally transient and unsatisfactory. It is a universal characteristic of the false and the spurious that they are in all their external features, splendid and showy and gay. The base guinea of the counterfeiter has all the glitter of the genuine coin, sets forth all the distinctive devices and marks—the shield, the motto, the blazonry, the head and titles of the sovereign: but the practised eye will readily discern a somewhat exaggerated and ostentatious exactness of detail, an obtrusive splendor, which never fails to discover and betray the counterfeit. The joy of worldly men is as the coinage of the rogue—a perfect, a slightly too perfect, and utterly false and worthless imitation of the real and the true—is as the blaze of thorns under a pot, a voluminous flash and then gone for ever. The good man’s mirth, on the other hand, is as the golden money from the mint, possessing no tinsel brilliancy, no meretricious and garish glow, but worth the full value a professes to bear; as a perennial flame which may flicker and wane, but will never cease to impart a moderate and cheerful warmth. The shadow of eternity should forever rest upon our spirits. It becomes us to be sober in all things, but specially should our hilarity be toned and influenced throughout by an ever-present consciousness of our solemn destiny and our solemn faith. They need not be mournful, this consciousness, those haunting convictions:—the joy of a healthy piety is always hearty and sincere. It does not mar, but rather enhance the beauty of a landscape when the shadow of the dark and massive