

poor have their cares, and they be often neither few nor small; grinding cares on a toiling father and an anxious mother to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to feed, to clothe, to shelter, to instruct, to start in the fair way of life their offspring;—care, that makes many a widow more sad, and the orphan more forlorn;—care, that blanches some young cheek, and makes to bow more heavily some venerable head. But we go not only to the humble dwelling and to the poor to find it, for it gloomily stalks into the palace as well as the hut, and it oppresses the heart that beats beneath the royal purple as well as that which is under rags; it ploughs its deep furrow on the brow of the millionaire as well as on the face of the debtor in his cell; it has its heavy sighings in the bosom of the epicure as well as in that of him who starves for want of bread; it oppresses one by his proud cravings, and another by his humble desires; and it springs from ambition as readily as from necessity; it is nursed by pride as well as bred by stern poverty; it is found with a luxurious Dives at his table as well as with a Lazarus sharing with the dogs the crumbs at the gate; it is distressing the man in the full enjoyment of health as well as the bed-ridden; it casts its grim shadow on jovial youth as well as on solemn old age; it comes wrapped in the swaddling bands, and goes in the winding sheet; it lives with our life, and only expires with ourselves. Why, then, is it that there is such a prevailing belief that prosperity and wealth are the antidote to care? Why is it that riches are esteemed the one thing needful to make a man blessed? Our Lord evidently intended to bring out this point, that of a man full of care, puzzled for a time, perplexed by his very prosperity, “he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my goods.” His covetousness and selfishness are clearly represented. He must still minister to himself; he must still gather in for himself. He will give nothing away. His very abundance caused him anxiety how he could heap up and secure all for himself. He must have larger barns; that will do; and covetousness says, “there will I bestow ALL my goods.” There is the old story of Alexander the Great, full of ambition and conquest, stretching out from Macedon, and marching to prostrate the nations at his feet, and to enrich his cabinet with the sceptres of their kings. In his earlier triumphs, he thought that the conquest of one more kingdom would satisfy him, but a new care sprang up with a new dominion, till, having conquered the then known world, he sat down and wept because there was not another world to conquer. Such is man, for let him have what he may, let fortune pour her treasures richly into his lap, it is seldom we find any one saying “now I have enough,” for, as has been sarcastically said, the contemplated “enough” is just “a little more;” and therefore there is a lesson given by universal experience, that it is not in worldly things we are to have our truest joys, nor in the lust of the eye or the pride of life we are to expect our full and glad some gratifications. One taught by the spirit of God has written that “godliness with contentment is great gain,” for it is the religion of Jesus Christ that enables us to behold better things than earth possesses, and which satisfies the heart with present peace and blessedness, and gives for support and good cheer to the pilgrim to heaven “great and precious hopes and promises;” and thus piety conveys to God’s poor. happy resignation, and makes the heart of the rich man ever to pour out its tribute