

SELF CONQUEST.

BY THE REV. RICHARD ROBERTS, LONDON.

Man is a creature of emotion deep and strong, but he has superior faculties, to which the emotional nature must be subject. To invest the emotions or passions with the regal power would be perilous to our peace. The man who is controlled by feeling is wild, fanatical, volatile, impulsive, and never to be trusted in an emergency. He deserts you when you most need him. He forsakes the cause he espoused, just at a moment when his ardour and zeal, rightly directed, would have made it triumphant. If you offend him, his hatred becomes as hot as his former love. "I'll have my revenge," he cries, "for revenge is sweet."—Sweet it may be for the moment while in the height of frenzy and of passion.—Sweet it may be to a depraved and fiendish taste; but it will not bear reflection. Reason, in moments of calm, condemns it, and conscience will reproach him with it when the frenzy is past, and the revengeful blow irrevocably struck. When a man indulges in angry passions, he becomes at once conscious of losing self-respect, and he cannot therefore complain if he lose the respect of others. When a man storms and rages, and adds oaths and curses to his anger, he thinks his godless rhetoric gives him power, whereas, if he understood human nature better, he would know that it is weakness and not power—a weakness which brings him into absolute contempt. Judge of the feelings of others by your own. With what emotions do you look upon a man who gives way to violent and ungoverned tempers? However highly you respected him before, yet, now that he roars, and raves, and threatens, all respect departs, and you learn to despise him.—Nor should you, therefore, complain if others despise you when unfortunate enough to betray the same folly. If, in a discussion, you allow your combatant to irritate you, and to provoke you to anger, you may be assured that he has gained a point, and is far advanced towards victory. You are weak in your irritability; he is strong in his calmness, and fortified in his self-possession.

Our emotions or passions, although liable to abuse, are nevertheless useful and

necessary. By their subjugation we do not mean their extirpation. They are not to be destroyed, but sanctified and regulated. We are no advocates for an unfeeling humanity, for the stoical philosophy which seeks to convert men into mere icicles, which, bright and transparent though they be, are nevertheless cold as death, and chill as the grave. We love the man that can feel, and weep, and rejoice. We love to feel the warm grasp of friendship's hand, and to behold the fires of the heart's affection lighting up the eye. Now-a-days there are not a few intellectuals who pride themselves on living high up *there*, in the clouds, far beyond the fluctuations to which we are subject, and who pour contempt on us poor mortals on account of the ebb and flow of our feelings. *They* dwell in a world of mind, in regions of lofty thought, and do not allow themselves to be touched by the tides of emotion which ever and anon swell the bosoms of ordinary mortals. Well, it may be a weakness, but we are bold to confess it, that we had rather live down here, where there is a little warmth, than be frost bitten up there among those floating mental stars which unith with their brightness a deathly coldness.

Christianity, while it teaches us to regulate our emotional nature, presents ample scope for the exercise and development of feeling. There are not wanting men who maintain, that religion is a matter for the exercise and development of feeling.—There are not wanting men who maintain, that religion is a matter for the intellect and reason, and not for the heart, and that it consists in a true creed, an enlightened judgment, and a mind well furnished with the evidences of Christianity. But this is far too cold for a creature of feeling like man. If you would meet the demand of his entire nature, you must give him a religion that affects his feelings, that will touch him at all points, and on all sides, and that will address itself to his moral as well as his mental nature, to his heart and conscience as well as his intellect. God demands the service of our passions in the first and great commandment—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." You cannot love with your intellect. Love lives deeper down in the depths of our being. It grows and flourishes in the genial soil of