

prompt us to provide for the sustenance of our bodies, are perverted from their legitimate ends, and resentment for wrongs, when carried to excess, leads to hatred, and malice, to deeds of bloodshed and revenge. In the moderation of our passions and affections, therefore, a great part of true religion consists. Then and then only, my Brethren, when you have been made Masters of your own spirits, and we trust that of such among you there are not a few,—when conscience as the vicegerent of God within the breast and acting according to His Law, has been restored to its rightful sway, will you be not slaves, but free indeed, and possessed of a moral and intellectual dignity which you can never otherwise attain.

4. But we are, farther, called to add to temperance "*patience.*" The early Christians to whom the Apostle wrote, were subjected to many persecutions, and they are, therefore, here specially called upon to exercise a meek, and patient endurance of these sufferings, still holding fast, amid their fiery trials, the profession of their faith without wavering, and abiding constant and immovable in their Christian hope, and love. But the patience to which our Text exhorts us includes in it, also, a patient submission to every affliction. When the stream of life flows smoothly on, and nothing presents itself to disturb our equanimity, no defect in our Christian character may be perceived, but, if we be exposed to the frowns and sneers of an evil world, it may be, we either rise into resentment, or resign ourselves to a sinful acquiescence. Or, if we be exposed to sickness, or bereavement, or sorrow, or pain, or any of those ills which are the common lot of all in this fallen and mortal state, it may be, we either give way to peevish discontent, or sink into despondency or despair. But let it not be so with any of us. Let us so endure whatsoever trial God may be pleased to send, as most to manifest the faith and patience of His people, and reap the fruits of sanctified affliction. Whatever he does is right, and therefore every repining ought to be hushed. His will ought to be our will, and whatsoever has seemed good to Him ought to be deemed so by us. He may have laid upon us His afflicting hand, but we can never repay the debt of gratitude which we owe to Him for what of His goodness we have received in time past, and for what is still left. He has led us and fed us all our lives long, and bestowed on us innumerable blessings,