

the gladness, just as in the latter there is no blame in the sadness. In truth, if we were to get at all the facts of both cases, we might see that the man who was so generally desponding had in reality made far more exertion to cultivate joy than the other had done. For we are often shamefully unjust in our estimates of our fellows. In a class at school the first prize is often gained by a boy who did nothing to secure it. God made him so bright and quick that he could not help out-distancing all the rest, while the boy in the middle was perhaps ten times more diligent than he; but, not having such original capital to work on, he made a poorer show. And in the same way many a man gets credit for good temper, who never knew what it was to be provoked; while he who has restrained his explosiveness by great effort nine times, is reputedly a fiery tempered man, because the dynamite got the better of him on the tenth. We don't know what is restrained, we only know what comes out. And the same thing holds in this matter of despondency. We see the melancholy, but we do not see and we cannot know the daily efforts and prayers that are made by the man to overcome it. But CHRIST knows. And He will not be unjust like men. He will not make it, as men so often do, a thing to banter and ridicule you for. He knows it is a real trial, and He will give you honor in proportion to your effort to get above it. Do not fret, therefore, over that which is the result of temperament. Keep resisting it, and take to yourself the helping hand which the LORD stretches down to you in the precious injunction of my text.

Again, *spiritual despondency may be caused by disease.* The connection between the soul and the body is both intimate and mysterious. They act and react upon each other; so that while it is true that the power of the will may keep the body up under protracted and severe labor, it is also true that the con-

dition of the body tinges and affects the experience of the soul. That which we call *lowness of spirits* is very often the result of some imprudence in diet, or some local disturbance. It would not do, of course, to resolve all spiritual phenomena thus into the consequences of our physical state. But every one who has given attention to the subject in any degree knows that the sound body is in all ordinary cases necessary to the sound mind; and I believe that a Christian physiologist could render no better service to many desponding spirits than by preparing a work which should treat of the effects of different diseases on religious experience. I know that in the course of my pastoral life, now extending nearly to a quarter of a century, I have seen many phases of so-called spiritual depression, or exultation, which I could only account for under GOD, from the nature of the maladies with which the different individuals have been afflicted. Thus I have literally waded with a friend for months through the swelling river, and battled with the waves of despondency that were breaking over him; yet, though I knew that he was a noble Christian, I did not lose my faith either in him or in God, because his disease was of the liver, and he saw things through a jaundiced eye. Again, I have heard great words of joyful confidence, and even of ecstasy come from those whose natures I knew were wanting in depth and stability, and if the truth must be told I did not set much store by them, for their disease was one which excited to hopefulness, and tended to lull every suspicion to sleep.

Now see the relief which all this affords. It removes from religion the responsibility for the depression of such a man as COWPER, and traces his spiritual gloom to disease of the brain; while, on the other hand, it takes away from Christianity all reproach for the hypocrisy of the man who, while he seemed to be on his death-bed, talked with the