

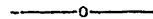
To sinners he appears as a sinner; to saints he appears as a saint. In the literal sense he becomes all things to all men, without aspiring to that faith which would set him above the world, or to that spirit which would enable him to assert the dignity of the rational character. He is timid, because he has reason to be so. Wickedness, condemned by its own vileness, is timorous, and forecatheth grievous things. There is a dignity in virtue which keeps him at a distance; he feels how awful goodness is; and in the presence of a virtuous man, he shrinks into his own insignificance.

On the other hand, the righteous is bold as a lion. "I fear my God, and I have no other fear," is the language of his heart. With God for his protector, and with innocence for his shield, he walks through the world with an erect posture, and with a face that looks upwards. He despises a fool, though he were possessed of all the gold of Ophir, and scorns a vile man, though a minister of state. The voice of the world is to him as a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal. The applauses or the censures of the high or the low affect him not. Like a distant thunders, they vibrate on his ear, but come not to his heart. To him his own mind is the whole world. There sits the judge of his actions, and he appeals to no other tribunal upon the earth. He possesses the spirit which rests upon itself. He walks by his own light, he determines upon his own deeds. Supported by the consciousness of innocence, and acting with all the force of providence on his side, he has nothing to fear; knows that he can no more be hurt by the rumours of the idle, impious, and hypocritical, than the heavens can be set on fire by the sparkles that arise into the air, and that die in the moment they ascend. Animated with this spirit, the feeble becomes strong in the Lord. Apostles, who on former occasions had been weak and timid, whom the voice of a woman frightened into apostasy, who deserted their Master in his deepest distress, and hid themselves from the fury of the multitude; these Apostles no sooner felt the impulse of this spirit, then they appeared openly in the midst of Jerusalem, published the resurrection of Jesus to those priests and elders who had condemned him to death, and discovered a boldness and magnanimity, a spirit and intrepidity, which shook the councils of the Jewish nation, and made the kings of the earth to tremble on their thrones.

In the last place, The spirit of the world is an interested spirit; the spirit which is of God is a generous spirit. The man of the earth has no feeling but for himself. His own interest is his only object; he never loses sight of this; that is his all; every line of his conduct centres in this point. He has a design in every thing he does. As the prophet Malachi says, "He will not shut the doors for nought." He deliberates not whether an action will do good, but whether it will do good

to him. That generosity of sentiment which expands the soul; that charming sensibility of heart which makes us glow for the good and weep for the woes of others; that Christian charity which comprehends in its wide circle all our brethren of mankind; that diffusive benevolence, reduced to a principle of action, which makes the human nature approach to the Divine, he considers as the dreams of a visionary head, as the figments of a romantic mind that knows not the world.

But the spirit which is of God is as generous as the spirit of the world is sordid. One of the chief duties in the spiritual life is to deny itself. Christianity is founded upon the most astonishing instance of generosity and love that ever was exhibited to the world; and they have no pretensions to the Christian character, who feel not the truth of what their Master said, "That it is more blessed to give than to receive." This is not comprehended by worldly men; and the more worldly and wicked they are, the more it is incomprehensible. "Does Job serve God for nought?" said the first accuser of the just. Yes, thou accursed spirit! he serves God for nought. Thy votaries serve thee for lucre and profit and filthy mammon; but the children of God serve him from reverence and love. Rewarded indeed they shall be in heaven, while thine are to be tormented, and by thyself, in hell; but they account that to be a sufficient reward which they have even here in their own hearts,—the consciousness and the applauses of generosity.



FOR THE MONTHLY RECORD.

There was silence in heaven—no anthem was heard,

Round the throne where the wings of the cherubim stirred.

Where jasper and gold pave each beautiful street,
Was hushed the light footfall of ministring feet;

Archangels and seraphs no longer were seen
By the river of life, where the pastures are green,

The city that rang with the songs of the blest,
From eternity's birth, lay in jubilant rest;

In light, unapproachable, dwelling alone,
From the Father, the brightness of glory was gone.

The only begotten, whose infinite love,
Now hushed for a moment the voices above.

There was music on earth, such a glorious strain
Went up through the midnight from Bethlehem's plain.

Where each awe-stricken shepherd kept watch at his post,

A multitude came of the heavenly host;
A glory shone round them, the glory of Him,

Before whose effulgence even light becomes dim,
Glad tidings they brought of redemption and peace,

Whose fullness to men should not alter or cease;
While the chorus that rang from that glorious choir,

Filled the echoes of space as the chords of a lyre,
Singing "Glory to God and peace upon earth,

Good will towards men," in Emmanuel's birth.