

whole and uncorrupt, an image of God corresponding with the sanctity of the Lord, the more illustrious portion of the flock of Christ." The virtue of fasting was also magnified because it was supposed to war against the natural appetite of the body. These poor bodies, in their natural and proper uses, have been made the object of a species of warfare in the name of religion, which exhibits throughout the influence of the idea that matter is under the dominion of an evil spirit.

Just so in literature, and in active participation in the conduct of public affairs, have truly devout men come into conflict with the prejudices of their brethren in the common faith. Profane literature as distinguished from sacred, however pure in its nature and beautiful in its conception,—however large its historical generalizations and correct its narratives,—has been often doubted of by honest and earnest persons, as prejudicial to the soul's health. "The Bible," say they truly, "is an inexhaustible mine of truth; it furnishes a glorious store of all that is sublime in conception and grand in action; and this is enough." We were once ourselves reproached by one of the best of men for troubling ourselves with the perusal of the newspapers. These things are of this world, and, according to the mistaken view we are describing, they are antagonistic to religion.

The active participation in the conduct of public affairs, engaging in the open discussion of public questions, and voting at the polls, whether at municipal or general elections, are supposed to be incompatible with practical godliness. Good people will sagely advise you to let these things alone, and let the world manage the world's affairs. Misapplying and perhaps misunderstanding the Scripture ejaculation, "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth," they would resign all municipal, and state, and other public affairs, into the hands of irreligious men. They seem to think the world is, in all senses of the term, irremediably bad, forgetful that there is an important sense in which the world, the production of the Almighty Maker, is, like all his works, and like himself, very good. The worldly spirit—the maxims and habits of the world considered as a great system under the dominion of Satan, its prince—is indeed *bad*; but the world, as the scene of our present activities and discipline