

fects the impressions of moral and religious truths, as agitated and muddy waters receive and reflect the image of the sky and of surrounding objects. The latter receives and reflects them as the image of the same objects are received and reflected by the clear surface of an unruffled lake. In the former case, all is broken, restless, and undefined; in the latter, there is a beautiful unity, calmness, and distinctness.

If habitual clearness of mind, then, be a blessing, and you will allow that it is a blessing of the first magnitude, as it is intimately connected with our improvement as intelligent and immortal beings, we ought to cultivate perfect sobriety, since, without the latter, we cannot expect to enjoy the former.

2. In the second place, intemperance injures the *pliancy* of the mind. By pliancy of mind, I understand the power of turning the attention easily and at once to any subject a person may wish to consider. This power is of great importance to us in the business of life in general, and particularly in the work of advancing our moral and intellectual improvement. We have so many things to attend to, that, if we would raise ourselves to the true dignity and enjoyment of our rational nature, we would require, if possible, not to lose a moment in urging our flagging or perverse powers. Now, whether has the sober or the intemperate man the advantage as to this power? Here, there can be no doubt. Who, that wishes to listen, with profit, to a discourse of any depth, would drug himself with intoxicating liquors before going to hear it? With such a preparation, he might go to laugh, or he might go to sleep, but he need not go to learn. It requires the whole frame to be as cool and calm as the most complete sobriety can make it, to prosecute any train of thought to a successful termination in all the most important questions connected with morality and religion. When do men learn to converse with God in meditative and discursive devotion, imbibing feelings of adoration, submission, and love, as, in the realized presence of that great Being, they contemplate the works of his hands, or the events of his providence, or explore the wonders of redemption? Is it when heated or stimulated by inebriating potions? Who so ignorant, as not to know that this would be most absurd? What christian has so little of the fear of God in him as not to feel that it would be impious? I have often heard of people taking ardent spirits to fit them for *executing* purposes, the execution of which required reckless boldness, but I never heard of any so stupid as to betake themselves to such aid, when called on to *think seriously* and *deeply* on any moral or religious subject.

It may, indeed, be objected here, that many persons of dissipated habits display often great readiness of mind. But, it may be asked, at *what* are these men ready? Is it at mastering or even apprehending any intricate or abstract truths connected with our highest and best interests? Present such to them even when they are regaling themselves, and in a state of agreeable excitement, and they are quite put out. They beg to consider of them. They will think of them afterwards. At present they have neither time, that is, ability, nor inclination to turn their thoughts to them. The readiness of such men is merely a mechanical sort of readiness in things to which they have been long accustomed. It is a readiness that may point a sarcasm, or give brilliancy to a jest, but it has no aptitude for forming or arranging serious and important thoughts. Intemperance never fails, when it has long prevailed, to fix the mind in one position. The person, who is its victim, feels at home only among one kind of thoughts, and these are quite congenial to his depraved habits. He is equally indisposed and unable to look in any other direction. What a contrast is there between such a mind and the mind of him, who, living soberly, obeys, at once and with de-