

engagements. He is urged to leave off all thought of his spiritual condition, and mix with the thoughtless crowd, whose amusements will soon bring him to himself again. If this advice is listened to, and this man yields, he may recover his former equanimity, but it is at a fearful sacrifice of principle and interest; and he will yet have to confess that miserable comforters are they all, and fool that he was to have listened to quacks and vain empiries.

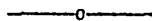
Again. If one is overtaken with pecuniary losses; if his fortunes, entrusted to the uncertain keeping of avaricious, dishonest, and embezzling men, or committed to the fluctuations of commerce, falls with a loud crash, the effect on the ruined man is often prostration of mind and utter despair; and the remedy is often a dishonest attempt to retain his fortune, by the adoption of means good or bad indiscriminately. Not able to dig, and to beg ashamed, the example of the unrighteous steward is pursued. It may succeed, but it is at one's own peril of losing the best inheritance, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Judas Iscariot sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, and afterwards, filled with remorse, put a period to his own life. He made haste to enrich himself by a horrible crime, which haunted him night and day, and plunged him in despair. And there have been others who sold their birthright, bartered away their eternal weal, for a pitiful addition to their estate, injuries to themselves, and sins against God, for which the vengeance of conscience would not suffer them to live.

If, moreover, the trial is occasioned by the desertion of those whom we esteemed our friends, or the treachery of those in whom we reposed our confidence, the first impulse of our minds is to resent the injury we have sustained. This is the remedy which is too frequently applied to the sore, and which, instead of mollifying, irritates it the more. Retaliation and resentment widen the breach, and admit into the camp a troop of revengeful, hateful, murderous thoughts, destroying the peace of the mind far more than thousands of mortal foes. Forgiveness of injuries, and a believing look to Jesus, the meek and lowly, will remove our trouble far more than cruel resentment.

Or, finally: if the sorrow be that occasioned by bereavement, how is it treated by the world? Every effort is made, (sometimes with indecent haste,) to bury the dead out of sight. There is a burden on the heart, no doubt, but it is an intolerable one. There are tears, no doubt, but they are selfish ones, and assumed sometimes for the sake of appearance. There are sable vestments, and every badge of mourning, loud lamentations and noisy requiems. But let every charitable construction be put upon these outward signs. Let us admit that they are all genuine bursts of sorrow. And what is the pre-

scription? One counsels active employment, that the mind may be diverted to some other object; and hence the busy wheels of life scarcely pause while the funeral knell of the dear departed is being tolled. Another counsels a change of residence, so that new scenes and new objects may soothe the wearied spirit—just as some African tribes do when one of their number dies and is buried—they desert the place for ever. A third takes up the old heathen philosophy of fate: and thus the poor wounded heart is stricken more and more. The world has nothing wherewith to bind up the broken-hearted, or meet the wants of suffering humanity.

How thankful ought we to be for this panacea for all sorrow! which converts the sorrows of life into nourishment for our spirits, and turns our mourning into joy. Let us then say in faith: "Our light afflictions, which are for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."



AN EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW VXL., 13, 20.

This passage has been the theme of endless controversy,—one vast body of the Christian world appealing to it in support of a fundamental doctrine of their system,—the infallibility of their visible head; another connecting a part of it with the view commonly termed Apostolical Succession; and yet another, through their dread of falling into either of the preceding errors, explaining the words of Christ away, and so interpreting them that they become almost meaningless. As a general rule, at the foundation of every doctrinal error which is extensively prevalent, there lies a truth,—perverted, marked, one-sided, indeed,—but still a truth. Now is it frequently the case, that the simple negation of an error involves the truth. Every river has two banks. Depress either, and the stream becomes a shallow and stagnant lake. Upon those banks, the verdure may be rank and pestilential. Poisonous shrubs may grow luxuriantly, deadly grass be exalted, and among the shades may lurk beasts of prey, and abominable creeping things. But all these are yet the signs of the exceeding fertility of the land,—more encouraging to the emigrant than if the banks were naked, leafless, wastes. To render them valuable it is not necessary to smite them with the curse of barrenness. What is wanted is cultivation, is the sowing of healthful seeds. Plant truth, and error will die. The very luxurians of error is the surest proof that, could the good seed be sown, it would bear an hundred fold. Doctrinal errors can never be simply eradicated without substituting anything in their stead. The soil of the heart must bear; and every part must be occupied,—if not with wheat, then with tares, which are a degenerate wheat.