

from the latter the very capacity of feeling for the ordinary suffering of those around him, as of being moved to exertion for their relief is taken away. In this, truly, are the words of scripture fulfilled. "He that hath, to him shall be given and he shall have abundance. But from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

But there is, we said in the second place a general lesson as to our use and improvement of all moral impressions. These are produced by moral and religious consideration, and they are designed to lead to moral and religious action. Be assured the laws of mind, we have been considering have respect to those as well as to other impressions. By repetition they become weaker. By acting on the impressions a habit of moral and religious action is formed. Just as in the case of the emotions of pity and sympathy, in the case of moral impressions, may the operation of these two laws be for good, or be disturbed and reversed and made for evil. By the same process may the mind become insensible to them—or a habit of determined wickedness and vice be formed. This however opens up a field of remark, best fitted perhaps for another place, and we would now only request you to take up the subject in this view yourselves. It is in this view that you will find it of the most unspeakable importance.

For the sake of illustration on this branch of the subject, I may however call your attention to one case. Suppose there had been here on Tuesday evening a person of intemperate habits. The statement made of the pernicious physical consequences of such habits, if heard for the first time, would be likely to make some impression. Suppose he should hear it again to night, would it make an equal impression? Suppose it were repeated to him night after night, would it not cease to make any impression at all? The same would be the fate of an impression made by an argument for temperance founded on prudence, as respects worldly comfort,—or on moral duty, as respects society, or on religious principle, as respects God. If a man acts on these impressions, acts instantly, acts honestly, acts energetically, well. No matter though they weaken. The habit of temperance is established, and the force of habit supplies the place of a powerful impression. But if he does not so act—nay, if on the contrary, he persists in his degrading habit of intemperance, at one and the same time, he is becoming in need of a stronger power to reclaim him, and the power for reclaiming him, without especial intervention which he has no right to expect, is becoming weaker. Judge then, how deplorable his condition—and how necessary it is in this or in any point of moral conduct, to act

promptly, on the moral convictions and impression which are given us.

I ought perhaps in conclusion, to apologize for the nature of the discourse I have given you, the subject of which was certainly chosen more with a view to my own convenience, than to your pleasure or profit. I did not feel prepared for lecturing here—at the same time I was anxious to appear among you were it only that I might mark my sympathy with the objects of your institution, my respect for the class, to which you belong, and my desire to aid or stimulate in any way of which I am capable your most honourable and meritorious exertions for your own improvement. I know well, how many temptations there are in this community, to all classes—to none more than to mechanics, to indulgence in mere sensual pleasure. And I rejoice in your cultivating those tastes and habits, which take you from and raise you above these. I wish you abundant success—and it will give me unfeigned satisfaction of heart if I can in any way contribute to it,

MEMOIR OF THE REV. ROBERT BLAIR.

From the Scottish Worthies.

MR. BLAIR.—Mr. Blair was born at Irvine in 1593. His father John Blair of Windyedge, was a younger brother of the ancient and honourable family of Blair of that ilk; his mother Beatrix Muir, was of the no less ancient and honorable family of Rowallan. His father died while he was young, and left his mother with six children, of whom Robert was the youngest. She continued nearly fifty years a widow, and lived till she was an hundred years old.

Mr. Robert entered into the college of Glasgow, about the year 1608, where he studied hard, and made great progress; but lest he should have been puffed up with his proficiency, as he himself observes, the Lord was pleased to visit him with a tertian fever, for full four months, to the great detriment of his studies.

Nothing remarkable occurred till the 20th year of his age. Having then finished his course of philosophy, under the discipline of his own brother, Mr. William Blair, who was afterwards minister at Dumbarton, he engaged for some time to be assistant to an aged schoolmaster at Glasgow, who had above 300 scholars under his instruction, the half of whom were committed to the charge of Mr. Blair. At this