

to which our fallen nature is not suited; and some of our noblest faculties would remain unexercised and unimproved. But it is not so. Under the discipline of Providence, the Christian is tutored in the school of adversity; and is rendered prudent by disappointment, humble by error, and magnanimous by endurance. Baffled, afflicted, persecuted, but rising superior to calamity, he unfolds his patience, his meekness, his resignation. Experiencing the hatred and contempt of those whom his heart desires to benefit, he learns the divine duty of forgiveness, and is taught to persevere in offices of kindness to the ungrateful. While engaged in these severe but exalted exercises, he becomes sensible of his own inability, and is forced to exclaim, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Thus, he is led to apply to Him who has said, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Weeping for his sins at the foot of the cross, he feels the virtue of humility taking deep root and growing in his soul; and the graces of faith, of hope, and of joy in the Saviour of sinners, rising to maturity.

In a word, the disciple of the Man of Sorrows is exposed to temptation, that he may guard against it; to difficulties, that he may overcome them; to dangers, that he may rise above them. He is taught, by experience, the unprofitableness of sin, and he hates it,—the emptiness of human honours, and he despises them,—the worthlessness of earthly pleasures, and he looks beyond them.

Contemplate the servant of Jesus, as, under the guidance of Heaven, he advances through his vale of tears, gradually throwing off the load of his sins,—mixing with the world, that he may learn to despise its follies,—gaining strength by moral discipline, and improving in virtues and graces at every step. In this character, you witness the highest glory of human nature in its state of sin and suffering on earth,—a being worthy of the approbation of angels. You see a soldier taught to fight the good fight of faith, and trained to victory amidst hardships, dangers, and death,—a pilgrim travelling through the wilderness, with steady eye fixed on the Holy Land, a pupil of God, instructed in the school of His providence,—an heir of immortality, rendered, by the discipline of his mortal state, meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

In this noble, this admirable being, you no longer recognize the fallen descendant of Adam, but the adopted child of God. Amazing change! How superior is this once degraded and wretched outcast to his former self! Clothed now in the armour of God, he goes forth 'conquering and to conquer,'—surrounded with danger, but trusting in an unseen arm,—struggling with sorrow, yet kissing the hand which inflicts the wound,—troubled on every side, but not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed,—eluding the snares of the world, and even successfully contending with 'principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.'

What striking instances of the efficacy of Christian principles, exercised amidst vicissitudes and suffering, do we discover in the Apostles of our Lord, who rejoiced when they were counted worthy of stripes for the sake of their beloved Master, in whom 'tribulation wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope;' and whom 'hope made not ashamed, because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts.' And, above all, what a dignified and lovely example of the same principle do we behold in Christ himself, whose whole life was an illustration of the power of Divine grace, in calling the noblest faculties into exercise, and thus rendering the character of man 'perfect through suffering;' and who could,—at the close of his earthly career, when He saw the time immediately at hand, so full of unutterable horrors, in which the whole world was to be combined against Him, in which His very disciples were basely to forsake their Master and allow him to tread the wine-press alone, and in which, during his agony, the blood-drops of anguish were to burst from His body,—who could, I say, even in this most appalling hour of the power of darkness, preserve unshaken His confidence in an unseen God, and feeling that he was not alone, for the Father was with Him, could in pious resignation exclaim, 'Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt!'

And these troubles of life prepare moral man for immortality. It is this which gives them their peculiar character, and stamps on them an inestimable value. Here is the true source of Christian consolation. What are a few fleeting years of imperfect enjoyment, or even of positive calamity, when, through that very condition, we shall be rendered meet to enter the kingdom of God, and dwell with Him for ever? Who would not go on a pilgrimage through this dark and howling wilderness, when he sees rising before him, in all their grandeur and beauty, the everlasting mansions of the promised land? Who would not cheerfully bear the light affliction of the present moment, when he knows that it is 'working out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.'

THE ESSENTIAL IN CHRISTIANITY.

The immediate purpose of Christianity is the awakening of a new life in the soul. It addresses itself not to the reason in the first instance, but to the conscience. Its first word is "repent." It seeks to change the sinner's heart—to make him feel his need of truth, and to turn him upon the cultivation of personal goodness. This constitutes its spiritual purpose, and the consequence of its action on the soul exhibits its spiritual efficacy. Nor on the sinner alone does it act with a Divine energy, working in silence, but mightily; like God's breath in creation, when the void became a universe of worlds; like God's will in providence, by which the life and order of the creation are secretly but continually maintained. On him who has been created anew it acts with its holy influence, to encourage every good purpose and sustain every right effort. In the time of our weakness it becomes our strength; in the hour of temptation, our saviour; in the day of sorrow, our comfort. It leads us from an earthly hell to a present heaven. It is a Divine power within us, renewing, sanctifying, consoling, filling us with peace and hope, with joy and love. This is its action as a spiritual instrument. And hence we say that a spiritual influence is necessarily included in any complete view of Christianity. Our Lord said this, and most careful was he to prevent any misapprehensions, like that to which the Jews were so prone, by which his religion should be thought to consist rather of doctrine and commandment than of life-giving force, or that allegiance to him consisted more in faith and outward obedience, than in the tone of sentiment which should pervade the whole character and determine the habitual experience of the soul. "The words that I speak unto you," cried he, as if to guard against this error, "they are spirit and they are life." Sadly have some of his followers—some at least who have borne his name—disguised this part of his teaching, strangely misconstruing and mischievously disfiguring the Gospel which he delivered. Let a man believe all the doctrines of religion, natural and revealed; let him observe all the external proprieties of life; let him even walk according to the rules of outward service which Christ prescribed, if this were possible without sympathy with Jesus in mind and heart; let him have faith to remove mountains or scale heaven, and obedience, such as meets the eye, enough to win the admiration of all beholders;—if he "have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If he have not recognized in Christianity a spiritual influence to which he has subjected his own soul, Jesus will not own him as a disciple. Christianity does not know him as one of the witnesses of its excellence. The spiritual influence of the Gospel is that which marks it as Divine, not less than its supernatural history, its positive truths, or its moral instruction. And if any should think that more clearly or more resolutely than either of these characteristics does its spiritual efficacy indicate its descent from above, we need not set ourselves against such a persuasion, since we remember that the Apostle spoke of Christ as "made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;" and thus proclaimed the spiritual agencies which are enshrined in him as the representative of his religion.

Yet are all these necessary to the completeness of Christianity,—its historical basis, its doctrinal exposition, its moral instruction, and its spiritual influence. They are all essential, and whoever denies either of these, essentially, if not fatally, injures the religion of Jesus Christ.

And now, perhaps, we might go on, and show according to this test who are and who are not Christians, measuring those about us by the standard which, I doubt not, is the only true standard by which they could be judged. But this, as I have said, we neither need nor desire to do. It is better,—nay, this is needful,—that we examine ourselves by this exhibition of Christianity, and see if we deserve the name which we have taken upon ourselves. Are we Christians according to this test? Our duty is plain. Christianity has its essentials. This we must not forget. We have seen what they are. To them let us cling through all the changes of life and amidst all the fluctuations of opinions. It has its Divine history,—that let us receive and study; its positive doctrines,—those let us ascertain and believe; its moral teaching,—that let us understand and practise; its spiritual influence,—that let us welcome and cherish. Other things may be important, but these are essential. Other things may pass away, but these must remain. Many questions of interest arise, on which men may form different judgments without serious detriment; but in regard to the historical, the doctrinal, the moral, and the spiritual characteristics of the religion of the New Testament, as constituting the undeniable evidences of its divinity, and the indestructible elements of its power, there should be but one concurrent voice rising from all Christendom—the

grateful confession of every mouth, the joyful assent of every heart. Here may we find the union of believers, there the strength and glory of the Church. Ecclesiastical organizations may perish, and prescriptive forms outlive their period of usefulness; but the essential in Christianity, that is immutable, the trust of man in all ages, the means of the world's redemption. Let us hold to the essential, and, whatever others may think or say of us, our inward experience will justify our immortal hope. Christ will own us as his disciples, and the Gospel have accomplished for us, and in us, its destined and blessed work.—Unitarian Tract.

GENERAL CONTRARIETY OF WAR TO REVEALED RELIGION.

We may safely presume warriors to understand the nature and principles of their own profession. Napoleon, in a temporary fit of candor, denounced war as "the trade of barbarians," and he excluded priests from his armies, because he held the maxim, *the worse the man, the better the soldier*. Wellington himself once declared in the House of Lords, *that men who have nice notions about religion, have no business to be soldiers*. Two British officers were once cashiered for refusing, on a foreign station, to join in what they conscientiously deemed idolatrous worship; and the king, in confirming the sentence, said, "If religious principles were allowed to be urged by individual officers as a plea for disobedience of orders, the discipline of the army would sustain an injury which might be dangerous to the state."

Well, then, does the venerable missionary Ward say, "Either our religion is a fable, or there are unanswerable arguments against war, and the profession of arms." With equal truth does Jeremy Taylor aver, "If men would obey Christ's doctrine, they would never war one against another; for, as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed to the meekness and gentleness of the Christian religion."

"War," says Robert Hall, "is the fruitful parent of crimes. It reverses all the rules of morality. It is nothing less than a temporary repeal of the principles of virtue. It is a system out of which almost all virtue is excluded, and in which nearly all the vices are included.—Whatever renders human nature amiable or respectable, whatever engages love or confidence, is sacrificed at its shrine. It removes, so far as an enemy is concerned, the basis of all society, of all civilization and virtue; for the basis of these is the good-will due to every individual of the species, as being a part of ourselves. The sword, and that alone, cuts assunder the bond of consanguinity which unites man to man. Hence the morality of peaceful times is directly opposite to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good; of the latter to inflict injuries. The former teaches men to love their enemies; the latter, to make themselves terrible even to strangers. The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interests by falsehood; the maxims of war applaud it when employed in the destruction of others."

Let us put war and Christianity side by side, and see how far they agree. Christianity saves men; war destroys them. Christianity elevates men; war debases and degrades them. Christianity purifies men; war corrupts and defiles them. Christianity blesses men; war curses them. God says, thou shalt not kill; war says, thou shalt kill. God says, blessed are the peace-makers; war says, blessed are war-makers. God says, love your enemies; war says, hate them. God says, forgive men their trespasses; war says, forgive them not.—God enjoins forgiveness, and forbids revenge; while war scorns the former, and commands the latter. God says, resist not evil; war says, you may and must resist evil. God says, if any man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also; war says, turn not the other cheek, but knock the smiter down. God says, bless those who curse you; bless and curse not; war says, curse those who curse you; curse, and bless not. God says, pray for those who despitefully use you; war says, pray against them and seek their destruction. God says, see that none render evil for evil unto any man; war says, be sure to render evil for evil unto all that injure you. God says, overcome evil with good; war says, overcome evil with evil. God says, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; war says, if you do supply your enemies with food and clothing, you shall be shot as a traitor. God says, do good unto all men; war says, do as much evil as you can to your enemies.—God says to all men, love one another; war says, hate and kill one another. God says, they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword; war says, they that take the sword, shall be saved by the sword. God says, blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord; war says, cursed is such a man, and blessed is he who trusteth in swords and guns. God says, beat your swords into ploughshares, your spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more; war says, make swords and spears still, and continue to learn war.

LETTER FROM THE LATE JOHN QUINCY ADAMS TO HIS SON ON THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

St. Petersburg, Sept., 1811.

MY DEAR SON,—In your letter of the 18th of January, to your mother, you mentioned that you read to your aunt a chapter in the Bible or a section of Doddridge's Annotations every evening. This information gave me real pleasure; for so great is my veneration for the Bible, and so strong my belief that, when duly read and meditated, it is of all books in the world that which contributes most to make men good, wise and happy, that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more steadily they pursue the practice of reading it throughout their lives, the more lively and confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens to their country, respectable members of society, and a real blessing to their parents.—But I hope you have now arrived at an age to understand that reading, even in the Bible, is a thing in itself neither good nor bad, but that all the good which can be drawn from it is by the use and improvement of what you have read, with the help of your own reflection.

Young people sometimes boast of how many books and how much they have read; when, instead of boasting, they ought to be ashamed of having wasted so much time to so little profit. I advise you, my son, in whatever you read, and most of all in reading the Bible, to remember that it is for the purpose of making you wiser and more virtuous. I have myself for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year. I have always endeavored to read it with the same spirit and temper of mind which I now recommend to you; this is, with the intention and desire that it may contribute to my advancement in wisdom and virtue.

My desire is indeed very imperfectly successful; for, like you, and like the Apostle Paul, "I find a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." But as I know that it is my nature to be imperfect, so I know that it is my duty to aim at perfection; and feeling and deploring my own frailties, I can only pray Almighty God for the aid of his Spirit to strengthen my good desires, and to subdue my propensities to evil; for it is from Him that every good and every perfect gift descends.

My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning, immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. But as other cares, duties, and occupations engage the remainder of it, I have perhaps never a sufficient portion of my time in meditation upon what I read. Even meditation itself is often fruitless, unless it has some special object in view; useful thoughts often arise in the mind, and pass away without being remembered or applied to any good purposes—like the seed scattered upon the surface of the ground, which the birds devour, or the winds blow away, or which rot without taking root, however good the soil may be upon which they are cast.

We are all, my dear George, unwilling to confess our own faults, even to ourselves, and when our own consciences are too honest to conceal them from us, our self-love is always busy, either in attempting to disguise them to us under false and delusive colors, or in seeking out excuses and apologies to reconcile them to our minds. Thus, although I am sensible that I have no derived from my assiduous perusal of the Bible, (and I might apply the same remark to almost everything else that I do,) all the benefit that I might and ought, I am as constantly endeavoring to persuade myself that it is not my own fault.—Sometimes I say to myself, I do not understand what I have read; I cannot help it; I did not not make my own understanding; there are many things in the Bible "hard to understand," as St. Peter expressly says of Paul's Epistles; some are hard in the Hebrew and some in the Greek—the original languages in which the Scriptures were written; some are harder still in the translations. I have been obliged to lead a wandering life about the world, and scarcely ever have at hand the books which might help me to surmount those difficulties.

Conscience sometimes puts the question—Whether my not understanding many passages is not owing to my want of attention in reading them. I must admit that it is; a full proof of which is, that every time I read the book through I understand some passages which I never understood before, and which I should have done, at a former reading, had it been effected with a sufficient degree of attention. Then in answer to myself, I say—It is true; but I cannot always command my own attention, and never can to the degree that I wish. My mind is oft-times so full of other things, absorbed in bodily pain, or engrossed in passion, or distracted by pleasure, or exhausted by dissipation, that I cannot give to proper daily employment the attention which I gladly would, and which is absolutely necessary to make it "fruitful of good works."

This acknowledgement of my weakness is