

principal inhabitant, so everything natural, to be profitably regarded, must be referred more or less to the moral condition of man in this world. We shall then find nature and religion helpful to each other. The religion of Christ is the only rectifier of that which is wrong in nature; and nature in her turn, by her analogies, strengthens man's faith in religion. Our Lord himself in his ministry taught much by natural similitudes, and has hereby left his servants a pattern that they should more largely follow. If the thorn, and the brier, and the various impediments to the earth's bringing forth the needful sustenance for man, have succeeded the curse, then it is but reasonable that our studies of these disorders of the original beauty of creation should be made with the aid of revelation. It is true that the gospel was not designed to teach us physical science, but it was intended to explain and rectify our condition, and to unfold to us the relation wherein we stand to God, both for time and eternity. But considering that the effects of this our state prevail all over nature, and will be the ultimate cause of the destruction of the world, it is quite clear that the Scriptures, though not teachers of science, must be the regulators of those who pursue it aright. "The wisdom of this world," arising out of the mere exercise of our rational faculties, is plainly asserted to be "foolishness with God."

"Truths that the learn'd pursue with eager thought,
Are not important always, as dear bought,
Proving at last, though not in pompous strains,
A childish waste of philosophic pains,
But truths, on which depend our main concern,
That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,
Shine by the side of every path we tread
With such a lustre, he that runs may read."

Without some allusions to the causes which involved the world in its present anomalies, all things around us are a mystery. Viewed through the gospel, they are seen to be parts of a peculiar whole, and the reason is explained; while both in the evils which attend our minds, and those which spread over the face of all things, we may perceive the same mixture of justice, mercy, and instruction. Not one of the minute consumers of our food which have been adverted to in these pages will, thus regarded, fail to teach us some lesson. The very atmosphere we breathe has been shown to be pregnant with the germs of these little pests; and yet tried as we are by them, they all perform some compensating function, which shows that in the very midst of judgments there is in heaven a remembrance of mercy. Is not this what revelation teaches us in a higher degree? And do we not see an analogy in the universal diffusion of these atoms, having life and giving birth to living things that prey on that which we regard most valuable, to the whole state of the moral atmosphere around us, whence sins of all kinds enter the heart upon the wings of every thought? Look again at the mistakes made respecting these pests. How continually have they been misconstrued; and let us remember how little man knows without the gospel, of the real character of the miseries which beset him in this life. It has been mentioned that certain cultivators of the soil have regarded some of their little foes as a favourable sign, accompanying a good yield of a valuable produce. How many are continually making similar errors with regard to the destroyers of that which is for their highest interest. Multitudes of people look upon certain irregularities in youth, for instance, as signs of what they call a good heart, a free disposition, a manly generous spirit; and believe them to be compatible with an abundant exhibition, in after life, of virtues of various kinds. But they forget that they are really destructive of all that fits the heart for the knowledge of God, and true preparation for his presence hereafter. Again, we have shown how constantly men have attributed to the destroyers of certain insects, the very evils caused by these little depredators to which they are the antidotes. This has been done in ignorance, and knowledge has shown the error. Now, how constantly do we find persons attributing to the very individuals who are aiding by their counsels, their prayers, and examples in warding off evils the actual evils themselves. All sorts of misrepresentations of Christian agency, every species of opprobrious epithet, all kinds of denunciations have been levelled against those whose occupation is in presenting the only genuine antagonism to the

spread of all that would overrun and destroy the best blessings of man. Blind prejudice has constantly accused such philanthropists of causing the maladies to which, under God, they are the only effectual check. Perhaps some persons who have indulged in such mistaken views, may learn from these observations to make more assiduous inquiries, and to seek for light and knowledge. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Many more instructive analogies might be adduced. We may recollect that not a single devastator of our bread-corn; not a single insect to which attention has been called; not a fungus that preys upon and accelerates the decay of the most useful plants, but in its nature has a tendency to remove, as well as to inflict, some evil. We have seen how it is their province to hasten decay, limit putrefaction, and thus to promote health. And ought we not to mark the effect of trials on the Christian? What is the tendency of everything which causes the man of the world to despair when overwhelmed by adversities? It is to purify the pious mind, to promote its health, to wean it from all that is prejudicial to its real welfare. So our afflictions "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Hereby Christian graces are called into exercise; patience has its perfect work; and it becomes actually good for us to have been afflicted. Is there not in these dealings of the supreme Governor of the universe with the natural and spiritual, the mark of the same hand? Surely there is; and faith may learn to see the same God in both. No doubt there are men of science who may reject such inferences, and declaim against appending such notions to the details of physical research; but the Christian sees otherwise, and receives from all the incidents he meets with a different impression.

In reviewing the various diseases to which our best cultivated plants are subject, we have seen that there is not a cause of any one of them to which there is not some antagonism provided. These considerations lead us, by analogy, to look for some such provision against the diseases of the heart. We find it in the revelation of mercy God has made to man. There is only this difference, that while the antidotes to the pests which injure the fruit of our labours in the soil are as numerous as the pests themselves, the great remedy for all our moral miseries is but one, but that one is capable of every conceivable modification to suit the necessities of every case, and the wants of every age of the world. We may also remark that the analogy goes further. While the provision of natural antidotes does not preclude the exercise of human art to lessen the numbers of the destroyers of our food, neither does the great provision of the gospel hinder the agency of man, and the diligent use of means. On the contrary it encourages them, provided only that they be in entire subserviency to the one great principle, and confidence in the efficacy thereof, under whatever form we present our modes of action to the objects we design to effect. Supreme confidence in the great remedy does not in any degree manifest itself by cessation from activity, but it rather signifies upon what grounds we may most effectually exert ourselves to do good. And in nothing does the wisdom of God in Christ more abundantly appear, than in accommodating this beautiful law of action not only to this or that particular society of men, but to the benefit of all mankind in the variety of climates, countries, and habits in which they may be found. If he had framed this method of counteracting evil and restoring the lost happiness of man for one nation alone, it would have been an evidence of a particular wisdom, but in the suitability of the gospel to ameliorate the present state, and secure the future bliss of his fallen creature in all lands where the gospel comes, he has exhibited an infinite and universal wisdom. Thus there is no true Christian who, by the exercise of the opportunities God has given him, may not help to bring in a revenue of glory to his Saviour, and a harvest of profit to his fellow-men.

The author, then, in conclusion, would commend these thoughts to the serious consideration of his readers. Long have great moral diseases consumed the best fruits of many portions of our land. We have thought too much of reaping the pro-