

cannot make wrong right, nor free its possessor from the obligations of the divine laws. On the contrary, the more numerous the talents bestowed, the greater the obligations of the receiver. He that possesses rare endowments of intellect and ample stores of knowledge, qualifying him to be a leader and teacher of men, has certainly weightier obligations to obey the laws of purity and rectitude than the ungifted and ignorant. And if such an one be false to his high trust, his rare gifts will not lighten, but deepen his condemnation. This homage and idolatry, bestowed on mere intellect without regard to the use made of it, corrupts and bewilders alike those who render it, and those who receive it. If "he builds too low who builds beneath the skies," he is false to the dignity of his nature who renders to talent what is due to goodness alone. Closely allied to this idolatry or intellect, and springing from the same root, is the prevailing idolatry of wealth, and the respect rendered to those who possess it. Wealth represents generally success, and men idolize success. It represents power, and men worship it as a form of power. This tendency is as widespread as it is pernicious. The intense desire for wealth is the fruitful source of many of the evils which afflict society. It may well be called "the root of all evil." It inspires a large portion of the falsehood and dishonesty that prevail among men. It petrifies the heart against the appeals of want and suffering; and bribes the conscience to forget the claims of charity and brotherhood. It is as inimical to the culture of the intellect, as it is to the improvement of the heart; and it perverts powers which if rightly exercised might have lifted us near to heaven, into instruments of mere sordid, selfish acquisition. It gilds over the most glaring faults of character, and the most reprehensible courses of conduct. It has inspired that wild spirit of speculation, that has given birth to the enormous dishonesties of many corporate bodies, and the fraudulent measures adopted in companies by men who would individually recoil from such expedients. And it erects a false standard of worth and respectability in every community; and makes poverty a greater fault than crime. That wealth is a potent means of usefulness, an instrument of civilization and comfort all must admit. But to make it the great object of life is to bind down the eagle powers of the soul to an object unworthy of our high birth right, as heirs of immortality. Assuredly there are grander objects of ambition, than wealth. The men of imperishable fame, as benefactors of humanity, are not the millionaires; but men "who knew no standard of superior worth, but wisdom, truth, and nobleness of soul." There are many other features of the period in which we live, that would repay our thoughtful study but time will not permit us to discuss them at present.