

in the great processes of decomposition and reproduction, by which vegetable and animal existence is perpetuated or maintained. Many insects,—the bee, the silk-worm, the gall-fly, the cochineal, and others,—work out beautiful fabrics or valuable productions for the comfort and health of man, which no manufacturing skill can imitate, or resources of chemical knowledge supply. Who does not see, in the abundance of these little artificers of good, a display of the divine beneficence? or, who that reflects on their own complete and wonderful organization, on the perfection of their anatomical structure, and on the amazing intricacy, combined with the remarkable littleness, of the animal mechanism of their frame, does not admire the omniscient wisdom, and the divine power and benevolence, displayed in peopling a tuft of grass, or the leaf of a shrub, with a whole community of animated beings, and investing them with capacities and practical energy subordinate to the welfare of the largest and the most important tenants of the earth? Yet insects, regarded individually, are so small, so frail, so ephemeral, as to be utterly incompetent to effect any noticeable result. Their influence arises—in the case especially of ants, wasps, bees, and other remarkable genera—from the combining of their numbers, and even, in some surprising particulars, from the adoption of minute social laws, and the principle of the division of labor. Insects afford a practical and truly wonderful illustration of the maxim, 'Union is strength.' If the sluggard may learn industry from the ant, and the philosopher take lessons from the bee, what hints of practical wisdom may not the quarrelsome, the unsocial, the vain, the unbearingly ambitious, and the divisive, learn from any one of a hundred species of the tiniest creatures that exist?

The displays of insect energy, connected with perseverance and instinctive skill, are so numerous and remarkable, that volumes have been written to describe them. A beeile, through steady continuation of unaided effort, will, in two days, bury beneath the soil, a substance of forty times its own weight and bulk. A single wasp will lay the foundation, sketch the outlines, and construct the elements, of an intricate habitation, exercising, at the same time, all the care, and performing all the offices, of the founder of a colony, and the parent of a summer's

offspring of thirty thousand of her species. The silk-worm spins an unbroken double thread of silk, nearly one thousand feet in length, and coils it with such compactness round its body as to render it a sheath impervious to damp and air, affording complete protection while the insect passes from the condition of a worm to its matured state of a winged moth. The Cayenne wasp manufactures a card so strong, so smooth, and of so uniform a texture, as to rival many a production of the human pasteboard-maker, and so curiously employs it as a covering for its nest, that rain-drops never rest upon its hard and polished surface. The bee continually, in the constructing of its comb, solves the difficult geometrical problem:—A quantity of wax being given, how shall there be constructed similar and equal cells, of the largest size in proportion to the bulk of matter employed, and so disposed as to occupy the least possible extent of space? Hundreds of instances like these might be produced, exhibiting the effects of industry or of instinctive wisdom,—all illustrating how 'very good' are the small, as well as the great, works of the Creator,—and all echoing to the irresolute, the slothful, or the self-conceited, these words of 'seasonable reproof and beneficent instruction: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard.' Many a lesson do insects teach, not merely of perseverance and prudent care, but of practical or even manufacturing skill. Were man less to consult his own ingenuity, than to explore or study, as exhibited to him in the works or creatures of God, the adaptation of animal mechanism, or adoption of instinctive means, to the attainment of definite ends, he would at once renounce his highest pretensions to the inventive wisdom, and blush at the boastings of his pride, and make not a few advances in the progress of useful improvement.

To look at the economy of insects, how should christians be encouraged to trust and to rejoice in the Lord's goodness and providential love? He sustains the meanest creature which exists, directing its instincts, and supplying its wants; and shall he not much more give all necessary blessings to beings for whose sakes he 'spared not, but delivered up, his only begotten Son?' Shall he not 'make all things work together for good' to redeemed souls,—to men 'bought with a price,'—to 'them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose?'