

which ought to be crippled. There are many who are equally unwilling to dismiss religious thoughts, and to own religious responsibilities. They want to wear the crown, but not to bear the cross. So long as religious ideas float dimly before their minds, and seem to present a distant and possible resource in future emergencies, they bid them welcome; but they refuse to give shape and definiteness to these ideas, and to induce them with a pervading and controlling power over their hearts and lives. They do not like the process of self-searching. They do not like to hear the admonishing voice in little things, and on the constantly recurring occasions of duty in daily life. They prefer a *sentimental* to a *practical* religion. Now one principal office of religious forms, when faithfully observed, is to invite to self-examination, to reveal deficiencies, and to prescribe an ever higher standard of devotion. Thus the father who leads the devotions of the family altar is held back from utter worldiness and levity. He cannot assume his priestly robes in the morning, and cast them off before mid-day, without his sins coming up in remembrance when he again appears before his God. In the service of the Lord's Supper, too, there is admonition as well as comfort. We there come into self-comparison with our Saviour. His character is a mirror for our own. We are made sensible of our frailties, follies and sins, and urged on to new diligence in duty and fervor of spirit, by every remembrance of Christ, by the voices of his cross, and the power of his death. But this is the only restraint which religious forms can impose,—the restraint of duty, the yoke of Christ. They create no new obligations, but only render us more sensible of those that already exist, and more