

mind with useful knowledge—here, by the most powerful of all instructors, facts; the evil or good effects of the pursuance of certain courses, is fully revealed; and we are encouraged thereby to choose that which is good, and warned to refuse that which is evil. Here is set before us the history of our fellow-men in all ages—their evil doings and their good doings; and the operations of Divine Providence, which is, by the thoughtful student of history, ever seen controlling the wrath of man; restraining him in his evil ways; and elucidating from the moral chaos, a something, like unto order and harmony.

Physiology, or the study of our physical system, is another of the useful branches of a finished education. The name affixed to the science is significant of a wide range of investigation; but, in its more limited reference to the animal body, we now allude to it. By this science, the structure of the body; the uses and operations of its various parts, and the tendencies of various ways of living on its health and comfort are brought clearly to light. This is eminently a practical science, and thereby highly important, as well from that reason as from its relation to our own physical system.

The body is an important part of our nature; it has important functions to discharge; upon its health very greatly depends the power and efficiency of the mind, and the continuation of our present existence—a matter of no slight importance, when we consider that our life in this world is preparative to the future state of being, and that here we are to be renewed and fitted for the realms of eternal purity and blessedness.

The science of chemistry is another of this class; it is practical, having to do with facts, and furnishing as its results that which is tangible, incontrovertible and useful. This science has made rapid progress of late years, and is fulfilling its part in adding to the comforts and enjoyments of civilized life—its adaptation to husbandry and agriculture is now fully acknowledged, and vast are the improvements which have been effected in preparing the ground for the reception of the seed, and thereby securing a plentiful harvest of that which is the support of man and beast.

Mathematics is worthy being noticed—that science which treats of quantities and numbers. It is likewise practical, although in many of its parts very abstruse.

Natural Philosophy is an extensive and most useful branch of study. By an acquaintance with it we become conversant with the secrets of nature, and are furnished with a vast amount of valuable and interesting knowledge, which prepares for a life of intelligence and usefulness.

Many others might be named, but these will suffice. You will perceive that all these have a powerful claim on our attention, from their great usefulness in preparing us to discharge aright the duties of life.

In the second class, the ornamental, may be enumerated—music, painting, drawing, sculpture, poetry, and botany. These are worthy of attention, but not to the same degree as the former class. The useful is always to be preferred to the merely ornamental; but when we can have both, the ornamental is desirable, as affording further play for our mental faculties—beguiling a leisure hour, or adding grace and dignity to our education.

In the third class may be mentioned, astronomy—that sublime, but abstruse and mysterious science, which treats of the heavenly bodies; their magnitudes, distances, motions, revolutions and eclipses. Here, amidst the endless variety of the objects, and the infinitude of the subject, the mind is “in wandering mazes lost.” This is the science which endeavors to examine the whole universe of Jehovah; to count the number of the stars; to estimate their distances; estimate their orbits, etc. Vain attempt,—“who can, by searching, find out God?” Who can discover and comprehend the works of God?

This science is, as yet, after the lapse of centuries, in its infancy, and will probably continue so till time be no more. This science will, no doubt, be to the glorified inhabitant of heaven a subject of unceasing contemplation and investigation. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the study of the empire of Jehovah, will be to the redeemed in heaven one cause of their happiness. For if God has said, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things,” may we not conclude that the survey and enjoyment

of these things, will constitute a great part of the happiness of the blessed in heaven.

This science, although it is, to a great extent, speculative, yet it deserves attention. The little insight we can get by it, of God's universe, is well calculated to arouse and exorcise the devotional feelings, by convincing us of our nothingness, and of Jehovah's greatness—by revealing the amazing love and condescension of God, who, although that he is so great, did visit us in our low estate, and exhibited to us, perhaps, the lowest of his intellectual creation, his mercy and love.

It has been well said, that “an undevout astronomer is mad.” How can it be otherwise, when “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork?”

“The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heaven, a shining frame,
Their Great Original proclaim.”

“When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers; the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?” These were the truly devotional sentiments of the pious David; and similar is the experience of all God's people, who, like him, look to God and to heaven through the starry firmament.

The only other subject which I shall notice here, is that of mental philosophy. That science which treats of the human mind, its faculties, capabilities, and operations. This is a deeply abstruse, yet interesting branch of study. Many and various are the theories which have been originated and exploded. The field is illimitable—the thirst here for speculation, may indeed be satisfied; and perhaps nothing better proves the insatiableness of the human mind after knowledge, than the history of this science, which, after the lapse of centuries, is just as well fitted for speculative investigation as ever it was. Yet, to those who have leisure, it is worthy of attention. Its study is an admirable exercise for the mental faculties, and much may be gained in this respect.

I have more fully hinted at these various branches of study comprised in the useful, ornamental, and speculative parts of a finished education—others might have been noticed, had it been necessary, and had our limits allowed it. So much for the education which has a peculiar reference to this world, and an indirect aspect to the future world:

But our attention must not be confined to the things of this lower sphere—we must ever remember that “we shall never die,” in the highest sense of the phrase. When we die, we die to live forever—all those studies to which we have alluded, should be therefore pursued with a reference to God's glory, and to our future happiness in heaven.

There are studies which directly refer to God and heaven. These should not be overlooked—I should rather say, these should have our first and highest regard and attention.

They may be briefly considered under these three heads—The knowledge of ourselves and our destiny; the knowledge of God and his purposes concerning us; and the application of this knowledge to the securing of our soul's salvation.

I will but very briefly allude to these three topics. 1st.—The knowledge of ourselves and of our destiny. What am I? Where am I? Where am I going? Infinitely momentous questions! Am I holy or sinful; happy or miserable? Is my Creator pleased with me or not? Am I answering the great end of my being? Where shall my soul exist when loosed from this world?

2nd.—The knowledge of God and his purposes concerning us. When we look to ourselves, all is darkness and dismay. God alone, has the words of eternal life. To Him we must go—and in His word there is fully revealed His being and perfections, and his purposes concerning us—which are mercy and love. In that word we are commanded to “acquaint ourselves with Him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto us.” And in order to this, there is all that information there furnished which is needed to lead us to the enjoyment of the favor of our Maker, which is better than life; and ultimately, to the possession of that glory, which in the heavens is laid up for the people of God.