

Steiner (L.H.)

By the Author

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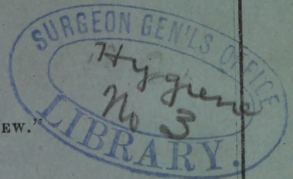
CONSIDERED FROM THE

CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT,

BY

LEWIS H. STEINER, A. M., M. D.

FROM THE "MERCERSBURG REVIEW."



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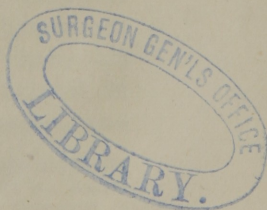
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THE HUMAN BODY AND DISEASE, CONSIDERED FROM THE  
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The Hebrew sage, after having mastered all the knowledge of his time, and learned that there was nothing new under the sun, commenced his sententious proverbs with the grand declaration, that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." How great the contrast between this devout declaration of a pious heart, and the godless assertions of those, who cultivate the paths of science without an humble recognition of their own nothingness as compared with the almighty Lord and Creator of heaven and earth! How barren and meaningless all the charms, which the mere worldling extracts from the fair fields of science, illumined by cold and cheerless light, as compared with those which meet the gaze of the Christian philosopher, whose vision has been cleared and brightened by his appropriation of the high and ennobling doctrines of his faith! The same objects—but how different the effects produced on the minds and souls of the two observers! One views them as the productions of an inconceivable Omnipotence, preserved by the agency of laws, which an incomprehensible Omnipresence is ever directing and upholding, and which are the wondrous manifestations of a mighty Omniscience. He is a stranger in a strange land. However much science may aid him to understand the phenomenal scenes which bewilder with their beauty and charm his senses—however much he may endeavor to exhibit, in words, the living attractions which all these possess, and

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\* *What Christianity teaches respecting the Body.* A sermon preached in the Parish Church, Crathie, 11th October, 1857. By Robert Lee, D. D. Regius Professor of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities in the University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh: Cowan & Co., 1857. pp. 31.

*God in Disease, or the Manifestations of Design in Morbid Phenomena.* By James F. Duncan, M. D., Physician to Sir P. Dunn's Hospital, Dublin. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1852. pp. 232.

with the aid of "the articulate voice of poetry," so well styled "the nearest approach of the human faculties to raptures more than human," his efforts only show too plainly, that he has failed to catch the significance of nature—he has failed to recognize the life which gives it all its meaning, and has contented himself with stringing dead bones artistically together; satisfied with a contemplation of the anatomy of nature, has overlooked the active current of vitality, which a knowledge of its physiology would teach him is wisely permeating every portion of creation.

The other, although not possessed of a tithe of the scientific knowledge which the mere savan claims, yet feels that all nature, whether it be inanimate or animate, the insensate clod and the bright flower, the rugged mountain and the goat browsing on the crags, the dark storm-cloud, with lurid flashes of lightning, and the drapery of Tyrian purple, of gold and splendent silver which bedeck the western horizon as the sun slowly sinks from our gaze, the worm that crawls and the being of beauty, whose flashing eye, sweet smiles and gentle manners collect tributes from scores of devoted admirers—all these are but the works of a Father's hand. Filial affection for that Father in heaven, invests all His works with an interest that makes them dear to His child, who now feels that *these* are his birthright, that the earth on which he lives, with its phenomena, its secret and open wonders, was made for him, and that the same Almighty power that brought it into being, is exercising over it, through every second of its existence, a watchful care and supervision. For such an one, no cloud obscures his vision. The whole heavens are irradiant with light, that penetrates caverns, otherwise dark, illumines deep vallies, and bedecks with rainbow tints the rugged sides of the mountain. He has learned, that "wisdom is the principal thing," and that he is truly wise who fears God and keeps his commandments.

This contrast has been marked from the earliest beginnings of mere human science! \* Satisfied with a study of "*the things that are seen,*" those which are unseen and eter-

nal in their very nature, were neglected, or rushing to the other extreme, with a kindred blindness, and despising the material things of this world, a special devotion to matters pertaining to the soul and eternity was affected. In this way, two schools of philosophers, and two schools of religionists arose, and have perpetuated themselves even down to our time, despite the instructions which the revealed Word and the Church have imparted to mankind. The connecting link between the two is beyond the reach of the mere man of the world, and he will be found either deifying the material creation and worshipping its laws, or forming to himself some ideal which will claim his constant devotion. The vibration is between the two extremes, either materialism or spiritualism—the former doing violence to the spirit, and the latter, to the matter which it vivifies and quickens into life.

In the religion of the ancients, both extremes may be found. One sect would worship material substances; the other, believing God to be an eternal essence, rejected all material representations, and hoped by means of a blind faith to be brought into the presence of Him whom no man had ever seen. One rejected the spirit; the other rejected the only mode through which we could see clearly the power and efficacy of that spirit, and recognize it by our earthly senses. Need we say that the first was *wrong, radically wrong*. Such an assertion will meet an approval from every one in this Christian nation; but we must go farther, and learn to know that the second was also wrong, and in many points fully as erroneous as the first. To the mortal being is denied any but a vague conception of the spiritual, unless he can rise to it from something material which it has once enlivened, and thus the material becomes as it were the first stepping stone to a knowledge of the spiritual. When the latter, however, is once gained, then it brings all aid to the more perfect understanding of the former, and the two are thus found essential to each other. We rise in the consideration of nature's phenomena to such inductions as set forth its laws, and these, if correct, make

those more intelligible and clear to the human mind. They are classified and arranged, made to assume some real relation to the general ideas which they embody in a sensuous form, and mere human knowledge in this way becomes human wisdom.

It is true, that when we endeavor to form an idea of the existence of God, confining ourselves strictly to the region of Natural Theology, we find that all our deductions from effect to cause never lead to such an idea. But still, all over the face of our globe; wherever man lives and thinks, there is a recognition of the necessity of such an existence, of the existence of an Eternal Creator of all things, by whose fiat the heavens and the earth were made. And this idea comes not to us by reason, but exists in our minds, deeply and immovably fixed, as a part of their own original structure. It is one of those innate ideas which education can no more give than it can totally eradicate. As Brahma, Jupiter, Zeus, Gitche-Manito, or Jehovah, it is in every breast. The soul falls down and worships, from the very necessity of its existence, something higher, holier and greater than itself. This worship may blindly endeavor to exhibit to the senses, a representation of the form its imagination or fancy has declared the Supreme Being should possess, and, when left to itself, the representation will remain mean, low and material—yet the recognition of the spiritual is necessary. But with the pagan, all this is blind. He feels that his material representations are, after all that he may do to embellish them, but inanimate or soulless structures, which are infinitely inferior in perfection to his own human body. Driven almost to despair, he pictures ever to his mind God as a great Creator and a great Destroyer—One in whose presence he can never come with an assurance that He will graciously listen to his complaints, or extend a father's kindly hand. Feeling that the highest object on earth he can respect is his fellow-man, he invests his God with a human form, and by exalting the faculties of the human being to a species of perfection, falls down and worships heroes and demi-gods. This is the



highest form that worship can assume with the non-Christian soul.

With the Christian, however, this idea assumes a clearness that makes it satisfy the wants of the soul, and yet is divested of that which is terrifying or appalling. He learns to know the Almighty Maker, of whom an innate idea exists in his mind, through His Son, who assumed a *human* form, took upon Himself the nature of man, and then, as *the perfect man*, sympathizing with all human griefs and woes, feeling the tender ties which bind the son to the mother's heart, enduring contumely and scorn—living, breathing, suffering and enduring as all men must do, finally, after a most unjust persecution and series of cruel sufferings, met an ignominious death upon the cross. This simple tale told of a man opens up the sympathies of the human soul. It feels that, while all this has occurred with a man, yet there must have been conjoined with *His* human nature something greater than human nature, under any other circumstances, could have exhibited. Now the God-like shows itself. At length man can learn to know his God. And when faith seizes hold of the idea of the incarnation, sympathies are converted into adoration, love and worship become so intermingled that they are inseparable. God is recognized as *our* Father, because His well-beloved Son had assumed in the course of time the form and attributes of a brother, and we hail him as our elder brother for all eternity. Then, by the aid of faith and the light which the Holy Spirit brings to us, we learn to appreciate still more that material form, that personality which first attracted our attention, and whose charms wooed us to a knowledge of the holy and the divine. Thus the Christian can sing with one of his own poets—

“Till God in *human flesh* I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just and sacred Three,  
Are terrors to my mind.”

If, then, the humanity of Christ proves attractive to the wandering soul, and from this it rises to higher and fuller conceptions of the nature of the Trinity, it must needs be

that the human form, which was thus sanctified by being made the dwelling place of God, is entitled to our respect—that no true Christian can treat his body as an encumbrance to his soul, which it were well to be rid of, without doing injury to one portion of his human nature. It follows, that that which Christ thought it not unworthy Him to assume, should not be a hindrance to the Christian's soul on earth, but should be made to co-operate in the great end and aim of life, viz: the glorifying of God.

We propose directing attention to the teachings of Christianity as to the human body and its diseases. The subject is one which an enlightened Christian mind will find is not sufficiently understood, and that some of our Churches have so far failed to appreciate it, that a disrespect of the wants of the body has been considered tantamount to a high exaltation of spiritual life, while others have looked upon every disease as an indication of a direct visitation of God for some violation of His holy law. We trust that both these views will be seen to be erroneous before the subject is dismissed.

That the soul is clogged, in its aspirations after a holier state of being, by the wants of the body, seems to be an error woven into the very substance of the religion of the day. From the pulpit we are taught that the body must be despised, that the day of death will be a day of joy simply because we shall be freed from pain and sickness in losing our bodies, and that the Christian becomes more and more fitted for heaven, in proportion as he spurns those nice attentions to his body, which physiology teaches him are requisite to keep it in perfect condition. Still further, the religious devotee, relying upon works, and not upon faith, which shows itself *through* works, bewilders himself into the notion that the more privations undergone on earth, the more pain and suffering experienced, the more sure his passage from a world of trouble to one of bliss. As the Hindoo devotee, he assumes that by forcing his body into unnatural positions and retaining it in such for months and years, by lacerating his body with knives and

burning it with fire, by undertaking long and painful pilgrimages to the shrine of Juggernaut, he will purify his soul from the pollution of this world, and fit it for a blissful hereafter. Should death befall him on his toilsome pilgrimage (and millions have thus perished), it is hailed as a happy boon. Or if, perchance, the Car of Juggernaut roll its huge weight along, joyously he throws himself under its wheels, and, by a horrid end, hopes to gain celestial glory. As the widow, the funeral pyre of the dead husband is mounted, and, amid the blaze of the burning wood, life is lost with the hope of endless joy to the spirit. Again, as the crusader, under the maddening watch-cry of "God and my Lady," unknown lands are crossed, perils encountered which appal our minds even at their very recital, and death is hailed with joy as the brave man's sure admission into the courts of heaven. Infatuated with the same blind zeal, the ascetic undergoes days and nights of continuous fasting, exposes his body to stripes, deprives it of the comforts which sound health requires, and thus endeavors to purify his soul from contamination with the world.

We do not desire to overlook the real bravery which underlies all these self-inflicted tortures, nor would we in any way contribute to a cowardly fear of bodily suffering that would prevent men from encountering any peril that the cause of religion or humanity should throw in their way. Rather would we employ the words of Kingsley,\* and sound them aloud even in trumpet tones, that "he who willingly throws away his life for the cause of mankind, which is the cause of God, the Father of mankind, shall save it, and be rewarded a hundred-fold. He who renders up his animal life as a worthless thing, in the cause of duty, commits his real and human life, his very soul and self, into the hands of a just and merciful Father, who has promised to leave no good deed unrewarded." It is not a question whether a man should encounter peril, when duty calls him to the task. The question is, should he seek to mortify his body, when no such call is made, with the vain hope of thereby doing good to his soul.

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\* Lectures on Alexandria.

1. The human body must be respected by us, because it was selected, of all created forms, as the particular one which the divine nature entered into and assumed. Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, “begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God—of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made *man*.” Or, as we find the same idea expressed in the glorious old Te-Deum: Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum. And what is included in the idea of man? Dare we think of it as a mere spirit unclothed with material form? Can we picture to ourselves the loved ones who are no longer with us on earth, in our waking visions or nightly dreams, in any other way but as occupying *human* bodies? Does the mother, whose babe has been removed from the troubles of a sinful world, and carried by the loving arms of angels to that home where her hopes and faith induce her to believe she will again meet her never more to be separated—does she invest her with any other but the loved form? Does the husband picture to himself, as he notes the passage of the weary hours, brooding in melancholy sadness over the object of his heart’s inmost affection, lost now to him for this life—in any other but that quiet, matronly form and loving face which had become a part of himself? No! No!! We all firmly hope—for we have all had our heart-strings vibrating in unison with sadness at the removal from our sides of some quiet, gentle spirit, or some great, loving soul—to meet those, who have left us on earth, where partings shall be no more, and where mutual recognitions shall be granted us.

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Soul and body are necessary to the idea of humanity, and the fallen condition equally affects both. While the one, left to a state of nature, is directing her way towards the gates of perdition, the sen-

tence passed on the other was, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." The object of the incarnation was to sanctify both soul and body; hence we say that Christ assumed the human body when he became man. In this view, our bodies command higher respect than when viewed as mere organisms, involving both mechanical and vital operations. A species of awe fills one's soul as he thinks that the same form, which he wears, was once worn by the Deity himself, and that thus we have become, potentially, of the same family, and, if we only will, that our elder brother will prepare for us a mansion at his Father's.

The intimate relation of Christ to his Church is frequently likened to that of the soul with the body—"for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." And St. Paul distinctly sets forth his belief in the sanctification of this body when, writing to the Thessalonians, he prays that "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and *body*, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Thess., v. 23.

2. We are specially enjoined, "by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." This passage, together with another from the Epistle to the Corinthians—"glorify God in your body," has doubtless been warped from its true meaning by those who believe in the value and efficacy of self-inflicted tortures. "The glorifying of God" and "the living sacrifice" are not accomplished by such means, but by a consecration of our bodies to the good, and an avoidance of those sins which the allurements of the world, the flesh and the devil would lead us to commit. The sacrifice is not to be a dead, but a living sacrifice, which can alone be acceptable unto God. Hence, if we maim our bodies, injure any of our limbs, or in any way do them harm, we prevent to that extent the presentation of this sacrifice. The student who, from mistaken notions of zeal in his calling, deprives nature of her *proper* amount

of rest, the cloistered devotee who brings on disease and suffering by a neglect of the ordinary rules of health—the minister who permits *animal excitement* so far to influence him in his calling as to transcend the rules of health ; these are all not presenting their bodies as living sacrifices, but are acting criminally in inducing disease by setting at defiance known laws, and thus unfitting themselves for carrying out the duties which Providence has assigned them.

3. The body is called “the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” In one point of view, this passage of Holy Writ is calculated to produce great awe to the Christian’s mind, for it is especially directed to him. That the Third Person of the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, should deign to employ our frail and sinful bodies as a place in which He should dwell, is so wonderful an act of condescension, and yet involves such terrible responsibility, that one may well tremble lest he fail to keep that temple pure and free from contamination with the gross lusts of the flesh. But then the comforting thought comes to the mind, that He is “the Lord, the Giver of life,” and it is through His agency we are enabled so to conduct ourselves, as members of Christ’s mystical body, that His Father shall be our Father, and that He is the comforter that Christ sent from heaven for the suffering and weak members of His Church on earth. It is said that the father of Origen, kissed reverently his infant son when sleeping, as though he felt the necessity of paying homage to the human personality which was enclosed in his little form. But when we think of the indwelling of the God-head in the baptized child, that it has been accepted by Christ, through His minister, as a member of His own body, dare we look upon it, however humble its position may be in life, as any thing but one of the noblest and grandest things on the earth ? Laws of human origin give man the right of resenting any bodily injury, even to the taking of life of the offending party.

We can see how these are based upon right, as the nature of such an injury involves an insult offered to a temple of the most High—a consecrated place, wherein God Himself delights to dwell. Not wishing to justify the rash use of such a law, yet it is clear to our minds, that one of the grossest insults that man can offer to his fellow-man, is that which involves ignominious treatment of his body. That returning evil for evil is not laid down in the code of morals which flows from the relation of the Christian to the Saviour, is manifest from Christ's own words, that good should be returned for evil, and that when smitten on one cheek the other should rather be turned to the smiter than retaliation should be employed, and also, from His own example, during the whole train of events which filled the days of His trial, sufferings and death.

If the body be the temple of the Holy Ghost, does not this fact tend to ameliorate the condition of the poor, the enslaved and the oppressed? The relations which existed at the time of Christ were not destroyed in order to allow the reception of the new Dispensation. A life was given to the world which was intended to penetrate all classes and conditions of society. No laws or commands were laid down declaring one form or other of government the correct one, but the disciples were taught to reverence Cæsar, to respect the powers that be, with the certain result that all forms of oppression would *lose* their oppressive character under the genial influence of Christianity, and would exist then but as forms. It is well to keep this in mind, when a willful and rebellious spirit urges us on to an overthrow of authority. It is better to bear "hoping all things," than to act on the impulses of our own proud wills and cast off proper allegiance. He that hath Christ in him, and recognizes the bodies of his brethren as being the temples of the Holy Ghost, will treat them with Christian kindness, whether they be known as subjects, slaves or brethren; and he that hath not this life in him, will maltreat even his equals in the world's scale of rank. The former has the highest authority and influence to induce him to be kind and considerate, the lat-

ter has nothing but his reputation in the world to regulate his conduct. It is easy to see which one can be trusted—on which we can rely in the time of necessity.

4. The next consideration that we shall adduce as demanding from us respect for the human body, is the fact that there will be a *Resurrection of the Body*. The doctrine of the resurrection, as set forth by Paul, is based upon the fact of the resurrection of the Saviour, and it is explicitly stated, that “if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.” Upon the fact that the God-man had overcome the power of death, and had set aside the punishment which sin had attached to the human race, the doctrine can rest securely. The soul and body shall be reunited—the latter no longer a fleshly body, but a spiritual body, freed from all the imperfections inherent to animal life here, and invested with glorious attributes. Here is not the place to dwell upon the proof that such a resurrection of the body must take place. We receive it, as all the other articles of the Apostles’ Creed, on faith—an object, not of argumentation, but of belief—a truth which flows necessarily from one’s belief in the Humanity of Christ, and is inseparably connected with the same.

In *these* bodies shall we be assembled together at the resurrection-morn. The thought is overpowering! We eat and drink, and in a thousand ways indulge in lawful and unlawful pleasures, sacrifice comfort and ease for the gratification of the “lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life,” make our vital functions contend with countless difficulties which a decent respect to them should induce us to avoid, and thus make our animal life altogether abnormal and artificial, instead of normal and natural. All this is done in a body, which is not destined, in its true nature, to perish, but which shall be raised from the dead, and live throughout the countless ages of eternity. Let us be understood. We do not wish to convey the idea that the fleshly particles, which Chemistry informs us make up the structure of our organisms, should be raised up from the grave exactly as they were at the moment of



death, invested with the law of decay and constant change. It would be degrading to the idea of the resurrection to suppose, that the albumen, fibrin, nervous and osseous structures, the blood and the changing secretions and excretions should necessarily exist in the body at the time of the occurrence of this grand phenomenon, as they now appear. But whatever now constitutes human identity, whatever causes us to remain the same amid the constantly recurring changes which perishable matter undergo, *this* will rise and form the spiritual body, which shall thenceforward live in happiness or perdition. What it may be, is a mystery, and cannot be fathomed by human knowledge.

The separation of the vital spark from the body, leaving it for the moment with its natural expression—that by which we knew it best, is not eternal. No! We know that all is not lost, although we may sympathise with the wondrous truths embodied in those beautiful lines of the poet :

“ He who hath bent him o’er the dead,  
 Ere the first day of death has fled,  
 The first dark day of nothingness,  
 The last of danger and distress,  
 (Before decay’s effacing fingers  
 Have swept the lines where beauty lingers),  
 And mark’d the mild angelic air,  
 The rapture of repose that’s there,  
 The fix’d yet tender traits that streak  
 The languor of the placid cheek,  
 And—but for that sad, shrouded eye,  
 That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,  
 And but for that chill, changeless brow,  
 Where cold obstruction’s apathy  
 Appals the gazing mourner’s heart,  
 As if to him it could impart  
 The doom he dreads yet dwells upon;  
 Yes, but for these, and these alone,  
 Some moments—aye, one treacherous hour,  
 He still might doubt the tyrant’s power;  
 So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,  
 The first, last look by death revealed. ”

Paul expresses the idea of the resurrection and the Christian’s hope hereafter, when he says, that “ we that are in

this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." With such a grand birthright, the human body demands our respect. We dare not treat it as the beast that perisheth. There is an eternal future for it. The microcosm that is before us is destined to survive all the changes which seem now so wholly to control it. Gaze at it in whatever form we please—as innocent childhood, with its lively prattle about joys and pleasures that we consider trifling and of no importance; as man, exulting in his strength and fearlessly compelling nature's agency to the performance of his own behests; as meek, lovely woman, going about and doing good, bringing peace and content to the troubled soul, comfort and relief to the suffering body; as weak, tottering age, "the poor, infirm, weak and despised old man," dependent, even as in childhood's days, upon the ministrations of others, hoping for the hour when his release from sufferings shall be announced; in health or in sickness; doing good to his fellow-men or violating laws both human and divine, the human body must be treated with respect, punished or rewarded in accordance with just laws; for its existence is not for the moment, but for the ages which in a ceaseless succession shall follow each other, with an unerring course and precision, throughout an immeasurable and inconceivable eternity.

All that we have heretofore said involves necessarily the duty of guarding with great care the health of the body. Indeed, in one point of view, this is as necessary as the health of the soul. The two are singularly connected together. The happy contented soul acts upon the material frame which it inhabits, and stamps its mark on the countenance, while the filthy and degraded body reacts upon the soul, and imparts to it a low and grovelling tendency. Even a superficial glance at this relation of soul to body, will justify us in asserting as another argument obtained from the Christian stand-point:

5. That *physical* health is more or less necessary to the

perfect health of the soul of man, and that his spiritual faculties thrive *best* when his body is not exposed to pinching penury and want. Says Dr. Lee, to whose sermon on this subject we acknowledge ourselves largely indebted, "certain states of the body undeniably occasion, irritate and inflame those appetites and inclinations, which it is one great end of Christianity to repress or regulate. It is known how much our blessed Saviour insists upon meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, patience and the like. \* \* \* But these graces, which are so difficult in even the best condition of our corrupt nature, are rendered almost impossible by certain states of the nervous system. Sad experience has caused some to know, how dire a struggle the spirit is sometimes called to maintain against the flesh; and that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a dyspeptic person to be gentle, meek, patient, long-suffering."

The laws of hygiene, when neglected, revenge themselves not only on the body, but on the mind and soul. Much of the brooding melancholy, the fashionable disease, "Vapors" or "Blues," the sickly lackadaisical sentimentality of very young and very silly lads and lassies, the petulant and irritable tempers of men and women—much of all this is the direct consequence of an open violation of the laws of health. The body has revenged itself on the mind and the soul. If these will not respect the laws of its being, it will overthrow their equilibrium, and leave them to torments akin to those it is suffering. And the effect pervades every act they are called upon to perform, whether religious or secular. The clergyman who relies upon extempore inspiration in the delivery of his sermon, or who eschews liturgical forms for public worship, and prides himself upon the offering up of impressive prayers, instead of acting as the mouth-piece for his people in their confessions, thanksgivings, petitions and intercessions, should, above all others, feel himself bound to pay the most rigid attention to the laws of health, lest a morbid condition of body should react on his mind, and his people be made to suffer, with

fatigue and weariness of spirit, on account of his bodily infirmities. Many a sermon, breathing the threatenings of the law instead of the gentle pleadings of the gospel, has been occasioned by a fit of indigestion, which soured the speaker at the whole world around him. Many a tirade of condemnation of his fellow-Christians has been the result of a surfeit at the table. The law of charity has been violated over and over again by those, whose Christian character would have never justified such a violation, had their whole being not been shaken, by an open and senseless following of habits which have overthrown their bodily health.

There was a deal of good philosophy in the words which Shakspeare puts in Cæsar's mouth, when he wishes to have himself surrounded with

“Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.”

The loss of rest, in consequence of the excesses of the day, also acts powerfully on the spirits of man, and his religious experience is often shaded by dark, lowering clouds, produced from such causes. We have not the space, but the subject is worth examination, as to the fanatical sects and orders which have really originated from diseased bodies acting on the minds of their originators. It would be curious to investigate the condition of the digestive organs of those, who, with childish fretfulness, have thrown aside all Church authority, and have rushed, with an insane zeal, into the extravagances to which an unbridled private judgment has led them. How much that the world has been accustomed to consider as the result of sound conviction and unwavering assurance, would soon reveal itself as the silly whim of a morbid constitution?

Indeed, nothing can be more certain than, that many a Christian is heaping up for himself life-long pain and sorrow by his carelessness as to the wants of the body; and while dark, brooding clouds are hanging over his soul, preventing those outshinings of happiness and content which are so peculiarly his right, he is but reaping the inevitable results of a violation of nature's laws. The *sana mens in corpore sano* was the object of the prayer of the heathen

writer, and it is a crying shame that the Christian should not know that this *sana mens* can never be fully attained under any other condition. The wild dreams of the ascetic, and his cruel self-torturings, together with the inhuman shouts and ear-piercing shrieks of the fanatic, are all indications of morbid mental faculties, too often occasioned by violations of the laws that the God of nature had ordained as essential to the normal state of their bodies.

A healthy condition of the body enables us the better to perform the duties which are incumbent on us, during our residence on earth. These fall naturally under the three heads of duty to God, to fellow-man and to self. A slight glance at the relation a healthy body bears towards the performance of these duties, is all that can be allowed us at present.

We have already shown how man's religious condition may be affected by a morbid condition of the body, and it is easy to perceive, that all this must seriously affect his relations to the Deity. The command to love the Lord, involves not only all the heart and soul, but also all "our might." What if we have made our might weakness by our own misconduct or carelessness, is not this a sin against the command? We must "glorify God in our body," and this is not and cannot be done, if we pursue a course of conduct which will deprive the body of any of its strength, or impair the vigor of any of the vital functions.

Our relations to our fellow-men are briefly set forth in the Saviour's second commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love—what is not embraced in that comprehensive word! The greatest of all the Christian graces, it blooms in the barren plains and all around becomes irradiant with its rainbow hues, and is redolent with the perfume of happiness and holy content! It dwells in the humble cot, and poverty is no longer a privation and hardship, but the bright beams of another world gild all that is rude and misshapen with the gold of heaven. It brings relief to the sorrowing and heart-sticken, whispers consolation in the mourner's ear, seeks the poor, the blind,

the halt, and cheers them up amid life's devious paths, tends by the bedside of the dying, and smooths the pillow on which the head of the sufferer, in the anguish of death, is resting; braves the dangers of the battle-field to carry relief to the wounded soldier, delights in divesting plagues and fevers of their terrors, and smiles even when death presents his gloomiest terrors. It has its true resting-place alone in the Christian's heart—there it lives and flourishes, because the love of Christ only can woo it fully forth in man's nature. If it go forth and seek one spirit as its peculiar object, and the strong and active unites itself with the tender and gentle, the twain grow together as one, and through all time and eternity, remain united with the blessing of God resting upon them. But, that this love should thus flourish and bear fruit, it is necessary that the body, the instrument through which it acts, should be in perfect condition, able to endure all things in its gentle ministrations, and sufficient for the work which Providence furnishes it.

How happily was the idea of strength and virtue expressed by one word in the Latin! And love without strength of body, is love with its wings clipped. No longer either able to fly or even to walk, it is comparatively impotent as regards the performance of good to its fellow-men. We are not allowed to take our lives into our own hands unnecessarily, because they are God's, and we have our duties to our fellow-men continually pressing upon us. If we take not every care in the preservation of our health, we shall not be able to exhibit that indication of "pure religion and undefiled," which James says consists in visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction.

But our duties to ourselves also require that we should cultivate high health. One of the first commands to fallen man was, that, in the sweat of his face, he should eat bread. To labor so long as we remain on earth is our duty—our pleasure, we might say; for labor gives zest to life. The truly miserable man, is he, who has no employment for his mental or bodily faculties, who sighs in the morn-

ing for the arrival of the evening, and at nightfall prays that the light may speedily return. With him, who labors either mentally or bodily, the day is *never* too long. Conscientiously endeavoring to perform his duties, he feels that he is obeying God's own command, and this lightens his toil.

We have no right to speak of trusting in Providence, while we reject the means he places at our disposal for the satisfaction of all our needs. It is, in fact, a species of irreverence which usage has permitted. Far more reverent was the command of Cromwell: "Put trust in God and keep your powder dry," than the folding of hands and pretended resignation to the events of the day, without an effort, fairly and honestly made, to force them to act for our own benefit. Dr. Lee, on this subject, well says: "Patience, which is perhaps the greatest, is also the last of the virtues, the sheet-anchor of the soul, not to be had recourse to till a tempest has fallen upon us out of heaven, and we are in extremity. Let us never preach patience, when we can point out the means which shall render patience unnecessary. The patience which endures removable evils is not acceptable—it is an insult to the Almighty: it is not a grace of the spirit, but one of those lusts of the flesh 'which war against the soul,' and against the body also."

Notwithstanding all our attention to rules of hygiene and the most careful compliance with the requirements of science, yet disease invades the secret recesses of the organic system, bringing with it pain and suffering. "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." At the mere mention of the word disease, a shade of sadness passes over the human countenance; for from it have arisen "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." Visions of sleepless nights and days of torture come before us, when the spirit, weary of the pains and troubles of mortality, is groaning for release and even disposed to complain that it is not set free from its companion, the body. How we are all able to realize, to

the full extent, the meaning of the word, from personal experience, and from watching by the couch of those who have suffered and died! Enshrouded in gloom, invested with appalling terrors, a frightful object indeed is disease to the natural man! Does it not imply a loss of relish for the beauties of the fair world around us, a deprivation of that appreciation for the wonderful and sublime which we possess in full health? It is presented as the antipode of happiness, the synonyme for misery. We associate it with the idea of extreme misfortune, and look upon those who have devoted themselves with full zeal to its alleviation as men who prey upon the miseries of mankind. All are willing to admit that it is a grand and beautiful sight to witness a man in the full tide of health, each organ performing its function with regularity and precision, the life-current of blood running its appointed course gaily and vigorously through the system. Herein they are willing to recognize one of the evidences, which that mis-named science, Natural Theology, is ready to bring forth, of the wisdom, goodness and greatness of the Almighty Creator. In health, there are marks on all sides of design. A perfect structure, full of proofs of consummate skill stands before them. But in sickness, according to the general notion, evidences of defect appear in the organic functions of life, and few are willing to recognize the wonderful indications of design which disease sets before them. We will be but giving the complement of our subject by occupying some space with the subject of disease as viewed from the Christian stand-point.

Disease may seize our bodies, either from what is generally known as accident, as a penalty for violations of laws of health and for an immoral life, or from causes which are hidden from human ken. In whatever way sickness comes, it is by divine appointment. We arrive at this conclusion from the frequent mention in Holy Writ of the direct agency of God in causing disease and even death to attack the people of Israel; and the character of these instances, does not justify us in the belief that they were



exceptional, but that they were the results of a regular law. So long as we permit the idea, that it is from Satanic influence, we shall not be able to endure, with resignation, the pangs and anguish which it brings. Duncan, in his excellent little essay on "*God in Disease*," says that, "from the case of Job, we are warranted in concluding that Satan can neither put forth his finger to touch a single individual, nor carry his malicious designs one step further than the divine persuasion is pleased to allow. Viewed in this light, the intervention of Satan, if it really exist, cannot properly be regarded as the cause of the occurrence of the disease, seeing that he is only an inferior instrument in carrying out the designs of Him who doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."\*

There is a special reason why this notion of Satanic agency, in the production of disease, should be overthrown. Those who are acting under its suggestions, purposely avoid such aids as nature, through the science of medicine, may offer for the relief of pain and suffering. They hope, by prayer and reliance upon a miraculous interposition of divine power, to be freed from suffering, and refuse all material aid which nature may afford. A similar mistaken idea fills the minds of those, at times, who even believe that disease is the result of divine command, and they refuse to interfere with it, saying that God has sent it as a punishment for sin, and that it is arrogating to ourselves the right to interfere with His appointments, if we dare to adopt means for the removal of the cause of sickness. Such a position can only be explained by the existence of fanaticism, and can be justified in no way at all. It is really the highest order of irreverence to assume the ability to interpret that which God has, for reasons sufficient to Himself, kept concealed from us. And this we do, when we declare that all disease is intended for punishment. Such an explanation is not furnished us in the Holy Scriptures, nor is it a legitimate deduction from any of the articles of our holy faith. When we are deprived of

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\* *God in Disease*, 13.

such authorities for opinions on sacred subjects, all conjectures are merely gropings in an unfathomable darkness, where no glimmer of light can be had for the guidance of our steps.

Besides all this, we know that nature, with a free and liberal hand, offers us that which will alleviate disease, bring relief to the bed-ridden sufferer, and remove pain from the distressed. If disease be a patent fact, then also is this a patent fact, that the same God, who has established it, has furnished with a liberal hand, healing balsams and curative medicines in the three forms in which he has been pleased to create matter. If one be an evidence of His power, so also is the other. We are taught in "the Wisdom of the son of Sirach," that we should "honor a physician with the honor due unto him, for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him. For of the most High cometh healing, and he shall have honor of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head: and in the sight of the great men he shall be in admiration. The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them. \* \* Then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time, when in their hands there is good success." And we also read, that one of the chosen twelve was *Luke, the beloved physician*.

If we were placed in this world, with all its products as ministers to our wants in one form or other, then there is a solemn necessity for us to cultivate an acquaintance with nature, so that we may know the extent of our power, and use it with thankfulness to the Being from whom it has come. This necessity becomes more and more pressing as knowledge increases in the earth. A much less excuse would have justified a man for neglecting it years ago than now. If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true knowledge, it is evidently not intended that we should avoid acquainting ourselves with those facts which will enable us all the more to appreciate His wonderful power.

When sickness and suffering result from what is generally called accident, we are most often totally unable to account for them. The world is accustomed to associate the word accident with the idea of chance or blind fate. But wherever fatality exists, there also exists denial of the existence of a Divine Providence. The Christian can believe that his God, "behind a frowning providence, hides a smiling face." With Job, he can say, "Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him." When losses of property and substance are conjoined with the death of all that is near and dear, he can bless the Lord, and piously exclaim, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away."

But disease is often also the result of wicked conduct or willful violation of the laws of health. Here we are enabled to detect the relation of effect to cause, at times, with wonderful accuracy; and it is well it is so, since mere considerations as to the consequences of a wicked career, or of carelessness as to health, may sometimes produce a reformation. If we see a long continued career of intemperance terminating in an enfeebled body, a shattered nervous system, and a brutalization of the finer faculties of man, we do not hesitate to attribute these to it as the cause. Or when the terrors of an attack of *delirium tremens* present themselves—when horrible shapes and forms are tormenting the poor sufferer with terrors more awful than those which the earth in reality can afford—when helpless and hopeless, he seems as if undergoing the torments of the damned even while on earth, and friends fly his bedside as though escaping from a loathsome object, here we have no difficulty in pointing out the exact cause and origin of all this array of frightful symptoms. When the glutton complains of the effects of a confirmed dyspepsia, the student of oppressive palpitations of the heart, or an unsettling of the nervous system—when the slave of passion or lust shows his body all hideous and loathsome with ulcers and disease, we have no hesitation in pointing out certain violations of the laws of God, as the direct and immediate causes of these effects. Our judgment is not at fault un-

der such circumstances. There are, however, other cases, where we can find no assignable cause for the origin of the disease, and it is irreverent to declare that there must have been some sin for which God has sent the disease. It is then not reasonable to conclude that disease is the punishment for sin. Are not the good often stretched upon beds of sickness—for days, weeks, months and years the subjects of anguish and pain? The little infant, before its reasoning faculties have fitted it for indulgence in sin and its fruits, endures pain, spends sleepless nights, seems destined to undergo, with inevitable certainty, a fixed course of diseases, which the physician finds often are beyond the power of his science. First comes the nervous and febrile sufferings consequent upon teething, then whooping cough and measles, chicken-pox and scarlet-fever, mumps and diseases incident upon hot weather and foul air. Surely these can not be sent as *punishments*, and, if we cannot see their necessity, it behooves us reverently to acknowledge our ignorance. A man's knowledge is none the less respected because he confesses that of which he is ignorant.

While, however, we dare not look upon all disease as sent for punishment, we may look upon it as intended sometimes for correction. The chastening influences of sickness have proven blessed, beyond the power of words to express, to many a man's soul; and the sick bed has become thus a dear place to memory, as by its influence and monitions the wanderer has been made to see his error, and has obtained that strength and courage and knowledge which enable him to retrace his steps, and begin his career of life, as it were, anew.

The Christian has learned to kiss the rod, however severe may be the blow which it has given him. In any view, we are safe to conclude that sickness is *for the glory of God*. While we are commanded to glorify God in our body, it is not stated that such an end can only be attained in health, but it may also be reached when the whole system is racked with disease. When the latter is not the result of any misconduct on our part, there is great room for doing good,

even through the submissive spirit with which it is endured. Who has not felt, as he left the bed side of an humble, patient Christian soul, that its gentleness and endurance most beautifully illustrated the strength of the Christian's hopes, and the strength of that foundation on which all these hopes were placed. The gold that is tried in the fire, that is rubbed by the burnisher's hand, only comes forth the more brilliant for the treatment it has received. It is purified from the dross, and is more precious for the separation. The corrections of the divine hand are extended in mercy even to the erring and sinful, and are hardly to be considered as the evidences of an angry God.

In another point of view, disease is preservative. There is something foreign to the human system, latent in its inmost recesses, which would work its entire destruction, did not the preservative effects of disease remove the peccant substance from the system. Medicine furnishes us with a host of illustrations of this fact, and the main use of its armament of remedies is not so much to cure disease, as to aid nature in her efforts to throw off morbid matter. It is nature that cures diseases, medicines only aid her efforts, give power where she is almost powerless, strength where weakness prevails, and the gentle stimulus to functions that, when fully aroused, will drive the intruder from its lurking place. A strong proof of design is thus furnished from the history of disease. Duncan has illustrated this admirably :\* "Let us for a moment suppose, that in exploring some remote and uninhabited quarter of the globe, we were unexpectedly to come upon the remains of some gorgeous temple, which displayed the marks of great beauty in its original formation, but which had been levelled with the ground shortly after its completion—not by the action of the elements on its mouldering materials, nor by the ruthless hand of violence, but by a person of equal skill, with its original architect, as evidenced by the care and attention bestowed in the position of the prostrate portions—

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\* God in Disease, 21.

would not the attentive observer be irresistibly led to the conclusion, that some circumstance having occurred to render the continuance of the edifice in the locality originally selected inexpedient, the owner of the building, or perhaps the architect himself, enamoured of his work, and unwilling that it should be destroyed, had superintended the process of taking it down, with the intention of rearing it again in a new and more permanent position." Thus is it in disease. The same wonderful adaptation of means to ends pervades the human body in disease or in health. Although the vital actions may be broken up or suspended in some organs, yet those which take their place show the same wonderful evidences of design throughout their every portion. When inflammation attacks an organ, the blood vessels show themselves fully prepared to meet the emergency, and all morbid affections are but illustrations of the same result. The hand of God is seen in the history of disease full as well as when the glow of health mantles the cheek, and the blood courses gaily through its cunningly devised channels, visiting all parts of the body and bearing life to them all.

In another point of view, however, disease is often a blessing. It tries friendships, and shows when and where they may be trusted. The sunshine friends, those butterflies of formality and fashion, flee from the sick bed. Those who had fawned upon us, flattered our pride and taken advantage of our weakness, no longer are found by our sides. It is an awful thing for the weak and insincere to be by the bedside of suffering humanity; hypocrisy there cannot feign an interest which it does not feel. Hence we do not find many left to minister to our wants, of those who had pledged true friendship and had prated to us of unending affection. The touch-stone of affliction has been applied, and a base alloy, with a poor film of gilding has been found, instead of the true metal which the external appearance had indicated. Those who are true and reliable, cling to us all the closer for our sufferings. The sympathizing breast opens up all its sympathies in such a trial, and shows

how reliable all its pretensions have been. Affliction is, indeed, the grand test for the friendships of this world. Those who are proven by it should be prized as above all price.

But if all friends desert us at such a time, even this itself may be, to the truly devout, a blessing, assuring them there is no love on earth equal to that which Christ himself manifests toward his suffering members. Under such circumstances, it is the rock of ages which becomes the only reliable resting-place for our hopes and expectations of succor. The Christian is drawn nearer and closer to his Saviour, and feels that from Him alone can help in time of need be expected. His faith becomes stronger, and he draws comfort from Christ as from a well of living waters.

Ordinarily, we look upon the sensation of pain as an evil, but physiology shows us, that in this we are mistaken. One of the great blessings to man is the fact that we can feel pain. It is a protection to our bodies, as it bids us attend to that which may do irremediable injury. In a state of health, man is not conscious of the existence of any special organs within his body. It is only when disease attacks the latter, that he begins to be aware of their presence, or to know that he has such organs as the stomach, liver, lungs or heart. The sensation of pain directs his attention to the seat of the disease, and enables him to reason as to the correct remedy.

The sensation of pain is dependent upon the nervous system. Where nerves do not exist, there no injury would produce pain. The nails may be pared and the hair cut without the sensation of pain. Its distribution is then to parts where its presence would be required for protection, and nowhere else. Thus the skin, which covers the whole external surface of the body, is largely endowed with nerves of sensation, not universally even distributed over it. The thick covering of the heel has different sensibility from that of the fingers. If the sensibility were great in the former, every step taken would be agony to the human frame; were it small in the latter, then the great utility of the

sense of tact would be destroyed. The common idea, that bones are exceedingly sensitive, and that the marrow is peculiarly so, has its erroneousness demonstrated whenever the surgeon is called on to remove a limb. He knows that the first sweep of the knife, with which he severs the skin, produces pain beyond all other portions of the operation, that the incision of muscle and the sawing of bone will be as nothing to it. The great seat of sensation is the skin, because those substances must come into contact with it, which would be of injury to the body.

The reviewer of "Rowell's essay on the beneficent distribution of the sense of pain," in the London Quarterly, says: "Without pain, we could not proportion our actions to the strength of our frame, or our exertions to its powers of endurance. In the impetuosity of youth, we should strike blows that would crush our hands and break our arms; we should take leaps that would dislocate our limbs; and no longer taught by fatigue that the muscles needed repose, we should continue our sports and our walking tours till we had worn out the living tissue with the same unconsciousness that we now wear out our coats and our shoes."

Had we space, we might show how the sensation of pain is sometimes wonderfully acute, in some parts of the vital structure, where ordinarily no nervous sensibility appears present; and again, how it is deadened and quieted. A mere reference to the frequent cessation of pain, as the moment of final dissolution arrives, is all that can be allowed us. It is a common occurrence in many diseases, that the sensation of pain entirely disappears just before death. It has sounded the alarm from the first inception of the disease—has reported accurately the extent of the injury, so long as hope remained that nature, with the assistance of medicine, could remove it. But all its alarms have proven ineffectual, the citadel of life cannot hold out any longer against the violent attacks of disease. It must surrender; nothing in the world is to be gained by continued reports of danger. The end is at hand, and is inevitable. The



sensation of pain ceases, and what a blessing that the last moments on earth can be spent with an unclouded mind—that the soul can make its peace with its God, throw off all its inimical feelings for the world, and with a quiet calm close its eyes upon the fading beauties of this life, to open upon those of another which shall be unfading and eternal. The waters of death are sometimes very dark and dreary, and the good Christian is almost forced to cry out: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, ” but in the greater number of cases, the bodily anguish disappears, and the spirit longs to attain its rest where God has prepared eternal freedom from pain and suffering. Death, then, to the good man, illustrates the divine beneficence, as exhibited in the laws which govern the human body.

If the view we have taken of our subject is correct, and not one of mere fancy, it is easy to perceive that the errors which pervade general belief are by no means small or unimportant. The human body cannot be a something to be despised by man. It was made as the crowning act of God’s creation; as though, through him, as the grand exponent of nature, the works of God might find a fitting agent to pour back, in articulate words, never ceasing hymns of praise and honor. The primal pair—

Godlike erect, with native honor clad  
 In naked majesty, seem’d lords of all,  
 And worthy seem’d: for in their looks divine  
 The image of their glorious Maker shone,  
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,  
 Severe, but in true filial freedom plac’d,  
 Whence true authority in men: though both  
 Not equal, as their sex not equal, seem’d;  
 For contemplation he and valor form’d,  
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace;  
 He for God only, she for God in him.

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Adam, the goodliest man of men since born  
 His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.”

The soul and body were then, as with all their descendants, inseparably yoked together, during this earthly life, and after a short separation, produced by death, will again be united nevermore to be sundered. Whatever joys hea-

ven may have in store for the soul will be enjoyed by the body; whatever sorrows and torments the gloomy regions of hell may have reserved for the soul, those also will the body suffer. Both must either reign in triumph, or both suffer eternal despair. There is no prospect of a divorce of the two. The salvation which was brought to man, was not only one affecting the soul, but the body also.

And in addition to all that has been said on this subject, one other consideration may yet be mentioned as justifying all we have claimed in the way of respect for the human body. Christ Himself, before leaving his disciples, instituted the solemn Eucharistic Sacrament, calling the bread and wine, which was employed for this purpose, His body and His blood, and enjoining them to repeat this solemnity in remembrance of Him. And when the Jews, on a previous occasion had cavilled at this saying, that he would give His flesh for the life of the world, His answer was: "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." These words, involving as they do the awful mystery of the presence of Christ's real body and blood in the Eucharistic Sacrament, should make those, whose precious privilege it has been to partake of this priceless blessing, duly respect that body which has thus been the recipient of the blessed elements.

We close by another quotation from Dr. Lee: "Unless mankind shall be taught to take a conscientious interest in their bodily welfare, they will hardly be persuaded to feel that concern which they ought, in the health and salvation of their souls. He cannot be expected to aspire after eternal life who has not learned to appreciate the blessing of temporal life." "He that is unfaithful in that which is least, is unfaithful also in much."



