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ON THE

CHRISTIAN TEMPER,

AND THE

NECESSITY AND BLESSED EFFECTS

OF

SELF-RENUNCIATION.

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Pauline

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By “the Temper,” we do not here mean what is commonly meant by that phrase,—the presence or absence of irritability,—it is here applied to denote the peculiar manner in which the mind is affected by daily events and circumstances, whether resulting from the dispensations of Providence, our general intercourse with society, or our connexion with persons immediately around us.

We find mankind are variously, and oppositely affected by the ordinations of Providence; some being content and satisfied with their situation in life, and resigned to what are called contingencies, while others are disposed to quarrel with every thing that happens to them, and, in effect, to rail against Providence by practically accusing the Divine Government of partiality, injustice, unkindness, or negligence. ‘Of the former class of persons we are accustomed to say, that they are of a composed, contented, and quiet temper, and of the latter, that their temper is restless, disturbed, and discontented.

In regard to those events or circumstances which arise from our general intercourse with society, or with our more immediate connexions, a difference is also perceptible in the manner in which different people are affected; some being disposed to exercise submission, gentleness, compliance, forbearance, and forgiveness of injuries, while

others are haughty, violent, unyielding, sullen or vindictive. The former class of persons we regard as being of an humble, gentle, pliant and forgiving temper; and the latter, as being of a haughty, harsh, self-willed, angry, and vindictive temper.

The Temper, then, may properly be considered, as being at once the result, and the manifestation, of some principle or affection of the mind or heart, which thus discovers its nature, its inclinations, and propensities. Every Temper, therefore, has its parent disposition or principle, of which it is the offspring; and it will ever be found bearing its parent's image, speaking his language, obeying his commands, and submitting to his will. We may consequently say of the Temper, when regarded as the derivation from some principle or love, that it is not primary but secondary; it is not the trunk, but the branch of the human will and its affections. But it is precisely on this very account that it merits our particular attention, and serious examination; inasmuch as it bespeaks, and reveals to us the true quality and character of the principle within us from which it is derived.

Nothing can be of greater consequence to our peace and well-being, both in this world and the world to come, than to acquire an accurate knowledge of the principles by which our actions are governed; for it will be according to these principles respectively, after we have quitted the body, that our eternal state will be determined. If our actions are then found to spring from the love of self, and the love of the world, we shall find our place in hell; but if they are found to originate in love to God and our neighbour, we shall then be privileged, because prepared, to dwell with angels, in the Lord's immediate presence in heaven. It is a very important point of Christian doctrine, that all good loves or affections originate from, and thus are included in, love to God and love to our neighbour, (which also is called charity, or the love of goodness and of doing good, and this is the same as heavenly love); and that all evil loves or affections originate from,