No. 46

The true object of glorying.
Jeremiah IX. 23, 24. "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let them that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciseth longsuffering, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things doth my soul delight, with the Lord."
for the more noble aspiring part of human nature, she must have something to stay in. It is not enough merely to prescribe rules or motives for the discharge of duty; it is not enough to mark out for each one the course in which he should move; to tell them how the more noble in its nobleness it is not enough; it is not enough to indicate rigid obedience or unflinching fidelity; there must be something more; something, that we may call a duty of ambition; a feeling of elevation, abstracting from its ever so little pride, a sentiment of grandeur, exalted with all false aspirations. A state of indifference is probably the most unhappy station in which man can be placed. If a man would be happy, the heart must be filled with some strong and living interest, something that can stir it up, and make it feel clearly and strongly.

Nor the great question is, what object shall be chosen for this purpose? What is that pursuit, that hope, that question, that shall serve as this enduring and salutary influence? And it is at this point, that all the difficulty arises; it is here, that we see the difference between the morality of man, and the morality of the Bible. It is here that we discover the weakness of our conception of the one, the strength and beauty of the other. Go to the nursery and ask the child who will tell you to be gay in the pursuit of pleasure, if you will be sent forth to write, or the dignity of intellectual being in the chase after that, which it is obtained is not worth the price paid? Others will tell you to endeavor to enrich the struggle for honor or fame. If you are far from engaged in the arts, you will find little except defeat, disappointment, resignation. If there is some who will yield up to riches, and give to them the empire of your heart, to you lean on the broken reed. But go to the instructions of the mighty, what do they declare on this subject? They do not sink your feelings to helpless inaction; they do not destroy the aspiring disposition of the soul, but they give it that disposition a proper object to work upon, an object at once sufficient to fill your heart.
The text, as it stands in the prophet, has relation to the Jews, as a nation; they seem to have trusted that their own power, wealth, &c. would be a sufficient protection against that destruction, &c. The Armies of the host had so often announced to them, believing perhaps, that the Almighty had deserted them: they thought that they could do without his help. The administration of Jehovah, therefore, has reference to their prosperity as a people. &c. the institution contained in it is national. Still, however, it is applicable, in all its strict sense, to each individual of every age. Let us consider the particulars of the text. 

1. The wise man may not glory in his wisdom. &c. He knew the more serious & considered part of mankind are so willing to be bond, as of their mental requirements. It would seem that if there were anything, on which we might be allowed the privilege of self-congratulation, it should be the excellence in that which constitutes the prime distinction of man from the circle of animals beneath him. And yet all what is the wisdom of man? Why should he be proud of it? It is true, he can look abroad in the works of creation, & in the thing that is formed he can see the powers of them, who formed it; he can trace the connection of causes & effects; at least, in many of its parts. &c. he can look at the mighty movements are regulated, &c. from his little mansion on this little earth, he can as it were, survey
the glories of the universe, he can inspect the wonders of nature, and understand his own mysteries, from thence. But after we have allowed for the widest range, the highest flight of the most vigorous mind, we must come back to the humblest question, how much does our ignorance exceed our knowledge? What weakness is there in the midst of all this strength? what folly in the midst of all this wisdom? How much is there that we do not know at all? how much more that we know but very imperfectly? Very often it is nothing but outlines and shadows that we can trace, our advance but just far enough to perceive that the path on which we have entered is endless. There is scarcely an insect or a particle of matter that does not suggest problems, which we cannot solve; scarcely a grain of wheat or a blade of grass, that does not offer to our enquiring, if not to our conscious, nature, the consciousness of our ignorance. With all our boasted wisdom, with all that knowledge of which we are so proud, we are constantly

walking in the midst of mysteries, which we cannot comprehend, and surrounded by objects that baffle our enquiries. And what do we know of ourselves? Is it very poor, that thinks, reasons, remembers, can it explain its own operations? Is not the nature of mind beyond the power of mind itself to understand? Is not beyond the power of mind itself to appreciate? What then, becomes of wise men, or a mystery to man? What then, becomes of wisdom, to those events which appear to us only as distant appearances, so distant, so remote in our sight? And suppose our wisdom were much more than it is, how often is it rendered useless, or turned loose by our own carelessness, or by the ignorance, malice, or envy of others? Does it often accomplish all the good, or the might? Is it not frequently defeated, or thrown back, even in its most intended efforts? The success of the wisest calculations depends so many contingent causes, on so many uncertain and fickle elements, that our most changing from one point to another, that the most prudent and sagacious must yield to many disappointed hopes... The providence of God often confounds the wisdom...
of the wise turns their counsels into foolishness. If
even if we suppose the perfection of human wisdom
to have been attained, how insecure is the possession!
There are a thousand accidents, which may destroy the
highest excellence, and the soundest mind in the
world once shattered, the finest thought, and the bright-
est ideas become darkness and confusion. When, therefore,
we reflect, that at the best, we are but children
in wisdom, and that even of the highest perfection in
our possession, disease or accident may deprive us, we
have surely no reason to be proud; nor can we grate-
fully to God who has given us our powers and faculties
fulfil the work of his providence, and» the possession
of mind, we must feel the force of the injunction
in our text: „Let not the mighty man glory in his might,»
Strength and honors obtained, are the least things in
which we should glory. For we can grasp the law that
shall secure them to his possession. For all that we are
acquainted to call great, at least, we are as wholly de-
defendant, as the infant is for its support. Will you take
pride in natural strength? Consider how many beasts of
the field excel you in this respect: consider for many
ways it may be lost; how riches may wither it away;
precedent may frustrate it at once. Surely, ye know,
the handmaids of old age, y, the strongest arm of
the foremost serve must at last be laid in the dust. It
was a stone of the breach from the sting of the stcf-
king of Israel, that brought to the ground the greatness
of Gath; and thus it often happens, that the most love-
ly and unheeded causes take away the boast of them-
you. I leave them to feel their Helplessness. Again, does
the might of all you glory, consist in honors and influ-
ence? Will you have no better reason to be proud of it? Per-
sonal influence are in themselves desirable; but their value
defends entirely on this: They may be possessed in a
thousand different ways, is in a thousand different de-
grees by all, from the highest to the lowest condition
of society. There is no person, however humble his situation,
that is limited, his means, who has not, or may not have,
personal influence in some way or other. There is an act-
ual operation among the members of society, which puts it in
the power of everyone to retain some hold upon those by whom he is surrounded. For each one may go to the source of influence, so as to obtain, as far as it is in the means of being good, the power of authority; yet in no case is he absolutely responsible to God; so much as human nature resists in these new obligations, by stronger ties to new creations. In whatever degree, then, he has attained to power of influence, let him value them in just the same proportion as they enable him to be more useful or more kind. Thus far it is a laudable and noble feeling. But let not the mighty man glory in his might, but let him be made a humble tool of pride, a matter of self-congratulation. The mighty man, rich, that who sits upon a throne, the most nobly distinguished, that who has been the delinquent of government, the most successful general, that who has been the hero of his followers, may find, at last, that the title, when his own name is heard away, left them solitary and powerless. There are events, as of late, to make us ashamed of pride, to see man dressed in all the robes of authority, sitting on high, perhaps, who gave him his powers. Habakkuk of Babylon, in the intoxication of prosperity, said: "Thou shalt ascend into heaven, I will prepare my throne above the stars of God," yet the proud sat, as he is, in the temple where lay the princes whom he had trodden under his feet, if by them he is welcomed with the taunting voices: "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou also become like unto us? Hast thou fallen from heaven?" Such is often the fate of pre-eminence, boasting greatness; it is ever greatest when most elated, as the bubble becomes thinner just before it bursts. When will man learn that power and influence are to be regarded as means, not as the end, that they are of no value any further than as they subserve the cause of doing good? To be proud of them is to be proud of that on the highest breath of the winds. Let not the mighty man glory in his might.

9. Let not the rich man glory in his riches. If thou
be any one sort of pride more ridiculous & empty than
another, it is that of all plumes itself in the mere pos-
session of wealth. Riches, like other things, are the gift
of God, & one should not undervalue or despise them. They
who receive them may be the children of Heaven's bounty,
the stewards of a treasure for doing good. They possess
the means wherewith to relieve others, of affording relief to
distress, & patronage, & encouragement to good institutions
& useful undertakings. Y of the receive them.

As does the golden curse encompass,
"Only to shed a sacred glare of blessings,
I found so all,"
they may become a bitter source of happiness to their posses-
sor's, & benefit to the world around them. But though
the rich may rejoice, that they have it in their power to
be more extensively useful & meritorious than others, yet
in the language of the prophet, "not the rich man glory in his riches." Who does not know, for who has
not seen, how much chance has to do in the struggle
for obtaining them. Certainly it is not always the more,
the wiser, or even the kinder & skilful, who are not
successful in the strife for wealth. Very often the eyes
of the vicious, y sometimes the carelesse & idle receive the line
of better hands cannot seize. And if the competition
for the possession of riches be so often decided by events,
yt it was impossible to foresee, y not ovt of the whole
but a matter of chance, surely after they are obtained
they are greater surety for retaining the possession. And
often do they sink from the hand, or seem to grasp
them most firmly, y when the hold upon them is lost.
Who has not seen them.

The change from plenty & wealth to poverty & dependence
from being admired & envied to being pitied & despised,
is one in which we are called not in frequently to notice. Men,
therefore, are reflect for a moment of how little value
riches are in themselves, y how their worth depends wholly
on their use, - when we remain but too, how much accidenally
events beyond our power to control have to do with these
questions, y still with the retaining the acquisition. What
were those, who have succeeded in the struggle for them,
to teach in the precarious possession, "Let not rich man rule in his riches."

What, then, is the true object of glory? We have seen, it is not wisdom, it is not might, it is not riches, the text teaches us what it is. "Let them that delight in glory in this, that he understands the speech of God, that I am the Lord, who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do all the kings of the nations delight." The divine wisdom points us to a treasure, the value of which may well fill our hearts with gladness: to a possession in the riches of which we may truly rejoice. The knowledge of God is that pearl of great price, of which wisdom is turned into folly, mightiness into weakness, and riches into helpless indigence: still it will remain a bright, glorious treasure, for eternity will be ever adding new lustre, and a higher value. To show Him who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, is that knowledge, in whereto man is mainly interested. All religion is founded upon right notions of the Almighty and of His perfections; so that every divine revelation takes its origin from that we believe in the existence, providence of God, by the truth revealed can signify nothing to us, unless there truth be first known and believed. For unless we are firmly persuaded of the providence of God, or of His particular care for man, how should we believe, that He makes any revelation of His will to us? And unless we are convinced by the light of nature, that God is a God of truth, what ground have we for the belief of His word? Do the principles of natural religion are the foundation of revealed religion: it is therefore nothing can be admitted to be a revelation from God, frankly contradicts His essential perfections. But though from the light of nature we learn some thing of the nature and character of Deity, yet it only in the Bible, that we find these first revealed. We find ideas of the Almighty, who are necessary to the flame of devotion, to make our fear, faith, and trust of unlimited trust and confidence. What reasons do
from the observation of nature, & from its own effects, is the foundation; but since it is not for that subsistence, or the hand of God has ceased in the volume of revelation, the foundation would fall to decay, & would become weaker almost as less. It is in the internal character of the Deity as displayed in the Bible, & in the mediation of our Saviour, J.C., that we see the richest glory of the church. It is then He condescends to instruct us in his purposes, y. will, to teach us our duty; y. pursues what be requires of us, y. to what we are destined, y. to act before us the arm of justice rising from the enjoyments of the punishments of the world to come; that we learn to feel the close intimate relation in which we stand to our Saviour, to see that God loves, if we may so say, all the good of his creatures, y. that he have, each one of us formally, a deep interest in the truths, & J.C. has brake from heaven to earth. Thus it is, that we may say in knowing God. We should be deeply gratified at Heaven, that we are permitted to dwell in the beams of the sun of righteousness, while so many of our fellow creatures are still in the darkness & shadows of death, that the glad news of peace in earth, forever, will to men be proclaimed to us, while there are so many in whose ears that happy sound has never sung. If we neglect so great advantages for our eternal improvement now, how can the savage will we who indulge against us, for the cause of Heaven more than ed in the desert will he try, of the unchangeable plan, will bear witness against us, for he bound to his idea of unshipped stocks & stones, with more decided Tamang than many of us bow to the only true God in

We have seen, truly, in what things God forbids to say, & in what He commands us to say. That such is the instruction of the Saviour is sufficient for us; but, on this, in all other cases, we can see that his instructions are agreeable to the dictates of our own in-terpreted reason, & uncorrupted conscience. Let us not then linger around our idle pursuits, desiring to out-fish till death tears us from them, before we have laid up for
ourselves a treasure in heaven. I will leave with the solemn injunction of the text, 'Do not the wise many lose in his sins, nor the rich man gain in his riches. Let not the rich man glory in his riches; 1 Cor. 4:1. But let him that glorieth glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. 1:31. 

God of holiness and truth, give us, even thee, right views of our nature and condition in this world, of our hopeful destination in the world to come. Teach us to see before us such objects of pursuit, as time and death cannot destroy, as may be worthy of securing the real interest of immortal beings. Suffer us not to glory in the wisdom, the might, or the riches of this world; but may we see with all the diligence the means with which we are indulged of becoming acquainted with the one God, of knowing something of the character, purposes, and will, of gaining thy favours and is hope of thy living kindness, not is better than life. May we entreat thee to refine and elevate our souls by the habitual contemplation of thee, by raising our thoughts heavenward, by baffling off the incursions of temptations of earth, and as gone from day to day to live thee more and more the better; and when we shall have answered all thy promises,
earth, wilt thou take us to thyself in glory?
Athene Sept. 17th, 1820. afternoon.
At home. Feb. 19th, 1832 - afternoon.