Philippians iv. 11. - "For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

And we should all, my dear friend, find ourselves happier & better, if we too would learn the same lesson; if we would learn to repress desires that cannot or ought not to be gratified, to set aside in that ambition which will almost inevitably bring its own punishment, in the misery which will produce, & to realize that restless, foolish anxiety that never suffers us to enjoy the present, but is continually pointing to something better some in futurity. In whatsoever state we are, there-
with to be content is among the most useful of those best instructions, the instructions of the Bible.

But what is contentment? This question should be answered: For until we understand the nature of the virtue, it is in vain that we are called upon to practice it. Incorrect representations of duty may discourage from all attempts at performing it, even to very erroneous attempts. If he who is taught to do what he cannot, will even be induced to conclude that there is nothing for him to do.

We may remark at the outset, that contentment does not consist in that listless indolence of falsehood, which never seeks promotion nor strives for improvement. It does not command us to stand still where we are, or never take a step in the advancing path. We are taught to be contented with our present condition, but we are not forbidden to strive to make that condition better. Nay, it is the duty of man to go on, not to hunger by the way, even though he hangers there without com-
of enjoyment as the result of external labours or enterprise, where the stream of life is continually flowing on, flowing on, as it were, through the thousand avours in the course of active effort? Can any such a scene as the very face of it, tell us that we are not satisfied with doing nothing? No, the universe is an organism, God hath ordained it so; it is a law of this mighty moral government. The whole of nature as in motion, man as a moral, rational, accountable being, should be in motion also. A contented disposition, therefore, contentment, satisfaction to produce an sluggish indifference, without a watchman alert for improvement. This is selfishness, not contentment: it is a want of all proper feeling, not a noble receptacle of all good. A man may be contented, and yet his constitution watchful to improve his condition, as may be consistent with a due regard to his duty, the religion. Again, contentment is not a forced submission to evils or deprivations, wh cannot be avoided. It is not a constraint, 78 unwilling service. It is not like a tribute, this is wrong from us by necessity. But we would gladly yield, if we could. There are some people, who do not complain of their condition; yet are deeply dissatisfied with that condition, perhaps, you will never hear from them a single word, a single regret when prosperity, yet it seems to be in the mean time, when about more, than there is turning all to bitterness, they feel that discontent is now they have not as will not express. Is in the spirit of contentment, through its outward appear- ance may give it credit for much in the world's estimate. There may be a smile on the face, but there is a cold, grievous discontent at the heart. What then is the true character of contentment? It consists, my son, in the disposition, the sincere, hearty disposition, to be satisfied with our condition, whatever it may be, so long as the presence of heaven shall appoint us to remain in
that condition. Hitherto, that description, of course, has never been applied to the human condition. The moral feeling, though it does not profess to be the guide of human thought or action, is a powerful influence in determining the course of men's actions. It is therefore, in harmony with our moral nature, that we should strive to make that life happy and better still, so that it bids us receive cheerfully the benefits which we have received. The spirit of contentment does not itself in adapting our wants and wishes to our situation and means; for after all, the sweetest way to become truly rich is not to increase our possessions, but to diminish our desires. And therefore, the true secret of contentment, which is the most to be recommended, is the desire to be recommended. Therefore, it is not a fortunate tie to any of those sentiments, accidentally or often, that is the best agent, and2ween the poorest goods, the treasure of every sort, whether it be that, nor better itself in such and such a thing, nor that, nor never speaks, but always endures, and silently in the spirit, or makes the soul clack.
The nearly related to contentment, oh seem to take its place, i.e., patient resignation to the will of God... It is principally at the middle point between absolute misery & a high state of felicity, that contentment finds its favorite abode.

I would suggest to you a few motives & reasons for contentment:

1. Think for a moment of the unhappiness of the opposite disposition. There lies not perhaps in the universe a more miserable being than the discontented man; & his unhappiness is of a kind, not more than any other has an inquisitive affection in his whole heart & life. It is gradual, unnot in its operation. It does not come rushing when the mind is once, & then pass away, leaving it to recover its strength & position; but it is, if we may so say, a distillation of misery, it comes drop by drop, & wastes away pure, virtues, & good feelings by the constant repelation of small vexations & insensible disappointments. The man is discontented at every专业化, if for one other reason.

I get for this, because he is his own enemy. He who has given himself self to me,3 & passive, & amiss, feeble, & insensible feelings, because his lot in life is not only as he could wish, needs no foe from without to fill his cup of bitterness to the brim. He has within him sources of misery, which unless be dried up till his restless & dissatisfied soul is not at peace.

On the other hand, the contented man is the happy man. He knows how to discover & embrace all the good & to avoid or make the best of the evil of his condition. He can bear with it on the empty commotion & the Saul & preferences of the great world around him, & though he has not the ample resources & the gay splendor of some of his neighbors, yet he blesses God for his he has, & is happy. We plead the cause of those who are virtuous, then, on the score of self-interest; or we may virtue, then, on the score of self-interest; or we may
higher happiness, than to exchange conditions with
you. What seems to you an intolerable burden, they
would deem light; if they would only take it.
B. — Notice to contentment may be drawn from
that very source, viz. as the most common thing of
the opposite temper. I mean from comparing our
condition & situation with those of others. There is
precisely any disposition more common, than to
compare ourselves with those around us. If we will
indulge the habit of looking abroad, let us turn
it to a good account; if possible make it means
of happiness. Certainly if many of those, who com-
plain so bitterly of their lot, we may ask, whether
they can cherish the foolish hope, that they shall
be distinguished by a constant course of happiness
from the herd of sufferers, who surround them?
Perhaps there are thousands, whose portion is so much
more than your own; that they would desire no

their condition, instead of cherishing at one's own lot. Mark the conduct of these very persons, at whom you gaze so environingly, & do you not often find that they too are as discontented as yourselves? Behind the gay smile, or beautiful aspect, you know not how much misery & grief is concealed. It is no remark more common, than that they seem to have the greatest abundance of the means of felicity, are far from being happy. They want something in this world, or else they are afraid of losing what they already have. They tremble with fear for the safety of their present possessions. There is perhaps many a secret sigh of sorrow in the heart of him, who appears before the world as the pride of high station, & in the eye of the man, who looks in the annals of famous fame, there are many moments, when for one hour of peace of mind & real satisfaction, he would gladly give away all this false glitter of this world.

Before, when you gave yourself up to the musings of discontent, because it is to be more hateful than yourself, consider whether this be not the fact. The truth is, after all, that with its defects, there is not so great a difference in the happiness of different people, as is commonly imagined. We know & we feel, the evils of our own condition, but we do not know the evils of another's. & therefore, when we can feel the evils of another's, & therefore, we are liable to the grossest deception. You wonder, perhaps, that the rich should be so unhappy. Yet persuaded that the great are met every day with happiness, and that they are envied, we wonder at the melancholy spirit of man. But the same feeling occurs in the meanest of the mean: let him be placed in their estimation, you would be if you were placed in their estimation, you would be the same. If the fortune must be changed, if you were placed in the meanest of the mean, what would you then do? The desire of permanent happiness. How often does the prospect of it give rise to the idea of that station in which he shall be placed, & from the necessity of laborious exertion, as if it were a blessing. Yes, if he who has nothing to do.
would on that account be easy & contented. But
indolence is always a curse, as well as value; on the
other hand, that sort of equitable engagement, which
takes all the thoughts & affections, yet so as to
leave them capable of turning to any thing more impor-
tant, as occasions offer, is a most invaluable
living. Let no man, therefore, renounce the
wants of wealth & pleasure; for when they come, they
too often come like bridal & magnificent guests, brin-
ging with them a long train of them. Thus, after
dants of felicity, & disorders of passions that
cannot easily be quelled & of desires, that cannot
be gratified. & after having embroiled reason & de-
stroyed religious impressions, they render men unable
to bear even common & trifling disappointments.

2. But there is a higher motive for the practice
of the virtue, for not one friend. Contentment is best
learned in the school of Christ. It was there that Paul
learned it. He who is all heart & all must be a
contented man; for as the same proportion as
endulges the refinings of discontent, he shows

3. That we have not imbued the spirit of it.
It is not for man to study the character of his Lord
in this, as He is revealed in the day to see wherein
of mighty designs of mercy, & working in a flood of
light & glory on the midst. To learn that He, like
some wheels it triumphs through the signs of
heaven, watches the fall of a sparrow; as guard
the head as of our heads. It is not
so, that this providence is
spread with a mighty shield over the universe. It
that His spirit pervades creation; it is not, Sir. For
man, when he has learned these glorious truths,
to give place for a moment to colder impressions &
minds. Are you discontented with your condition?
think from whom you have received that comfort
remember that it is, as it has looked
God to better your care, & on them surely one may praise
our care, for He is the cares for us. It is a blessing of
our holy religion, for our gratitude is so strong
8 wear, that it is given us the day an widow,
all the difficulties of life, by giving us a refuge &
resting place for all our weary is disappointed.
feeling, by connecting the events of life with the mighty chain of the moral government of the universe... And the soul must have a mind to be preserved, one can seriously consider life as the ambition of God, and still adhere against God, that he has not given a better portion. And he, who can look forward to the unseen world with the hope, that there happiness is in reserve for him, may surely remain satisfied whilst he travels his wearisome pilgrimage of a few days here below. If these be proud, yet there the wisdom of God promises will be found when men... if here his condition is humble, yet there he will be consoled to the society of angels & archangels. I can look back with pity on those who are sorrowing & suffering for earthly dignities. Temporal incomparabilitie... such am more seem trifling & inconsiderable & the common objects of men's hopes & fears, desires & uneasiness would appear but as the shadow of come & go with every cloud that passess over the face of the sun. If he is disturbed by the rough parts

of life, he remembers that the event is silent... of time is constantly carrying away all his prospects, by bringing him to the warning of that ever-lasting day, & to the time followeth of x is to be than... to what alone deserves the name of life or

These trials are a few of the motives & helps to contentment. Does any one say, that his condition is so hard, that it does not permit him to listen to these persuasions? Let him remember who it was... that uttered the memorable words of the text. It was one, who in his labours to spread the gospel had exhausted all the varieties of suffering & pain, had looked in the face dangers, insults & persecution without dismay or without turning aside. Not could say with truth & feeling, that the event has daily beenines & painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger & thirst, in fastings often, in cold & nakedness light... this is the man who could say... I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content... this is my great moral maturity in this language coming from such a man. Is how does it fail to shame all our poor & miserable excuses for our murrors...
Most high and holy God, we beseech thee to direct us in the way, in all we should go; give us strength of our duty, and enable us to cultivate the true spirit of contentment, meekness, and humility. May we ever be disposed to receive with thankfulness our portion in life, whatever it may be, knowing that it comes from the hands of a merciful Father, a righteous God; to thy will we always bow cheerfully, and resign into thine hands all our interests both temporal and eternal. Give us grace, our Father, to imitate the spirit of our Lord and Master, to yield without murmuring to whatever thou shalt ordain. Make us contented with the dispensation of thy
providence in this world, that they by submission to thee we may become ripe for the world of glory through J. C.
At home July 16th, 1820 - afternoon
At home March 23, 1823 - afternoon.