No. 110.

On the habit of scoffing at religion.
by wit, ingenuity, or malice. And religion, as well as other things, has this ledge to be abused. It may be made the part of those, who think it mostly of rational beings to end their lives by despair, or by being dressed up for the amusement of such as are corrupt enough to be pleased with the sight. And such there always are. Not only in what Pilate calls the bitter days, but in all days, there are scoffers all the time, not only in their own bodies, but in others, in the present principles of the most glorious hopes of the human race only in the ludicrous side, while they despise the most sacred objects, and hold them up to the derision of others. Few seem to make any investigation; it is all earnest thought in the world, one who accuses nothing of those who practice it, except that they are nothing to weigh it all according to decency. A man who finds that he must let all emotion he can gratify his own feelings or of his companions or associates by scoffing at religions.

...
spires of faith. When we look upon these false abuses, a feeling of disgust and contempt is apt to steal over the mind. We then begin to distinguish the pure from the impure, the godly from the bad; the dress from the girdle, we include the whole under one general condemnation, yet preserve our own minds from the infection, and wish the whole. Whatever is liable to such abuses is almost necessarily exposed to the same injury. If this is an unhappy truth, that itself, by their very existence, have given reason to the wise and thoughtful to scoff at divine truths. But these, who think this cause suffices for their own desires, every one in the form of consecration should pause and see whether they can justify the abuse to their own consciences for this unqualified contempt. They should remember, that the question concerning the conduct of persons of individual faiths is a totally different one from that concerning the truth of importance of it. There is no gift of foreknowledge that may not be done, but because of its limitation. But does this prove that there is nothing good?
in any gift of providence? Is this the richest treasure that God has confided on the world, but it is committed to human hands? Of course it is ill suited to these possessors, with the exception, of course, of a capacity for man can put upon it, of to Emma's communciation or ridicule its claims, or accounts of these possessors, as much as you say, that we will not receive it, whatsoever blessings it has to offer, whether God will mercifully interpose in every particular, has ease to preserve it from abuse. This is so much that we are entitled to expect, for God does not so interfere with regard to any thing else, why should he not regard to religion? Besides we forget that after all, if this has done is doing something good, it is the exhibit of many influences in their daily habits of conduct. What then the scoffers point to the enemies, the follies of the amusements of pains, or ridicule the faith of the professors, did human beings the temple of God? Because the lightning of men have flailed them, became a monument of beauty, or made it mean in the voice of division. Its foundations will not only remain, if cannot be shaken or destroyed.

2. Another source of scoffing in serious subjects is the desire of appearing equal in religious knowledge. There is a disposition, and leads many captive, there is to many minds something very attractive in daring to despise others, to ridicule, without any regard to the character, to the importance of what we despise. He who can laugh at a deride what others deem sacred, or, to as the anchor of their hopes feel as if the stood on a higher ground than the rest of the world, can look down upon a contemptible smile on the crowd, who are groping in darkness beneath them. It admits himself, recognizes that others admire him, for his bravery, his valor, the virtues those uses to, to custom's education, who serves enough to think there is any thing in prejudice is something very flattering to the pride of ingenuity of the love of novelty, in attempting to undermine the metal of holding up to scorn or hate. It shall be seen over and over, as if the scoffers who indulge this spirit, so long as he can make the ignorant of the expectations, where tri...
samples on this earth, a very few are, though they be despised by the scorners, intolent, of reflecting patience, one
This is the deadliest sin, and gives rise to much of the ridicule by which sense, so strange, unexampled, is the only
of a despiser, from which everyone who possesses his own
fears of that of others, will do well to guard. Not to mention the fear of oppression and ambition of attaining the apparent or copied effects, which indicate it is ground for a very false estimate of superiority. For
It must be the necessity to know the inferiority.
Why is it that the scorners affect to show this superiority? Why is it that, without appeals to the only grand
of the great and valorous objects, to which it can direct
its aspirations and desires - in trembling and in secret that it forms the main principles of distinction between
men are the brute, that toils for them, and restrain
it cannot rise as spring dawn to the light from
not only of the springs, the consideration that it
In the strictest sense, the consideration that it
admit to the influence of the senses, of remembering, or a dark, severe account of neglected brothels, broken vows, of
at the same time tears, in hopes of city, it finds them
expressly prohibiting his guilty course and in sundry
by the displeasure of heaven, is not by anyone
pervert or force them. The fear of his crimes, even to the
incapacitated by them, in such a state of mind, he
will probably turn some 62 try to laugh from these
precepts of reason. It is too much easier to ridicu-

... other and religion, than to reform his life, that, when
his heart has come to that state when it is anxious
to seek a glorious countenance for its errors, there is
but little hope that be will have self command
or moral dignity enough to remove his guilty
sinct. I find this way back to the high road of vir-
tue... It is somewhere observed, that a man is
never against reason, till reason is against him;
of or not, maybe one, that a man is seldom against
religion, till religion is against him. It seems
by acts the part of an insensible monument, it tells
as and fails to plainly, it holds up a picture more
true characters are represented to ourselves, that
we begin to try whether we cannot make a jest of
the worth of the worth, whether we cannot, seize a laugh against
it, derracent in consequence, by making
ourselves of other, men at its expense. But it all reflect fairly for
moment decides whether this kind has once com-

Such have some of the minds from which proceeds the
continu to scoff at religion. They dont think
of it as a very sensibly in the mind of some, so carry them
much further than they intended to go. To be estimat-
\no the very attractive, that many an old, to gratify
the perpetuity will indulge the modesty to assure the
more commotions truths, in the amount of help, the
may place the best of highest hopes. In order to
 assures them with this distinction, let us now reflect
goodment on the folly of scoffing at

1. It is dangerous with regard to the individual him-
self, who indulges this spirit of ridicule. It de-
grades his character, it weakens the force of his moral
principle. Nothing, perhaps, is more unpleasing to
the growth of every thing dignified, pure, honorable
in the character, than that habitual vanity, which
no matter how high or holy the subject may be.
about which it is employed, is more satisfied except
it can make a jest. Suppose the case of a man, who
has been educated in the spirit of principles of re-
inn, often whose minds are deeply inclined to the Almighty have been impressed, who has been taught to regard him as his Lord, Master, and King. As a candidate for eternity, of whom his accuser, himself behold to those eternal hopes of undying treasures, whom he served in heaven. Now let such a man, with his feelings doubled up, have some solvable influence, catch the spirit of the seer, suppose him to have been disposed with some felicity, even in agencies of enemies or enemies of his present place, if he ever comes to our seat, that after all religion is an emptiness; let this seer come from such a heart, till it breaks out in sudden gushes at what he once ventured, still at length he finds no religion, only as it were to him an object of ridicule and contempt. What has this man become? What has the spirit of scoffing made of him? It has gradually undermined the foundation of his hopes, happiness, it has robbed him of all his delightful associations, even of the most holy and profound associations of feeling with the Lord and with God's eternity. And what has it given him in the place of this? It has given the short-lived, unsatisfactory, false, and inferior to religious prejudices, the satisfaction of being one, who seems to be more by the desire for the influence of the, who influence them. But these prejudices, judgments, as they are all away as soon as the excitement of company, of the world, or the future, when the dark hours of life come, the man finds there is a world, in which it is,: living cannot satisfy, he has lost the social compacts, the real love of religion, but of God, and he goes to his grave, perhaps cursing the day, when he turned aside to join the band of the scoffers, walking after their own lusts. And as the melancholy consequences of the habit of ridiculing serious things, operating this sin, differently in different individuals, but in all eating, taking a mildness, every pure, heavenly feature.

2. But the folly of dangers of scoffing is not confined to the individual himself. They reach to others, and are extremely damaging to the mental welfare of the community. There is not a more deadly enemy to
the vital interests of society, than the mere occult sacred things. By repeated marriages he makes his companions renounce their religious hopes and objects, he becomes advanced of them; when he has done this he has prepared them to be led over the world without the restraint of moral principle, without motives but those imposed by ordinance and selfishness. It is difficult for us to estimate how much of the security of happiness of the social state are due to the influence of religion; how much religion is made to extend and become a second heart of virtue. Society, consequently, does much to control the passions of men, from them to a habit of regarding the laws of rectitude. It supplies that class of motives of feelings, our human laws of institutions cannot supply. Now here the pacific, by means of religious, spiritual, to even elude this current of society, they leave it in a worse condition, ready to fall into more ruin, is surely the common enemy of even virtue, practices a sort of piracy on the highest interests of the community. If every friend of good order will observe his attempts to break down the reverence for serious things in the minds of the people. But it is more pleasingly, when we consider religion, as holding up the example of the brevity of individuals, that we observe the destructive effects of shelling it away from its dwelling. How many are there in the world, whose religion is the only treasure they possess; how many are the moments in life, when these feel at all must feel that religion is the only thing that can yield support and peace? Temptations to sin are pressing in every side, of presenting their allurements and promises, who but the true can stand among these wounden at the foot of duty? - How to reason some times reach of falling? And what can strengthen her, but the revelation of God's will? Have we not ignorance, that needs to be enlightened? is there no path we need to the guidance? - Another often is the cloud of sense lying over our looking — a cloud through which nothing but religion canpen.
on the best hopes, the eternal happiness of those with whom he associates? His influence will be like the effect of the poison tree, consuming, drowning as far as it reaches.

Such is the folly and danger of this spirit of selfishness, when employing in sacred objects, hostile to the interests of others. To be his own enemy, is the enemy of society. And let me ask, what good does he fear to affect, by his scoffing? Nothing beyond the gratification of his pride, vanity, or contemptible passions. She would not perhaps have passed, and be forgotten, that it is almost uniformly the gratification of a miscarried design. Do mind. Let him reflect too, that the time is perhaps at hand, he will meet these before in the new decalogue; that at the longest, it will be but a short time. Before he must look for some other subject to his mind, the pleasure of the companions, or the pleasure of gaining, or he will prize higher the comfort, consideration of the humblest disciple of X, than all vanity.
the excitement of multitudinous religious errors confounded. And let them be cautioned not to surrender their confidence if their hopes on the gos. to the rude attacks of the scoffers,——let them not think the mere of their religion, because it has been, may be, the subject of ridicule. Nothing is not absurd, because it has been laughed at,—and because it does not seem to be. Be not shaped, trained to despise the Book of Ages, by the censures of the ignorant, the thoughtless of the world. The words of the Psalms are the best motto for everyone: "Whomsoever the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." —June 1824.

O God, most high & holy, author of all good, fountain of peace & happiness, wilt thou bless us in our captivity & imprisonment, & relieve to whom we have now been led. May our minds be impressed with a sense of reverence for sacred truth; if they are given heed to the things which long to our eternal peace. Save us from the thirst of the scoffers, from the habit of ridiculing the high hopes of the serious duties of the plan. May we ever maintain our minds in a humble & childlike frame, prepared to submit to thy will & to thy commands. Give us grace to imitate the example of our Lord & Master, that like him it may be our merit to teach as we do this will. Let us exercise all diligence freely to investigate divine truth, by that truth may we be sanctified.
At home, June 17th, 1821—forenoon.
At Dublin, December 23rd, 1821—forenoon.
At Cambridge, 1st, March, 1822—forenoon.
At home, Feb. 20th, 1823—afternoon.