No. 188.

The evils of quarrelling, of the motives to live peaceably.
Genesis XIII, 8. "And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we be brethren."

Who does not recognise in this soothing address a finer trait in the character of the illustrious father of the faithful? There is nothing more remarkable in the primitive history recorded in Genesis, than the simplicity of freedom from all disguise, and the manner of living and the actions, which are there portrayed. And this circumstance, if applied in detail, will be found to furnish the strongest evidence for the genuineness of the book. It bears the true and faithful stamp of the infancy of childhood of the world. You see none of that form, artifice, or refinement, which mark the advanced stages of cultivated society, none of the restrictions and checks when a natural expression of feeling, which men are subjected to in the course of the progress of improvement. It is the morning hour of the history of man, all is fresh and simple. Something of this character may be traced in that part of the primeval age..."
from whom text is selected? We are told, that Abraham after he came out of Egypt, rich in cattle, in silver, in gold, settled in Bethel, with his kinsman Lot, whose possessions were likewise considerable. They seem to have dwelt together, or very near each other; for in those days of simplicity, there was probably no division of land, it was a sort of common property, occupied by anyone, so long as it might be convenient. The flocks and herds of Ab. & Lot were so numerous, that it seems they seldom had the care of them frequently interfered with each other, & some altercations ensued. The hand was not able to heal them & there was strife between them. Ab. no sooner discovered this, than he came forward to heal the breach, to quench the quarrel in its beginning. With all the native feeling of a kind of peaceful disposition, he says to Lot, "let there be no strife, I pray thee, between the sheep of between my herdmen & thy herdmen, for we be brethren. He, then, presumes, do the best means of securing harmony that they should remove so far from each other, that their possessions might not interfere, he gives Lot his choice of the land: "if says he then wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, I will go the left." Lot accordingly made his choice, & then
every thing was settled on the happiest terms of quiet
of good neighborhood.

His wise and honorable was the conduct of Mr. in this
occasion! Even in that remote age, before it was known,
he behaved like a true man. The noble spirit of accen-
isation, as he displayed, "the earnest desire to avoid
strike, were as honorable to him as the faith from he
is so much famed. Had he favored the quarrel of his
heir, or looked upon it with indifference, a bitter
of deadly hatred might soon have grown up between
him and his kinsman; if this would have been followed
by all these acts of hooks of unkindness & mutual vexa-
then, as keep the soul continually harassed, agitated,
& destroy every good & virtuous principle. But this
was not the man to do this. He delighted not in di
knew full well, that peace & good fellowship & the
duties of man in a social state. Instead, therefore, of
giving way to the first emotions of resentment, setting
up with sharp angry words his claims or his rights; he
calms down whatever angry feelings might have exis-
ted in the mind of Lot, forms a common ground and
they might meet with kindness & good-will, & friends.
as for the first Inspector desirable blessing.

I need not say, sir, how worthy of your imitation is this fine example of the old patriarch. There are many occasions, on which we need the same honorable spirit of accommodation, the same generous temper of kindliness and forbearance. There are occasions, in which angry passions begin to be excited, & then is the time for us to use the words of the venerable Mr. “Let these, I pray thee, be no strife between thee & me, for we are brethren.” If there were more of the spirit, which dictated these words, we should not see so much of that warfare & confusion, by which families are distracted, arms the hands of individuals against their brethren in the intercourse of society. It would have required but a little of this kind of peaceable disposition to have extinguished in the beginning these quarrels, which have set friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor, province against province, even nation against nation. I speak not now of these interminable disputes, which are settled only by an appeal to arms, which convert men into something worse than the wild beasts of the forest, thirsting for blood, & ceasing not till sated with blood. War is a form of guarding the self, in which it requires a stern heart of an iron ten to des-
crive without painting & trembling... It stalks forth like a demon, before whom so happiness & prosperity, the kind, desolation, despair of every haggard form of sweet eden-swoe... From this sickening view, turn away, reply my remarks to those quarrels which occur in the private intercourse of social life. Their savages are confined to a humblest of these, but they are deadly & extensive. It would be curious for one who knew nothing previously of mankind to observe how the most fatal quarrels are sometimes got up... Some sarcastic expression, some reproachful allusion, is something done, perhaps, without the least intention of giving offense, will strike upon a mind perhaps accidentally disposed to be irritated, prove like a death-throes upon a train of new-dei. The most angry feelings will be suddenly called up, of the who has hsted these feelings, instead of endeavoring to soothe them begins to be irritated in his turn. Sharpness is met with sharpness, a month with insult; railing is given for railing & defiance for defiance. After petty provocation are committed by one, & as bad provocation from the other, till at last they settle down into a regular system of hostility, each seizes every opportunity to injure domestify the other... A man would think...
that these beings are not destined for eternity, but are judged for eternity, deemed it their duty to spend their days in fighting. Thus life is embittered, stunted aside from its purpose; man, so far as his passions are concerned, becomes but little better than the beasts that perish.

Now one might ask with astonishment, is it natural beings of whom this is a description, is it immortal beings to whom these remarks apply? Alas! the case is too common to excite any surprise; the feelings interested are too strong to be arrested by reasoning. Yet I would fain suggest a few thoughts to supply you with motives to resist a quarrelsome disposition:

1. I would urge it, as a powerful consideration, that scarcely any thing is more demoralizing, than quarrels of the indulgence of resentment. This is a point not sufficiently attended to, but one, ns. places the object in a truly awful light. These feelings, by n s. quarrels are excited, are not kept up, are almost fatal to every good social principle. This may be considered as an exaggerated statement by some, but I ask you to consult experience; it is the only true judge of the guilty, where discord and strife prevail. men are set in division against each
other. Is not moral principle in such a community generally degraded and corrupted? Is not the standard of moral conduct how unworthy? Are there not base adulterous practices, which only pass without censure, but are regarded with approbation? Is not avaricious, feeling blunted, deadened? Is there not a dulness in perceiving moral distinctions, an almost total insensitivity to them, when we perceive? I believe that I may make the appeal with safety, and that you will reply in the words of St. Paul, "where envyings, strife is, there is confusion of every evil work." And we might naturally expect beforehand that it would be so, that "every evil work" would be the natural consequence of these angry disputes, these mutual hostilities, by which the hearts of men are embittered against each other. For what is the direct effect of such a state of feeling? It is, to keep the attention of men fixed solely on one object, i.e. their interests; for this is the practical object. The passions, the duties, the processes of the mind are obscured, so that they are so long forgotten, that when the mind recovers from the intense agitation, in which it
was thrown, its sense of duty has become weakened by disease, or shattered by excitement. Under the clear sky of a beautiful night, the stars of heaven may be reflected in the stream, but not when the stream is tossed in disorder, ruffled by waves, or broken by cataracts. It must be smooth, gentle, calm & clear. So it is not when the soul is darkened by passion, torn by the violent conflict of the emotions of resentment, that it can reflect the moral aristies & the graces of social life. It must be tranquil, sober, quiet, composed. Not just in order to give the perfect image of those lovely excellencies. The man, who gives way to passion, who loses to graver & thinks it brave & honorable never to acknowledge himself in the wrong, is on the sure road to moral insensibility; will almost inevitably lose the quick perception of right & wrong. It is not merely with regard to these, against whom he is exasperated, that he forgets the laws of duty; the same passions lead him to violate or neglect his duty to many others. In general, without any reference to particular cases of resentment, by the very habit of indulging his hostile feelings, he will be much more likely to become vicious, he is degraded in his moral center.
ments of conduct, than the peaceful, kind, forgiving man, whose heart is anchored firm in good will, can be tested by the gnats of passion. A quarrelsome man will almost inevitably be a bad citizen, a bad husband, a bad father, a bad son. The acrimony which has been generated by the alternations of life will be apt to accompany him wherever he goes, and will linger among scenes, which should be devoted to kindness and better feelings. If he retains any principle, it will scarcely be such as can be defended upon, for it will ever be liable to be overthrown or swept away by the invasion of angry resentment or capricious irritation. There is then, to say the least, great moral danger in the indulgence of these passions, which spring from the offences that are scattered along our path in life; and in this ground I hold up a warning to those who are disposed to such indulgence. Then to let us think seriously of this danger is it no light or trifling thing. Are you ready to take fire at insults or injuries, real or imaginary? Remember that it is not merely the momentary effects of the desolation of the tornado of passion, to ask your exposure to self. This is bad enough, for it usually uproots dev.

states and the time at least the good things of the soul.
but there is something more than this, or worse than this; you are exposed to the dangers of losing moral principle permanently, and generally, a slow and cold person will be apt to creep over your heart, even after the forces of passion has subsided, that will carry death to many forms of good sentiments. I plead then against the disposition to resent a gross error over the offenses of life in the score of its demoralizing tendency. I maintain that while it is itself a vicious frame of mind, it is the fruitful parent of many vices, so that moments of exalted passion rob the soul of these from feelings of virtue, which coders moments she needs, the sutilst of strength.

2. The inscrutable and yielding temper is entirely opposed to the spirit of our holy religion. This is so plain that it scarcely admits any thing but a statement of the fact. Whether you consult the life of the instructions of the blessed Saviour, you will be taught this lesson must impress you by J. C. was the greatest peacemaker that ever lived; the great end, on which he appeared, was to make peace between man and his God. All that he did or taught pled for peace of forbearance. Point me to one instance in which he indulged angry or resentful feelings, one instance in which he retained dwelling for railing; I will agree that you
may be as vindictive and irritable as you please. But no such instance can you find: I can point you to many of
an opposite character; for it was he who, when his angry
disciples would fain have him solemn in fire the unkind
brother minded Samaritans who had insulted him, was
not stoop to the meanness of revenge, but assured them
it was his business to save, not to destroy; — it was he
who amidst the agencies of the cross remembereth his ene-
emies with kindness, said, I forgive them. And when
you turn to the instructions of the Gospels, you find the same
great feature prevalent throughout. The very terms, in
with the song of the angels announcing the introduction
of thy, were, that it was "peace on earth; good will to
men!" Pass next to St. Paul, the great herald of the God;
it is he who says, "if any man have a quarrel against
any, even as x forgive you, so do ye." "The fruit of the spirit,
"i.e. of the true spirit of thy, "is peace, long suffering,
gentleness, meekness." "Put on therefore bowels of mercy,
kindness, meekness of mind, meekness, long suffering,
"bearing one another, forgiving one another." "Charity
surfeith long is kind, is not easily.
provoked, thinketh no evil. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, be put away from you. "Be patient toward all men, see that none render evil for evil unto any man. St. James adds his voice to the same holy testimony: "the wisdom that is from above, says he, is just, pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, do not show it against the truth: "for this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devlish. "And from St. Peter you have this exhortation: "be ye all of one mind, having compassion on one another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing."

I have quoted these passages to show you what is the prevalent tenor of the teaching of the NT. Numerous as they are, they are but a specimen, for an abundance more of the same kind might be selected. They are enough to show that the man, who lives in books, presentments, who is not willing to make a fair or charitable compromise with one that has offended him, that such a man, says, cannot be a thief. The two characters are totally incompatible, for one is the other must be excluded.
Here then is a test, in every one many apply to himself. Do you wish to be a saint? Then you must be peaceable, full of forbearance; you must manifest the spirit of accommodation, a disposition to be reconciled with an offending brother. This is one of the first graces of a saint, other graces will wither and die without it. All the professions in the world are good for nothing without that mild generous disposition, which adorned the Saviour's life, and he the messengers inculcated so earnestly upon others.

Another motive to shun all implacable anger feelings is, the bad effect they have upon society. They kindle a flame, which spreads beyond the breasts of the individual, and is likely to consume something of the happiness and virtue of those around him. In many cases of mutual passion or offence between individuals, others are apt to take sides; the passions and feelings become contagious, one catches them from another, and the neighborhood or the village are divided into parties, from which course spring all the bad consequences of mutual ill will, of envenomated feeling, implacable resentment. Or, if its effects be not so bad, it furnishes food for scandal to the tattlers, busy bodies, who import every society, who are eager to find their pleasure in
the quarrels of others. If then we have no regard for our own peace and happiness, but no we have regard for that of society, for in proportion as we indulge angry, implacable feelings, we are spreading poison through the circle in which we move.

4. Another motive against an unaccommodating irascible temper is furnished by the solemn consideration of the brief space we have to live of the great work for which we should live. And it is a motive affecting enough one would think, to touch the most passionate revengeful. We pass but a few days in this state of being, shall these few be wearied out in the heat of contention, the servitude of passion? Life surely has evils enough, which cannot avoid if we would; shall we add to these the voluntary evils of bitter enmity? The thought of death should be a most powerful peace maker. In the grave our hostility, our anger must be quelled, if not before, for there the life is instantaneous cannot revive, the hand is crumbling to dust, it can never lift itself up in defiance. Ask of the thousands, oftentimes thousands, whose home is now the tempe, who are sleeping the sleep of death. Ask of them, if they
...would speak from their bed of dust, they would tell you that it is not long since they were as busy, contentious, and angry, as we are now, since they were agitated by the same passions, warmed by the same disputes, embittered by the same divisions, as we are; and would make you hear how fear and an heart corrupting these things. I am persuaded they would speak in accents of them, the warning against them. The day of disputes of anger with them has passed away, they now find that a tolerant, kind, peaceful spirit would be of great count in the sight of Him before whom they must appear. Nor, but a few more sums shall rise yet, because we shall be in the same situation, we like them shall be in the world of spirits, shall then like them, look back with remorse upon the wearisome dust heat of our present passions. A week of forbearing tempest will then be worth more to us than all the vicissitudes of passion, all the gratified revenge in the world. In the grave garden, which waits for us all, the most bitter enemies must lie down peacefully together with each other: inactivity, pride, and excited feelings must lie away, all must sink into a dread and awful refuge. Let us
Pause for a moment in the midst of our quarrels. reflect that we, those against whom we are exasperated, must alike go down to the tomb, must rise together, must stand together at the bar of a righteous God, where each one of us shall have need enough of mercy. It sickens the heart of a man, to think how we are wasting these precious hours of sin, the worst excitement of passion about the most frivolous objects. How shall we prepare for a heaven of peace, happiness, when in former defiance of mutual enmity, mutual unkindness, peace, harmony are the first laws of that heaven, the good shall inherit? I think you, we can be prepared for that state of things by bitterness, wrath, uncharitable feelings here. Oh no! It cannot be, that the violent, the revengeful, the unyielding can be fit subjects for the future kingdom of Him, who was meek and low in heart — whose yoke we are exhort to take upon us and learn of him, that we may find rest to our souls.

More motives for the cultivation of the spirit which I recommend might be indicated. Yet they are numerous
growing from almost every relation in life. I knew
there is a spirit in the human heart, which struggles
against these representations, a spirit of pride and
bravery, as it rises up and tells us, we cannot yield, that
it would be disgraceful to make a compromise with
one, who has injured or insulted us so much. The world
will look upon us as defeated in the contest, if we make
any acknowledgement; or who can bear the ignominy
of defeat? But all this way of thinking is unsuited to
a man, much more so, of a man. There is a great dif-
ference between the truly peaceful man, the service of
courage and man; the forbearing and mild spirit of that
man, never yet brought disgrace on anyone. Even in the world's
estimate, virtue is after all the best policy. And even
if it were not so, it is a small thing to be judged of
man's judgment; he has an account to render at a
higher tribunal, if it will be happy for us, if we can
stand there with hands washed from all share in these
murders, of angry contests, of bitter feelings, of having set
neighbors at war with neighbors, of made enemies of
these, who should be friends. The man, who aids and
in divisions of animosities is not only a curse to society,
but he has a black and heavy charge to answer for alone.
Let everyone of us remember it is better to suffer than to do wrong, let us be willing to make some sacrifice for the sake of adjusting compromising disputes, let us not multiply the thorns in the path of life, nor throw new stones of stumbling in each other way, let us in short be ever ready, like the good old patriarch, to say to our fellow men, "let there be strife, spring thee, between thee and me, for we be brethren."

At home, April 13th, 1825, afternoon.

April 1825.