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THE FOUR
TEMPERAMENTS

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THE FOUR
TEMPERAMENTS

BY

ALEXANDER WHYTE

D.D.

SECOND EDITION

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JACOB BEHMEN

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THE SANGUINE
TEMPERAMENT

A

I

THE SANGUINE TEMPERA- MENT

FROM the very earliest days of the medical and mental sciences the bodily constitutions of men, especially as those bodily constitutions bear on the mind, have been called the complexions and the temperaments. And the outstanding and distinctive temperaments have been classified

and designated from the earliest days as the sanguine temperament, the choleric temperament, the phlegmatic temperament, and the melancholy temperament. Not that any man was ever made up of blood and of blood alone, or of choler alone, or of phlegm alone, or of black bile alone. The four temperaments, as they are found in actual and living men, have undergone as many combinations and permutations as there have been individual

men and women on the face of the earth. At the same time, some one of the four great temperaments has predominated and has had the upper hand in the construction and constitution of every several man. And thus it is that, broadly speaking, each several man among us may quite correctly be described as a sanguine man, or a choleric man, or a phlegmatic man, or a melancholy man, according as this or that temperament or complexion

has the ruling hand over
him.

‘So in every human body,
The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and
blood,
By reason that they flow continually
In some one part, and are not continent,
Receive the name of humours. Now,
thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition :
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth
draw
All his effects, his spirits, and his
powers,
In their confluxions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.’

‘The blood is the life.’ And
a sanguine temperament is just
good old medical Latin for a

body and a mind full of blood— a body so full of blood, indeed, that the blood runs over, and fills the mind also. A sanguine man, then, is a man whose blood is his staple and chief feature; and that not of his body only, but much more of his mind and his heart. The sanguine man's whole mental and moral life, his whole intellectual character and spiritual complexion, takes the tinge and the temperature of his blood. His blood builds up his body, and fills his body

full of all its members and all their operations. And so is it with his mind. It is the bounding tide of blood in the hearts of our young men that keeps this otherwise old and withered world always warm and full of hope and joy. The angel of youth with his purple wings descends on this stagnant pool, in the porches of which a great multitude of impotent folk lie; and, as he alights, health and love and hope and joy are spread all around him. Thus it is that

while there is always a generation of halt and withered waiting for death, there is always a new race rising up with thankful and hopeful hearts. And it is their blood that does it. It is their young blood that does it. It is their sanguine temperament that does it. If it were for nothing else but that it keeps bright eyes, and ruddy cheeks, and clapping hands, and dancing feet alive on this place of graves, how much we should owe both to the youthful blood of the

body, and to the youthful blood of the soul.

The onward march of mankind also ; the ever-advancing providences of the Living God ; the expansion and the extension of the nations of the earth, as well as the spread and the fulness of the Church of Christ ;—all these are simply bound up with the sanguine temperament. For that happy temperament is open, hopeful, believing, enterprising, and responsive to all that is true and good. The sanguine tem-

perament beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. So truly good is this temperament in a man, and so useless and so evil does that man become who is devoid of it, that, when it dulls down, decays, and dies out in any man, we may as well bury that man out of our sight at once. His day is past. His work is done. Gather him to his fathers, and let his sons take up his once living name, and bear it onward into the new worlds of

God and of man that are ever opening their great gates to all open-minded and open-hearted men.

All down human history, both sacred and profane, we see the great deliverances, the great advancements, the great conquests and attainments, the great enlargements and the great enrichments that this so generous temperament of the heart of man has achieved. Look at all the true leaders of men in all ages. Look at the pioneers and those who have

prepared the way. Look at the men who opened their eyes, opened their hearts, spoke the first word, and took the first step. Look at home also. Who is the life of your house at home? Who is your staff? Who is the wine of your life? Is it not that son or that daughter who has a heart, and a mind, and an eye, and an ear, and a hand, and a foot, and warm and bounding blood in them all?

And yet, with all that, it must be confessed, it is with

a certain 'tinge of disapprobation' that we usually speak of the sanguine temperament. Now, why is that? With so much to be said in behalf of this temperament, why is it that there undoubtedly is a certain tincture of disapprobation and depreciation in this epithet? 'Ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys!' exclaims the master of insight and of expression. As much as to say that the sanguine in this world are the young. They are boys rather than

men. As also that great depth and great endurance of heart do not usually reside with great warmth and fulness of heart. 'The man of a purely sanguine temperament,' says a medical writer, 'his blood soon boils and soon cools; his heart rules his head; action precedes thought. It is a word and a blow, and then great sorrow for it. I know two partners in business,' he continues, 'one sanguine, the other bilious. The bilious has often to throw cold water on the

projects of the sanguine, who almost invariably fires up and says too much, and then he is miserable and ready to allow and to yield up anything. Inconstancy and levity,' he adds, 'are the chief attributes of the men of this temperament; they are good, generous, full of feeling, quick, impassioned, but fickle. Excessive and constant variety is to them as much a necessity as an enjoyment.' That is much too strong; but, at the same time, there is some truth in it. There is

just enough truth in it to justify the scornful and contemptuous exclamation in the play: 'Ye younglings! ye sanguine, shallow - hearted boys!'

From the very fact that we usually associate the sanguine temperament with youth, there is more than a tinge of disapprobation and blame when we so describe a grown-up man. He is a sanguine man, we say. We do not, in as many words, say that he is still a child; but, at bottom,

that is what we mean. When we say that a grown-up man is a sanguine man, we really mean to convey to you that he is still a boy; or, at the most, a very young man. We intend to hint that he has not really lived in the world of grown-up men at all. He has not learned his lesson in the sobering school of life. He has not yet laid to heart the defeats, the disappointments, the arrests, the overthrows, the crooks, and the crosses of human life. He is still in his

salad days, and green in judgment. He is still a sanguine-hearted boy, when, by this time, he should have been a sober-minded and a serious-hearted man.

We see the misleading and mischief-making side of the sanguine temperament in the way that many men take up, and run away with, this and that new thing. Good things, useful things, needful and necessary things are taken up, run away with, put out of their proper places and pro-

portions, and are greatly hindered and injured by men of an over-sanguine, impulsive, and enthusiastic temperament. We see political, social, ecclesiastical, religious, and many other schemes, plans, and programmes that are every day being taken up, and for a time run to death, by the over-sanguine and the inexperienced. They are all good things in their place; they are all needful and necessary things; but they are all injured past repair

when they get into the hot hands of the men who think about, talk about, and will let you think about, and talk about, nothing else. Those are the men who set out to wash the Ethiopian white with rose-water, to bind Samson with a green grass, and to tame a leopard with a child's toy.

The mischiefs of this temperament, when it enters into religious life, we see all around us every day. The victims of the sanguine temperament are always discovering some new

thing in their religion—a new minister; a new evangelist; a new doctrine; and a short cut to salvation. Like Pliable, they cannot get you to go fast enough for them. Lo here! or lo there! they are continually crying. But a short time comes and goes, and another new thing is discovered, another new nostrum, another new man. Want of depth, want of real seriousness, want of steadfastness, want of endurance, want of a lasting loyalty to any man, or to any

cause,—these things have brought, not a tinge of disapprobation only, but a positive contempt and scorn on the over-sanguine temperament, and especially on that temperament in the most serious of all things—the soul of man and the salvation of God.

At the close of his *Treatise of the Four Complexions*, Teutonicus says some things like this to those of his readers who are of this complexion. Thy complexion, he says, is a right noble complexion; and

in it thou mayest live a right orderly, calm, sober, and most useful life, if only thou art on the watch over it, and over thyself in it. There is a certain scope, horizon, and atmosphere in thy peculiar complexion; and thus by means of it thou art capable of great undertakings and great attainments. Thou art happily open to what is new; look well to thyself, and keep true to that good thing when it is old, and no longer new. Thou art much inclined to love;

place thy love on its right object ; give thy whole heart to it, and be faithful to it till death. This cold world will often gibe at thee for the warmth of thy heart. But a little passing scorn will afterwards bring thee the more honour before God and man, and both in this world and in the world to come.

THE CHOLERIC
TEMPERAMENT

II

THE CHOLERIC TEMPERA- MENT

FROM the very earliest days cholera has been the universally accepted and well-understood name of that lymph, rheum, or humour of the body which was supposed to cause heat in the mind and irascibility in the temper. 'If any man's soul,' says Behmen, 'be clothed about with

the choleric complexion, then he is tempted to be a fiery, fierce, fretful, and wrathful man. These things rise up in the choleric man's soul,—anger, pride, ambition, and desire of exaltation. A wish to tread all other men under his feet; a disposition to despise and insult the poor and miserable; tyranny and murder;—these are in the heart of every choleric man. The devil does not much need to tempt this temperament; he has but to pipe, and the choleric man

rises up and dances to his music.'

But let us begin with the good side of our somewhat suspicious subject. For God has made all things good in their proper place and at their proper season ; and bile, both black and yellow, among the rest—bile in the body and choler in the mind. This is the fiery temperament. But then, fire also is good ; for was not fire the gift of Heaven at the first? Fire is a bad master indeed, but it is one

of the very best of servants. And so is anger, which is just the fire of the soul. In his eighth sermon, Bishop Butler institutes a characteristic inquiry into anger. That profound sermon contains at once an inquiry, an exposition, a defence, and a direction, that the choleric man who reads it will never forget. Why, asks that princely teacher, why has God, who is goodness and love, and who has made man in His own image of goodness and love,—why

has He kindled in man the choleric temperament? Why has He laid in man's soul, ready for the match, the fires of anger, and resentment, and retaliation, and revenge? And Butler answers his own difficulties as he only can answer them. Anger, he boldly answers, is a sharp sword put into our hand by Nature herself; and she does not intend that that sharp sword should rust in its scabbard. As long as there are evil-doers abroad in the earth;

as long as injustice, and cruelty, and wrong are inflicted by bad men on their weak and innocent neighbours; so long will God be amply justified for having kindled the sudden fire of anger in good men's hearts, as also for having banked up righteous resentment and recompense against the unjust and wicked man.

But take this temperament as a sound state of the soul; take it as having seated itself in an honest and good heart; and then this temperament of

choleric and hot coals is surely the very noblest and the very best temperament of all the four. Take a man who has been made a partaker of the divine nature, and put choleric into that man's heart, and you have the best manner of man that walks this earth. You have a true nobleman; you have a true prince and a leader of men; you have a true king of men. And all men see him, feel his presence among them, and confess his greatness; for he is open, and

free, and hospitable, and full of heart. He is alive where all other men around him are dead. He is bold, brave, fearless, single-eyed, single-hearted, whole-hearted, pure-hearted. Where other men wait, and hearken, and hold in, and hesitate, and hedge, and calculate; where other men trim, and steer, and hug the shore; with an eagle eye, with an angel eye, with a divine eye, he sees the right way afar off, and is already far on in it. Opposition, resistance,

suffering even, do not alter his mind nor shake his heart, unless it be still more to purify his mind and his heart, and still more to fix and settle him in the clear and sure way of truth and goodness and love. When you cast stones and discharge weapons at the man whose whole life condemns you—‘So help me God’ he answers. ‘Here God has set me. Here I stand, if I stand alone.’ The man with this heat in his heart has the Son of God Himself for his ex-

ample; for His disciples remembered that it was written of Him, 'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up.'

The bad side of this temperament is naked enough and open enough to all. The whole world is full of the woe that the choleric temperament works when it is allowed to become bitter anger, soaking malice, and diabolical revenge. Nations, churches, congregations, families, and the homes and the hearts of men, lie in ashes all around us because of

anger and ill-temper. All our other evil passions, taken together, slay their thousands, but this evil passion of anger its tens of thousands. There is always some one in every house—it is a happy house where there are not two—hot as gunpowder. The least thing—in his own house—makes the choleric man a madman. A child's cry will do it at one time, and the same child's laugh at another time; a servant's stumble; a wife's oversight and absence of mind;

a chair or a table an inch out of its place ; a message not delivered and answered to the imperious and exacting moment ; anything ; nothing. Like the legendary white thorn of Judæa, the choleric man's heart will kindle a conflagration merely by chafing against itself. And then a hot look is darted ; a hot word is spoken ; a hot blow is dealt ;—and that house, that home of husband and wife and child, is never the same again as long as one stone of it stands upon

another. And then, far worse than even that, there are the covered-up, but hell-hot, ashes of ill-will and malice and hatred. 'Gunpowder,' says an old author, 'will take and will fall into a blaze sooner than lime, and yet lime hath the more hidden and scathing heat; it burns far longer, and far more inwardly; and if you put your hand or your foot inadvertently into it, it burns far more deadly.' It is Paul's fear lest their sudden anger should smoulder down into

life-long hatred, that makes the Apostle beseech all his readers not to let the sun go down upon their wrath. Jeremy Taylor, in his rich commentary on the Sixth Commandment, tells us an ancient story or two as his delightful manner is. Leontius Patricius was one day extremely angry with John, the patriarch of Alexandria; but at evening the patriarch sent this message to the angry man, 'Sir, the sun is set.' Upon which, Patricius, being a reader of Paul,

See
De
Quinca
Confession

took the hint, threw away his anger, and became wholly subject to the counsel and the ghostly aids of the patriarch. And, again, Plutarch, the prince of story-tellers, and the source of Taylor's best stories, reports to us that the Pythagoreans were such strict observers of the very letter of this caution that at sunset they always shook hands and departed home friends.

But by far the most deceitful and destructive kind of choler is choler for God.

There are many men among us who would see at once that it had its rise in their own evil hearts if they were plunged into anger at wife or child or servant or dog or horse or chair or table, who are as angry as hell itself on account of religion, and all the time think that they do God an acceptable service. Even Moses, who, up to that day, seemed to have been born without bile altogether,—even Moses, the meekest of men, fell, for

God's sake, into an unpardonable sin. For one hot word against his erring brethren, for one hot stroke of his staff against the unoffending rock, Moses lived all his after days under a cloud, and so died. And, in times of religious controversy, our very best men say and do the most rancorous things; nurse and feed their own and other people's bad passions; hate men, and hate even the fathers and mothers and wives and children of men who, in a few years, are ad-

mitted by the whole world to have been right. Just think of a saint like Lord Shaftesbury speaking of a book he did not like as having been spewed out of hell—the most beautiful book on the life of our Lord that ever was written. Of all kinds of choler, let all earnest and God-fearing men watch and beware of religious choler. The *odium theologicum* is the devil's hottest, most deceitful, and most deadly coal.

That man, says Jacob Behmen, who has his soul

compassed about with a choleric complexion must, above all things, practise at every turn, and exercise himself like an athlete, in humility. He must every day pour the cold water of humility upon the hot coals of his own complexion. Therefore, exclaims Teutonicus, thou that art choleric, take warning and advice. Be a humble-minded man. Press with all thy might after meekness in word and thought; and so shall not thy temperament enflame thy soul. Thy

temperament is not alien to God ; only take good care of its evil tendency and temptations. Choleric man ! mortify thy temperament and thy complexion. And do it all to the glory of God.

Another good thing to do is this. Say every day to yourself that you know yourself. Say to yourself that you have good cause to know yourself. Say how much you have suffered from yourself. And admit also and confess how much other people, and

especially your own people, have suffered from you. Say to yourself that you know now, what all men have long known, that you are a very choleric and a very dangerous man. As often as you see the word temperament, or complexion, or humour, or passion in print, or hear any of those words spoken, take occasion to tell yourself on the spot what your peculiar temperament, complexion, humour, ruling passion still is. Never see gunpowder without spiritualising it. Never

see lime without taking it home. Never see fire without pouring water upon your own. Never see smoke without a prayer that the fire may not spread.

Then, again, descend to particulars. Stamp out every several spark, and pour water on every single cinder in your heart. Tie up your tongue and your hands in the places and beside the people where you are tempted to lash out with the one and to strike out with the other. If you are

a father, or a master, or a schoolmaster, or a minister, set a watch on the door of your lips every morning before you encounter the stupid, and the disobedient, and the injurious, and the ungrateful. If you are a public man, and if your duty leads you into places of debate and contention and division, hold your peace. Keep quiet, even if you should burst. Your silence will be your best speech. Everybody knows your mind. The cause will lose nothing, and you will

gain much, both for the cause and for yourself, by keeping a watch on the door of your far too choleric mouth. Best of all, be angry, and sin not. But that attainment only comes to you after a long life of banking up your inward fires, making them burn low, and putting them out.

This is the choleric man's prayer out of the *Golden Grove*: Lord, let me be ever courteous, and easy to be entreated. Never let me fall into a peevish or contentious

spirit. Let me follow peace with all men, offering forgiveness, inviting them by courtesies, ready to confess my own errors, apt to make amends, and desirous to be reconciled. Give me the spirit of a Christian, charitable, humble, merciful and meek, useful and liberal; angry at nothing but my own sins, and grieving for the sins of others; that, while my passion obeys my reason, and my reason is religious, and my religion is pure and undefiled, managed with

humility, and adorned with charity, I may escape Thy anger, which I have deserved, and may dwell in Thy love, and be Thy son and servant for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE PHLEGMATIC
TEMPERAMENT

III

THE PHLEGMATIC TEMPERA- MENT

THERE is some confusion about the derivation and transmission of the epithet phlegmatic, but the phlegmatic temperament is quite well known to us.

To begin with, the man of a phlegmatic temperament has escaped already all the peculiar temptations of the too san-

guine man and the too choleric man. The phlegmatic man has not their hot heart in his bosom. Their hot blood does not roar in his veins. The storms of all kinds of passion that are continually surging and bursting out in them are a mystery to him. They look like wild beasts to him when their passions are upon them. Now that of itself is a great gain to the phlegmatic man. For the man of a hot heart often ruins himself past all recovery before he is a man.

He has not seldom sold himself for nought before he knows what he is doing. He has run himself on a hundred rocks, and all his days his prayers and his praises are full of nothing else but his broken bones. But the calm, cool, cold man escapes all that. He is not tossed about with every wind. His feet are not on the soft sand. He has his root in himself. He is a solid, stable, strong man. That is, when his phlegmatic temperament is not wholly given over to itself, but

is balanced and redressed by its complementary and compensatory virtues.

His enemies call the phlegmatic man unconcerned and indifferent, and so, perhaps, he sometimes is—too much. But even his unconcern, which angers you so much, has its good side. For, if he is unconcerned, then he is unconcerned. He says to himself that your affairs are no concern of his. If he is not busy, he is not busy in other men's matters, not even in

yours. He has forgotten, he neither knows nor cares to know, the things that so much interest so many other people in you. For the life of him, he had forgotten that there ever was a skeleton in your closet. When they ask him, he has forgotten again how old you are. He has been told—Oh! my dear, you know how often I have told you; but, with all that, he has clean forgotten how much you got with your wife. The wearisome, careless man has

no idea how many children you have, nor who their mothers were — the first wife or the second. You must not ask him. He has no head. He has no interest. He is all out in the facts of life. He is not a companionable man. He is a most uninteresting man; he has no talk; he knows nothing. No, neither about your neighbours to you, nor about you to your neighbours. Phlegm has two sides.

Lotze is particularly lenient

to the phlegmatic temperament. 'I shall perhaps be regarded,' he says, 'as the advocate of a strange thesis when I say that I regard this temperament as the natural and proper temperament of advanced age; and, at the same time, as an improvement on the choleric temperament, with its prejudices and its narrownesses.' All true. But then, this is not the natural temper of advanced age only; it is the natural temper of all ages

that are advancing in truth and in goodness; it is the natural temper of all ages in which men are learning to take home to themselves the mischiefs that heat and hurry work, and to lay to heart the great need there is for sober-mindedness and self-command, foresight and forethought, among the tempests and whirlpools of human passion. Alas that all our lives should be so far advanced before we come, by sound judgment and a well-

garnered experience, to the full fruits of our several temperaments. Reason, religion, and growth in character, should achieve for us that balance, and that weight, and that possession and reserve of power over ourselves and over our circumstances which no temperament, the best, will of itself alone give; but to all which this temperament now before us is well fitted to make a large and an immediate contribution. Then, again, just as

advancing age gives a man an easy mastery over the rampant passions of his youth, so does this temperament go to help even a young man to that mastery, if he cares to have it. The chorus at the end of *Samson Agonistes* testifies in noble language to that 'calm of mind, all passion spent,' to which the Highest Wisdom leads all His children at the last, and His children of this temperament soonest and easiest of all.

Sloth sums up, in one short

and expressive word, the bad side of this temperament. Some part of what we call sloth in some men is, no doubt, in fairness to be set down to such a phlegmatic constitution that it would take the will and the energy of a giant to overcome it. There are men of such a slow-working heart; their blood creeps through their veins at such a snail's pace; their joints are so loosely knit, and their whole body is so lethargic, that both God

and man must take all that into consideration before they condemn them. And when we must say sloth in his case, we still take into account all that can be said in extenuation, and the phlegmatic man will not be blamed for what he could not help. He will only be blamed and chastised for what he could quite well have helped, if he had only resolved to help it. At the same time, sloth is sloth, laziness is laziness, whatever your temperament may be.

Laziness, indeed, is not of the body at all; it is of the mind; it is of the will; it is of the heart; it is of the moral character. It is not their temperaments that make shipwrecks of so many of our students' and of our ministers' lives. The phlegmatic minister has not worked harder on Sabbath than some of his people have worked every day all the week. But he is a minister, and he has no master beside him but his own conscience; and so he

spends all Monday on the sofa with a newspaper and a novel. He will read for his pulpit—to-morrow forenoon, and visit his sick in the afternoon. But to-morrow he is not very well in the morning, and it rains in the afternoon. On Wednesday he has still four whole days before Sabbath; and, besides, his letters are in terrible arrears; he has not had time to answer a note for a fortnight. A friend drops in to spend Thursday with him;

but what of that? he has all Friday and Saturday to be kept shut up and absolutely sacred. On Friday forenoon he is told that his old elder, who was so ill, is dead; and he is as unhappy a man all that day as you could wish him to be. And he has a very unhappy errand before him that afternoon in having to explain to the bereaved family how busy he has been all the beginning of the week. He sits into

Saturday morning seeking for his Sabbath text, but has to go to bed before he has found it. All Saturday he has his meals at his desk, and he is like a bear robbed of her whelps if anybody but looks at him or speaks to him. On Sabbath morning he takes an old rag out of his drawer, and his people look at one another, as he cannot even read it. Brother minister, of the most remote and illiterate congregation in Scotland, sit down to thy desk

early every day; and if God has made thee of a slothful, lethargic, phlegmatic temperament, only sit down all the more doggedly. Let every lazy student of divinity, and with him every waiting, complaining, postponing probationer, go drown himself at once.

Johnson

The phlegmatic temperament has its compensations at some times, in some companies, and in some circumstances, but never in the study, and of all places on the earth, never in the closet. Fight

with thy worst devil, thy slothful self, in thy place of secret prayer every day and every night. Thy battle is set thee there. It is set thee there by the Captain of thy salvation, whose zeal ate Him up day and night. Thy crown will be won by thee or taken from thee there. Fight the good fight with thy phlegmatic temperament there. Fight with thy constitutional sloth there. Fight this day with thy procrastination there. Blot out to-morrow there.

THE MELANCHOLY
TEMPERAMENT

IV

THE MELANCHOLY TEM- PERAMENT

IT has long been a popular proverb that certain temperaments obtain and prevail among certain races and nations of men. Our old literature is full of the sanguineness, light-mindedness, over-confidence, and inconstancy of France; the phlegm, solidity, steadiness, and en-

duration of Germany; the brag and the hot breath of Spain; the quick choler—a word and a blow—of Italy; and the melancholy of England, where men take their very pleasures sadly. ‘A peculiar vein of constitutional sadness belongs to the Greek temperament,’ says Professor Butcher in his fine paper on the Melancholy of the Greeks, in which paper its learned author traces the manifestations of that melancholy down through the whole of the Greek classics. Not

that all Frenchmen are light-minded; or all Germans steady and enduring; or all Spaniards, or all Italians, choleric; or all Englishmen, or all Greeks, melancholy. But, broadly speaking, the thing is true. It may be in their race and lineage; it may be in their history; it may be in their religious, political, or social conditions; or it may be in all these things taken together; but there is unquestionably a prevailing temperament in all these, and in

all the other distinct races and nations of men. Then, again, it has been held that certain occupations, certain pursuits, certain interests, certain professions, and certain handicrafts even, tend to produce, develop, and perpetuate certain temperaments and certain dispositions, and there is a good deal to be said for that doctrine also.

Dr. Butcher quotes Aristotle approvingly as saying that all men of genius are of a melancholy temperament. And that,

when it is said by one of the profoundest students of human nature the world has ever seen, is all but final. For, besides being a man of a supreme genius himself, Aristotle lived among a people, and in an age, in which genius blossomed out as never before nor since on the face of the earth. And all that is wanting to make his affirmation absolutely final and conclusive is the observation and experience of like observers and like experimenters in the ages, and

among the races of men, since his day. And though there have undoubtedly been men of genius who were of a light, gay, elastic, and vivacious temperament ; yet by far the greatest, the most original, and the most commanding men, in all ages, go to prove the author of the *Ethics* to have been, not only a profound psychologist and moralist in his own day, but a true prophet for all the days and all the races that have come after him.

‘A more than ordinary

depth of thought,' says Jacob Behmen, 'produces this temperament.' There you have the whole truth and the best truth in a nutshell. Let a more than ordinary depth of thought be found in any man, and that man's mind will naturally and necessarily move among the mysteries, the solemnities, the sadnesses, and the awful issues of human life, till, as sure as shadow follows substance, that man is a melancholy man. And thus it is that when, either in life or in

literature, you meet with a man of an extraordinary depth of thought, you will see shafts of sadness and chasms of melancholy sinking down into that man's mind and heart and character—clefts and chasms that will offend, exasperate, and scare away all light-minded and shallow-hearted onlookers.

Great examples, in a great subject like this, are far better than any man's disquisitions and argumentations upon it. For great examples are the

disquisitions and the arguments of God. Take two great examples on this matter then. And, first, take that of the author of *The Four Complexions* and *The Divine Vision*: 'Before I was led into the light of God, I saw, and thought, and felt like the men around me. But when I was awakened, and went on, I fell into a great melancholy. Brooding on the darkness of this world—the height of the heavens and the depth of the earth—men, good men on the

one hand, and bad men on the other—chance, fate, providence—the whole unfathomable mystery of life, I became very dejected, melancholy, and mournful, and could find no consolation, not even in Holy Writ. The deeper my thoughts went, the deeper did my spirit fill with sadness; till, after long and sore wrestling, I got light upon many things which had been before that as dark as midnight to me.’ But this deep thinker’s speculative, philosophical, and theological melan-

choly only prepared the way for a spiritual and an experimental melancholy which took deeper and deeper possession of his mind and heart, till that light broke upon his melancholy mind and heart in which there is no shadow, and which never sets.

John Foster was a man of an extraordinary depth of thought, and this is how he writes to one of his most thoughtful correspondents :—
‘Everything that interests my heart leads me into this mingled

emotion of melancholy and sublime. I have lost all taste for the light and the gay; rather, I never had any such taste. I turn disgusted and contemptuous from insipid and shallow folly, to lave in the tide, the stream,—of deeper sentiments. I have criminally neglected regular, studious thinking for many years. My greatest defects are in regard to religion, on which subject, as it respects myself, I want to have a profound and solemn investigation, which I foresee

must be mingled with a great deal of painful and repentant feeling. What a serious task it is to confront one's self with faithful truth, and to see one's self by a light that will not flatter! At the last tribunal no one will regret having been a habitual and rigorous judge of self.' Does any one ask what a true and a wise 'melancholy' is? Does any one wish to know what that mourning is which our Lord pronounces to be blessed? I know no better English example of it than

John Foster ; I know no better German example of it than Jacob Behmen ; and no better example of it ever lived than the French Blaise Pascal. Dante, Cromwell, Johnson, and Cowper will occur to all in this connection. And the melancholy of all these men is a melancholy worthy of the solemn name. Their melancholy is that into which all truly great minds, and all truly deep, awakened, and enlightened hearts more and more sink down, till they and their mel-

ancholy are all swallowed up in the ocean of light and liberty that is at God's right hand.

All those masters in the intellectual and spiritual life both lived and wrote in a profound melancholy; and 'melancholy,' says Samuel Rutherford, a master also, 'is such a complexion that, when it is sanctified, it becomes a seat of mortification and of humble walking.' Yes, let the melancholy temperament only be sanctified; let the darkness, and the doubt, and the gloom,

and the despondency, and the querulousness, and the moroseness, be all taken out of it, and you will straightway have all that depth, and strength, and detachment, and superiority, and sovereignty of mind and heart, which Rutherford calls the mortification and the sanctification of the saints. And, as he says, it will be a seat of humble walking also. For the truly humble man,—who is he, but the man who has gone down deep into himself, and who abides there,

and walks with God there? No man can continue to be a proud man who walks much with God in his own heart. No man carries his head high there. No man looks down on his neighbour there. He may be the most intellectual of men ; he may be the most spiritual of men ; and if only he is both, then you have the humblest man that ever was on this side heaven. If John Milton's melancholy is the daughter of retirement and learning ; then, by the Spirit of God,

she is afterwards the sure mother of humility and mortification, and thus of all the fruits of the Spirit.

But sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, melancholy, and all,—we all belong to the same family of the Fall. God has made us all of the same blood. And we all have our own portion and plot of human nature selected, allotted, and laid out for us to till, and to keep, and to reap in for God. Some men's plots are harder to make much of than others'.

Some men's plots are already full of stones, and weeds, and fallen fences, through past generations of misuse and neglect. One man's vineyard will lie more to the sun than his neighbour's; but every man's inheritance summons him to his utmost skill, and care, and labour. With that, the most unpromising piece of ground will bring forth an honest harvest; and without that, the best ground that ever was laid out will soon run into a wilderness.

We cannot all have the same temperament. One will have a better and a more easily handled temperament than his neighbour. But the best temperament has its dangers ; and the worst is not without its compensations and opportunities. And a wise man will give all his attention to himself, and will hail all offered help to know himself, and to make the best of himself. To climb up and look over the wall and call the attention of the passer-by to the weeds

in his neighbour's garden,—
no wise man will do that.
No man but a fool will do that.
His own hoe and his own
mattock will take up all his
time and all his strength. No
wise man will attend to any-
thing in this world so much
as to his own heart, and to
his temperament and his cir-
cumstances as they affect his
heart. Are you, then, a man
of a melancholy temperament?
Is your constant temptation to
gloom, and sadness, and morose-
ness, and peevishness? Do

clouds, and fogs, and sour east winds hang continually over your soul? Do you spend all your days in 'the melancholy inn'? And would you escape all that? Or, if all that cannot be escaped in this life, how are you best to do? You will be careful to read how all the great melancholians did. You will study and imitate the great men, and especially the great saints, of your own temperament. You will make a little library of the melancholy men of God. You will

worm into their secrets. You will work yourself into their ways. And, as you sit alone, and read their psalms and their prayers and their diaries and their letters and their confidential conversations, you will ever and anon lift up your imagination and your heart to that life on which they have now all entered; to that city where there is no night, and no sea, and where God has wiped all tears from their eyes.

Now I saw in my dream

that Christiana thought she heard in a grove, a little way off on the right hand, a most curious melodious note, with words much like these—

‘Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me ;
And in God’s house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.’

So she asked Prudence what ’twas that made those curious notes? They are, said she, our country birds: they sing these notes but seldom except it be at the spring, when the flowers appear, and the

sun shines warm, and then you may hear them all day long. I often, said she, go out to hear them; we also oftentimes keep them tame in our house. They are very fine company for us when we are melancholy; also they make the woods, and groves, and solitary places, places desirous to be in.

‘ His truth at all times firmly stood,’
—that melodious note went on
in the wood—

‘ And shall from age to age endure.’



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