

PLAINNESS AND INNOCENT SIMPLICITY

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Plainness and Innocent Simplicity

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WITH

*The salutary Effects, compared to the corrupting Nature
and dreadful Effects of WAR.*

WITH

*Some Account of the blessing which attends on a Spirit influenced by
divine Love, producing Peace and Good-Will to Men.*

*The true Believer in Christ, is relieved from all fear; but the
fear of offending God; nor does he know of any Enemy, but the
Corruption of his own Heart*

No Man is happy, till he thinks, on earth,
There breathes not a more happy than himself
Then envy dies, and Love o'erflows on-all :
And Love o'erflowing makes an Angel here.
Such Angels all, intitled to repose
On him who governs fate, tho' tempest frowns,
Tho' nature shakes, how soft to lean on heaven.

Young's Night Thoughts:

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T H E

Plainness and Innocent Simplicity

O F T H E

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE Gospel of Jesus Christ is a special manifestation of the love of God to mankind. Our blessed Saviour came into the world to put an end to sin, to finish transgression and in the room thereof to bring in everlasting righteousness. Hence he was called Jesus, a Saviour, a Deliverer, to save his people from their sins* and in the room thereof to introduce his life, light and spirit in them, that they might serve him, without fear, in holiness,
and

* Not in their sin by a faith or belief in our Saviour's outward sufferings, but by a radical change of heart through the operation of his spirit.

and righteousness, all the days of their lives. Hence we are told, John i. 12. That as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God. Himself kindly invites his creatures to partake of this love, Matt. xii. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." No circumstance of life can separate or incapacitate us from being made partakers of this love; ever the most abased appear to be the particular objects of his care, Isaiah lxvi. 1. "The Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool—but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word" The plainness and simplicity of the work of redemption, in opposition to the perplexed intricacies of those systems of religion taught in the schools, &c. is most worthy of note. Where a feeling sense of our natural corruption prevails, and a sincere desire of being delivered from the power of evil, with a conviction that this great work is alone to be perfected by obedience to the teaching of the spirit of grace, the work of redemption is so plain and easy, that we read Isa. xxxv. 8. The wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein.

This power of God to salvation, operating

ing, through obedience, in the minds of the sincere hearted, has from the beginning of the world been verified in the experience of people of every kind and nation.* Indians, Negroes, and others, even those esteemed of the lowest order, by no means excepted: Many of these have, in great simplicity, experienced its salutary effects: a remarkable instance, whereof some years past appeared in a number of Indians in this province, since removed beyond the Allegany Mountains. The account given by some of the first of these was, that being, through divine favour, made desirous of leading an orderly, religious life, they found a violent opposition in themselves, to this good work, from the hardness, or as they termed it, the badness, which they felt in their hearts,† this put them upon seeking help from their fellow-men; but being disappointed therein, they were induced to seek and cry to God, the great and good Creator of the heart of man, who, as they persisted in seeking to him,

A 2

granted

* Matt. viii. 11. Many shall come from the East, and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven.—Rev. vii. 9. I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all Nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues stood before the throne

† Jer. xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it.

granted their request, they finally experienced the hardness, and badness of their hearts taken away; * and in the room thereof, love to God, and tenderness to their fellow-men prevailed to that degree, as enabled them to bear the ill usage which some of these might inflict upon them, without resentment; but rather with pity and compassion; from a consideration that those who thus persecuted them, were still captives to that evil power which had so long kept them in thralldom, from which, through divine favour, they were delivered. †

The

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

† These Indians, absolutely, refused to be concerned in war, of any kind, however they were threatened and abused on this account by the other Indians, being persuaded that in the original creation of men, God did not intend they should annoy, or kill, but cherish and comfort each other. In this disposition they have continued now, for about thirty years, notwithstanding the ill treatment they have received from Indians and others: more especially of late that they have been pillaged, their settlements at three towns broke up, and they carried away captives towards Canada. Those Indians who carried them away, giving as a reason for this violence, that they were in their way, and a great obstruction to them, when going to war. See the Pennsylvania Packet, for December 22, 1701.

The simplicity and plainness of the Gospel call, farther appears in the account given by Edward Andrews, a person, afterwards, an eminent instrument in the hand of God, in gathering many towards the fold of rest. His residence was at that time in the Jerseys, near the Sea-shore, amongst a wild sort of people, Indians and others, vain and loose in their conversation, fond of frolicking, music and dancing; amongst these he acted the part of a fiddler. In this situation, as he was one day working in his field, he came across a part of a human body, which he had seen before, which, as he now saw it, lying on the ground, a thought struck him, that it was not right to suffer a part of his fellow-creature to be thus thrown up and down in the open field; but that he ought to do with it as he would desire to be done by in the like condition; after some reasoning in this sort, he decently buried it, and returned to his work again, with an answer of peace in his mind. From that time he grew pensive, the pure witness of truth rose in him, by which he was made sensible he had spent many years in vanity, that it was high time for him to turn unto the Lord, and a desire was begot in him to experience an inward acquaintance with God, and be favoured with power from
him

him, to forsake his vanity and loose living, the iniquity of which was then opened to him; and he found a call in his mind to destroy that fiddle, which had been so much an instrument to lead himself, and others, to the mispending their precious time; this he concluded to do, when he went home; but delaying to perform this resolution, as he lay in his bed he felt the fire of God's wrath kindled, on account of his disobedience, which induced him, the next day, to break the fiddle in pieces, which, when done his heart rejoiced, and he felt a strength of hope rising in him, that God would give him farther power over all his vanities: A sense was also given him, that if he was faithful to what the Lord would require of him, he should be made an instrument in God's hand, to gather a people to his praise, from those very loose people amongst whom he resided, which seemed strange to him. But as his heart became daily more and more exercised towards God, and in giving him thanks, for his mercies, a lively concern and desire came upon him, that sinners might be brought, as he had been, to a sight of the error of their ways. He then found it to be his duty to speak to those same people, whom he had led on in folly and vanity, and to direct them to the ser-
vice

vice of God; this he at first found to be hard work; but being charged by the spirit, to be faithful to what was required of him; and made sensible that if he was so, God would be with him, but that if he refused, he should be left to himself, and fall into a worse condition than that he was in before, he was enabled to speak to them, though in great fear, and the Lord caused his admonition to be well received by his neighbours. And on the next day of worship, instead of spending their time in rioting and excess, as they were used to do, some of them sat with him to read the scriptures, and confer together upon the things which related to eternity; in which his understanding was opened to see, that the right worship of God was to be performed in silence, unless when moved by the spirit to appear in vocal service, under which prospect he found himself moved to kneel down and pray; and, sometime after, to exhort his companions, which was accompanied with so much energy and power, that the people were much affected: Thus the Lord manifested his love and power amongst those people, by this mean instrument, till by degrees, a religious meeting was gathered to the praise of God, whose baptizing power was sensibly felt amongst them;

them; in which service he continued during the whole course of his life.

By these and many more instances which could be mentioned, the gospel dispensation is undoubtedly confirmed to be a manifestation of peculiar love and good will to men, through a communication of the spirit of grace, influencing the hearts of those who submit to its operation, whereby the hearts of the faithful being replenished, it abundantly flows out in acts of goodness, sympathy and compassion to their fellow-men, and leads not only to pity and commiserate those who remain in bondage to their corruption, but also to overcome the evil they may inflict, with benignity, patience and love.

When christianity, considered in this light, is compared with the pride, the selfishness and the wrath, so predominant in the world, particularly in the indulgence of those lusts, which the apostle declares to be the occasion of war, with all its destructive and corrupting effects, it cannot but strike the considerate mind with amazement and horror.

Several historians observe, that at the battle of Cunnorsdorf, between the Prussians and the Muscovites, in 1759, the carnage was truly horrible, about twenty thousand Prussians lay on the field; the loss of the
Russians

Russians, amounted to ten thousand. At the battle of Zorndorf, the loss of the Russians, amounted to ten thousand dead on the spot, and ten thousand wounded most of them mortally. * To think how many of these were dragged from their connections, and compelled to kill or be killed, separated from a wife, a parent, or children, who stood in need of their affectionate care and assistance; but more especially to consider the number, which were suddenly cut off from life, and driven into eternity, in the bitterness of wrath and revenge or other excesses, to which the life of a soldier is so much exposed, from any farther power of answering the end of their existence, must occasion very solemn reflections to every considerate, feeling, mind. And if we turn our eyes from this deplorable spectacle, towards the many thousands † who, after such battles remain alive, in a wounded condition; many so sorely as to be obliged to undergo the painful amputation of their limbs, or perhaps more grievous operation, to suffer long under the cure. And yet more piteous is the case of those
whose

* History of the war, from 1756, to 1760, page 314.

† In some cases were the vanquished retreats before the victor, many thousands are after battles left to die in the field.

whose wounds, beyond the possibility of cure or for want of sufficient help, die in painful languishment. From this view of the dreadful effect of war, there will naturally arise a query, in the minds of every reasonable, feeling, heart, why and whence does such shocking scenes take place amongst men of humanity and reason, to say nothing of christianity; a scene contrary to every idea of that mutual affection and good will, which nature and duty, so forcibly calls for, from creatures so helpless in themselves, and who stand in such need of one another's sympathy and assistance, originally formed, by one common father, for the purpose of serving and honouring him, through a life of virtue, thankfulness and love, which, himself declares, is best manifested by mutual endearments, in patience and love to each other. To these observations, which will necessarily occur to those, whose senses are not totally deafened, or heart quite hardened by the lust of revenge, the lust of honour, the desire of wealth; it is generally answered, that the case is grievous indeed, but that there is no other means of preventing injustice and oppression from reigning in triumph, but by the means of war. If those who make this answer, would endeavour to quiet the tumultuous passions of nature,

nature,

nature, suffer reason and humanity to speak, and only consider from the idea implanted in us, from our youth, of our Maker's goodness, they cannot otherwise think, but that if he was properly sought unto, he would provide different modes of settling those differences, which will naturally arise from the different tempers and interest of mankind. He has expressly declared himself to be a God, hearing prayer, For the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith the Lord, Psalm lxxvi. 9. That he is so ready to fulfil the desire of the honest hearted, that even before they call he will answer, whilst they are yet speaking he will hear, Isa. lxxv. 24. And to remove all doubts of every right petition being answered; our Saviour brings it to the most sensible feelings of nature, even to the tender connection of a father, to his child; "if a son, says he, ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone; or if he ask a fish, will he give him a scorpion; if you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the holy spirit, to those that ask it." Luke xi. 11. But in fact men, who are encouragers of war, either give way to an evil heart of unbelief,

or take pleasure in indulging their wrath, their selfishness and pride, or the more iniquitous desire of advancing their fortunes. That wars are mentioned in the Old Testament to have subsisted before the time of our Saviour's appearance upon earth, makes nothing in its favour under the dispensation of peace and universal love, under which we now live, which he came to establish. The apostle in the description he gives of the occasion of war, makes no distinction between present and past times, but centers the origin of war wholly in those lusts, which war against the soul, "ye fight, ye kill, and desire to have, that ye may spend it upon your lusts." Hence there is reason to conclude, wars were allowed to the Jews for the same reason, as our Saviour tells them, Moses suffered them to put away their wives, because of the hardness of their hearts, and was a violence upon that purity and brotherly love, which subsisted in the beginning. Neither does the force used in the support of civil order, to regulate the weak and ill disposed, make any thing in favour of war. Government is the ordinance of God, a compact and agreement of a number of people, mutually to support justice and order amongst themselves, upon an infringement of that order, restraint becomes necessary

necessary as mentioned in scripture, “ for the
 “ punishment of evil doers, and the praise
 “ of those that do well ;” for this purpose,
 “ that we may lead a peaceable life, in all
 “ godliness and honesty,” which falls solely
 on the transgressors, upon the breach of
 their own agreement ; hence civil govern-
 ment will always be necessary, for the main-
 tenance of the peace and happiness of
 mankind. But the case is vastly different
 in the prosecution of war, when people en-
 gage in the military service, as a profession,
 their ideas of right and wrong become,
 in a great measure, vitiated by many cor-
 rupt prejudices and customs ; looking upon
 war, as the most agreeable means of ad-
 vancing themselves, they often in despite to
 the impressions of grace, and the feelings
 of humanity wish for it, and endeavour to
 promote it. And here the several innocent
 and useful employments, either of agricul-
 ture or mechanisim, so congenial with our
 health of body and peace of mind, are ge-
 nerally slighted or despised ; a vain esteem
 for the importance of his situation, gene-
 rally takes possession of the mind of the
 warrior, which causes him to behold with
 undervaluement and scorn, every other way
 of life. That golden rule of doing as we
 would be done unto, so much the glory
 as it is the happiness of humanity, is given
 up

up for a foolish idea of human glory; the most empty fanthom that ever possessed the distracted mind of man, or some other vain or corrupting pursuit, which centers in human life; the calls of humanity and reason are, avowedly, no more to regulate our conduct, the maxims generally agreed to, by the military men, must supersede all other considerations; one of which is, that where a fortified place refuses to obey the enemies summons, and is taken by storm, those within may be put to the sword, even though the soldiers and inhabitants were not parties to their commanders imprudent resolution, nevertheless they must fall victims to this horrible maxim. * Whatever pillage and destruction is accounted necessary, to annoy and distress the enemy, must be put in practice; nor, (say they) can any distinction be made on these occasions; those who are peaceably and innocently disposed, must partake of the

* Several historians mention the dreadful tragedy which was acted at the city of Magdeburg, by the Austrian General Tilly, who having taken it by storm, delivered up the citizens, without distinction of age or sex, to the barbarity and lust of his soldiers. Besides the general massacre, they exhibited such acts of wanton cruelty, as disgrace human nature. Three or four hundred were all that were saved out of twenty thousand citizens.

the same fate with the guilty. Neither may the warrior parley with reason or humanity, much less christianity, in strictly executing the orders of his superior; which he has engaged in all cases to obey.

And here a reasonable query arises. What real advantage has been gained from the pursuit of these horrid maxims, to those who are principals therein, even when they have obtained their desire by the addition of some territory, to those they held before, perhaps; already larger than they could properly govern; in the prosecution of which so vast a number of their fellow-men, who might, in the innocent and useful engagements of life, have been happily and profitably employed for themselves and the advantage of society, have been cut off in their prime. What benefit has been reaped by the several powers, engaged in the last German war, wherein during the short space of only six years, from 1756, to 1762, more than twenty battles were fought, two hundred thousand soldiers slain, the souls of each of whom, were as valuable in the sight of God as their own; and this with as little concern, or perhaps less concern, than if they were so many brute beasts, in the particular description of which, from the account of the history of that war, printed in London 1762, we

meet with relations of barbarities the particulars of which, the author says, would be shocking to humanity; whole districts laid waste; cities destroyed, by bombs and red hot bullets; regiments cut to pieces; a horrid and undistinguished carnage in close engagements, by sword and bayonet, and lanes made through the ranks of soldiers, by the artillery charged with cartridge shot. * Surely the dark cloud of prejudice which prevails in support of war, amongst

* If persons who are active in war, particularly those who for gain, or in pursuit of honour, or from some other selfish views, have been instrumental in its promotion; if these are not hardened beyond reason, or the feelings of humanity; the thought of this dreadful carnage, cannot but strike them with amazement and horror. And however whilst in health and under the prevalency of corrupt prejudices and passions, people may make light of such awful scenes; yet if not deprived by sudden death, of the desirable opportunity of reflection, or besotted by the stupid persuasion of an annihilation; when the awful time of their dissolution shall draw near, and their spirits fail under pain or mortal languishments; and they expect to meet with those souls, they have been instrumental to hurry into eternity; the reflection of having in any degree promoted this mighty evil, must be a cause of deep anguish and sorrow, which will be much augmented in those who, believing the christian religion to be a revelation of the will of God to man, will consider the different fruits it would produce in those who submit

amongst the christian powers will, by the mercy of God, in time, be dispelled; men will see their mistake and be as much astonished at their blindness and folly, and look with as much abhorrence at that cruelty, which is such an obstruction to that happiness which God intends for his creature man, as they are at the recital of the folly.

mit to its spirit, as mentioned by the apostle, even "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, &c." Gal. v. 22. or, influenced by its wisdom, which is pure, peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good works, James iii. 17.

In the course of this German war we meet with accounts of a whole regiment, some battalions, and in one instance, of eight hundred Pandours cut to pieces; now simply to picture to ourselves the horror of such a transaction; the confusion, the carnage, the streaming blood, the cries and shrieks of the wounded; by men and horse, striving with every effort of nature in the utmost rage and fury to out do each other in the murder of their fellow-men; in despite of the commandment Thou shalt not kill; and this towards men whom they have no personal enmity against nor knowledge of, but that they are of those whom, by every call of nature and religion they are required to love, as they love themselves. The imagination of the reader, if not lost to every sense of reason and humanity, must suggest such apprehensions of the horror as well as wickedness and madness of such a scene, as is beyond the force of expression to remark upon, and which no pretended necessity nor usage can excuse or palliate.

but there is indeed you in heaven over me

folly of our ancestors, exposing themselves to so much labour and suffering, in the time of the Croisades, for the recovery of Jerusalem from the Turks.

The sentiments of that celebrated author A. De Voltaire, upon the solemn subject of war, is worthy of note. In the first vol. of his works, he observes “ That the primitive christians, without exception, held the same sentiments with relation to war as did the Essenes and some others; and as the Quakers now do. Tertullien he says, speaks with the most strength upon these legal murders, which our abominable nature has made so necessary; that there is no law nor usuage that can justify this criminal act. In other parts of his works he says, It would seem that the law of loving our neighbours as ourselves was made only for the Quakers; and in truth, how can any one pretend that he loves his neighbour as himself, when for reward he will shoot or stab him, and, at the same time he exposes himself to be killed, might it not rather be truly said, That he hates his neighbour as himself. He reproaches the preachers of the time when he wrote, who made so many sermons against impurity and other smaller evils, whilst they were silent against those various kinds of murder, those robberies, those violences and that
 universal

universal rage by which, under pretence of necessary war, the world is laid waste. Put together, says he, all the vices of all ages and places, and they will not come up to the mischiefs or enormities of one campaign." He appears to have a prospect of a time, when as he says, "That part of mankind dedicated to heroism, will be esteemed the most execrable and destructive monsters in nature."

Under these afflictive prospects, we have reason to return thanks to the great and good Father of mankind, in that, there is a remnant, under different religious denominations who remain, unshakably convinced, that the voice of reason, the feelings of humanity, and more especially the gospel of Jesus Christ, calls upon them to bear a uniform testimony against every thing which is inconsistent with that patience and love, which the gospel proposes; and which, in any measure tends to impede its establishment, agreeable to the antient prophecies. Hence they can in no wise support that spirit which gives life to war in any of its branches, but apprehend themselves uniformly called to promote to the utmost of their power, the welfare of all men, to bless those that curse them, and do good to those that hate them, thus to overcome evil with good, agreeable to the precepts

precepts of their meek Saviour, who overcame by suffering, leaving us, says the apostle an example that we should follow his footsteps. These are persuaded that the great and good Father of mankind, will preserve and protect those who endeavour to the best of their power, to obey and love him, so that what ever may befall them, in consequence of their obedience, of their dwelling in the patience, and maintaining that love and forbearance to their fellow-men which he requires, however threatening of depriving them of what men so much esteem to be happiness, yet he will in such sort protect them that every thing will work for their good, and will afford them such a degree of inward peace and consolation, such a frame of submission to the will of their creator, such a fund of compassion and love to their fellow-men, as will give them a happiness which passeth the human understanding.

And however worldly men, or short-sighted politicians, may conclude, that no other means but that of war can be pursued to protect their respective countries from oppression; yet instances are not wanting, of the blessing which has attended upon contrary measures. Pennsylvania furnishes an instance how far the divine blessing may co-operate with the spirit of
 peace

peace and good order; so long as the government continued chiefly in the hands of a people principled against war, notwithstanding their exposed situation, the great number of Indians within their borders, and the several warlike nations which surrounded them, they experienced the protecting hand of providence, and enjoyed an uninterrupted tranquillity for more than sixty years; whilst Canada, and most of the other colonies who pursued different measures, suffered dreadfully from their Indian neighbours. Ancient history also furnishes a striking example of the happy effect which a spirit influenced by the fear of God, producing moderation and universal benevolence will produce. Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, is a particular instance of this interesting truth, born some hundred years before the christian Era, he appears to have been in a special manner one of those wise heathens, mentioned by the apostle, who, from a conformity to that inward principle of divine intelligence, which all men are favoured with, doing by nature the things contained in the law, was a law unto themselves; which shewed the works of the law written in their hearts. Some of these were doubtless favoured, as our Saviour declares Abraham was, with a sight of his day, a
day

day of good tidings to the meek, and special peace and good will to men. Numa's natural disposition for moderation, probity, and justice, had been greatly strengthened by a proper education. Inured betimes to industry and labour, and extremely averſe to ambition and violence, he infused the ſame ſentiments in his ſubjects. Numa, ſays Rollin, had a great veneration for the Deity, whoſe nature and perfections were his ſtudy. He deemed true goodneſs to conſiſt in ruling the paſſions, and keeping them in ſubjection to reaſon. Luxury and magnificence, were unknown to him. He plainly ſaw that to accompliſh his deſign, and infuſe the ſame ſentiments into the Romans, his firſt care muſt be to ſoften and tame their minds, in order to extinguiſh by degrees, that inclination for war, which Romulus had inſpired them with; and inſenſibly turn them to ſuch pacific, gentle, and profitable exerciſes, as would cauſe them to forget and loſe this firſt inclination. The remembrance of the Deity, whom Numa endeavoured ſhould be always preſent in their thoughts; * the industry and moderation,

* Numa laboured to bring the Romans from that wretched inclination, ſo prevalent with mankind, of corporalizing the divinity. Hence, Plutarch obſerves, that he forbade to repreſent God in the form of man

moderation, he had instilled in the Romans, caused that warlike people to lay down their arms, and employ themselves, throughout his whole reign, which lasted forty three years, in conciliating the favour of heaven, cultivating their land, and the other innocent employments of a country life; which proved an excellent school of simplicity, frugality and other moral virtues. " He dedicated himself intirely to the service of the citizens and strangers, to whom he was counsellor, arbiter and judge. All, says Livy, formed their man-
C
ners

or beast; no painted or graven image was admitted amongst them; this was it great impiety to represent the most excellent Being, by things so base and unworthy. He taught them, that there was no possible access to the Deity, but by the minds being raised and elevated by divine contemplation. That he seemed to favour the Pythagorien doctrine of silence, in a familiar and constant attendance on the Deity, who was not subject to sense or capable of passion, but invisible, incorruptible and to be comprehended only by the mind. Hence Numa, before his advancement to the throne, spent much of his time in unfrequented groves and fields, consecrated to the Deity, not out of melancholy, or disturbance of mind; but because he had experienced a more sublime conversation, by which he became skilled in matters of a divine nature. Plutarch adds, That it was not strange that God should be pleased to dwell with those who were more eminently virtuous. That many in past ages had been thus favoured with the love of God.

ners by the King's, whom they took for their sole pattern." Hence the nations about him who before had considered Rome more like a camp than a city, conceived such a reverence for them, that they would have thought it a sort of impiety to have attacked a people, wholly intent upon serving God, and making men happy.

A wonderful change of manners also prevailed in the neighbouring cities; the people visited one another without fear, uniting in religious services, and rejoicing together, as if Numa's wisdom had been a plentiful fountain, from whence the streams of virtue and justice had flowed into the minds of the people; instead of a martial ardor, an eager desire to live in peace, to cultivate their lands, and bring up their children in the same, infused into their hearts the same tranquillity which reigned in his own.

The nations around, were so far from taking advantage of his pacific temper, to make war upon him, that in their differences, they chose the Romans for umpires, and referred themselves entirely to Numa's decisions; a glory founded on the esteem and gratitude of the nations, who paid a public homage to the wisdom, justice and sincerity of a prince, void of self interest and solely intent on the happiness of mankind.

kind. Neither did any rebellion appear during the long reign of Numa, whether, says Plutarch, reverence for his eminent virtue, or fear of the Diety, who so visibly protected him, vice was disarmed; or whether, by a particular providence, Heaven was pleased to preserve this happy reign from whatever might sully its glory, or disturb its peace; it has served for a proof of what God, in his mercy and love can do, in rendering virtue triumphant over vice. Numa ended his life in the gentlest manner, by nature's being quite exhausted, in the 83d year of his age, and 43d of his reign.

If Plutarch, though an heathen, under the prevailing prejudices in favour of war, could manifest so much esteem for the maintainance of peace, as freely to acknowledge the display of a particular providence in Numa's protection, from the violence of unreasonable men, as a special mark of the divine approbation on his diligent labour, for the establishment of virtue in a people, before so daring in rapine and murder, how much more have christians reason to rely upon the same divine protection, in the maintenance of that love to their fellow-men, and patient suffering of injuries, so strongly enjoined by the precepts and practice of their great exemplar Jesus Christ.

And

And certainly men thus peaceably disposed, have great reason to expect to be protected by the rulers wherever their lot may be cast, as these rulers cannot but be sensible of the advantages which arises from the virtuous example of persons so disposed, in opposition to those vices which war naturally produces. For, notwithstanding some christians look upon defensive war as lawful; yet sober men, of every religious denomination agree, that it is a great evil and much to be deprecated; hence great tenderness is due to those who, in sincerity of heart, apprehend themselves called out of the spirit of war, to the promotion of harmony and love.

We also find Cardinal Fleury, long Prime Minister of France, under the late King, to have been a person of much mildness and moderation, and a great lover of peace. He had seen the dreadful misery occasioned by the prosecution of a long war, during great part of the reign of Lewis the 14th, which several writers of that reign say, gave the old king so much concern, that, upon his death-bed, he exhorted his successor, the late king, to use measures different from those he had pursued. The good disposition which prevailed in this cardinal, in favour of pacific measures is thought to have, in a great degree, been the

the occasion of the long peace, which so generally prevailed amongst the different powers of Europe, from the peace of Utrecht, in 1712, to the year 1733. If the influence of one minister of state can have so good an effect, how happy would it be for mankind, and how happy for themselves, if the present rulers of the different kingdoms, would so far yield to that good principle, which every man in his cool moments, is, in some degree favoured with, as to feel for the miseries of mankind, and become advocates on behalf of the Prince of Peace, and thus promote as much as may be in their power the prevalency of that peace and love, which not only the prophets, but also the wise men of all ages have had a prospect of, a time of love and good will to men; when righteousness and peace shall universally prevail.

The prejudice that so strongly prevails in the young nobility of most European Monarchies, in favour of war, which they are taught to look upon as the only business worthy their attention, very much prevents the establishment of that peace and love amongst men, so much the desire of the well minded. Most of those who do not inherit the family estate, and indeed most who do, enter into the military life; hence the disorderly passions of the human mind, in-

stead of being mollified by the soft endearments of social life, are rather increased, through the violent and cruel measures they are obliged to pursue. The culture of their estates, which might afford them so much benefit and pleasure, is abandoned to the attention and weak efforts of a poor, often exhausted and oppressed race of peasants, who have neither ability, nor courage to do any thing to purpose.

And, indeed, it must be allowed, that those evil lusts and passions, which are the remote causes of war, are much supported and increased by that romantic and false idea of the honour, resulting from a military life, which induces so many of the principal men, of most christian States, to spend the prime of their days in that service, whence, from a strange infatuation, it is esteemed the greatest honour to risque the putting a period to their existence, before they have answered the purpose for which their life was given, even the subjection of the corrupt propensities of nature; so as to bring them under the regulation of reason and religion. Wonderful instance of the corruption of the human heart; that men will voluntarily, and even with pleasure, encounter so much hardship and labour, in the prosecution of war, which upon the least reflection, they must be

be sensible, so greatly tends to corrupt the morals, and so miserably destroys the lives of their fellow men. The weight of this consideration is greatly encreased from a thought, how trivial and often unjustifiable have been the occasions of some dreadful wars. The last German war, wherein as has been mentioned, more than twenty battles were fought, two hundred thousand soldiers were killed, cities and extent of countries laid waste, besides the numberless deaths, distress and destruction, which on these dreadful occasions, on various ways attend, was chiefly consequent of the question, Whether the King of Prussia or the Queen of Hungary, should govern Silesia, founded upon some ancient contract between their ancestors, in which it is doubtful, the people of that province were never consulted*. How long will men thus suffer the enemy of their happiness to delude

* After six years war, a peace was concluded in 1763, when it was agreed by the contending powers " *That all things are to remain in the same state in which they were at the beginning of the war.*" What a dreadful consideration, that to answer the politicks of a few, such a sacrifice of men should be made to the Prince of darkness. And what must all those think, if they dare to think at all, who from vain or selfish ends have given it support or encouragement, particularly when on a bed of sickness and of pain,

them? How long will it be ere they recover their senses, and suffer the voice of reason and humanity to prevail in their councils and conduct.

If the young nobility and gentry were encouraged by their elders, whom it might be expected age, and experience had given a better estimation of the nature and value of things, to employ themselves in the cultivation of their estates; giving proper encouragement and assistance to their tenants and poor neighbours; promoting useful arts and manufactures; the proper education of the children of the poor, and in every other respect, as the truly great and happy Numa did, earnestly labour to make the people around them virtuous and happy, they would surely render better service to their country, and soon find themselves possessed of a substantial happiness, unknown to those who pursue different measures. How different, on a dying bed, must the sensation of these who have thus laboured

in pain, they will have to reflect on those numbers of souls, which they have been instrumental, to bring to such a miserable and untimely end. Under these awful considerations can it be thought strange that some who behold war in this fearful light, and are persuaded that such doings are utterly abhorrent in the sight of the great and good Father of mankind, will encounter all difficulties rather than take any part in it.

laboured to procure the improvement and happiness of mankind be, to that of those who have lived to themselves, in the pursuit of those vain honours and pleasures, which the thoughtless part of mankind so earnestly seek for, in camps and courts.

However mankind when in health and strength, generally suffer themselves to be influenced by selfish principles of pride, wrath, &c. yet, when humbled by the approach of death, we often find them bearing a uniform testimony, to those humbling truths of the gospel, which they had depreciated in their lives. The two noted ministers of state of France, Cardinal Richelieu and Mazarine, appear to have been of this number. The first, confessed to Peter Dumoulin, the famous protestant, that being forced upon many irregularities, by that, which they call reasons of state, he could not tell how to satisfy his conscience for several things, and therefore had many temptations to doubt and disbelieve a God, another world, and the immortality of the soul, and thereby to relieve his mind from any disquiet, but in vain: So strong, he said, was the notion of God on his soul, so clear the impression of him, upon the frame of the world, so unanimous the consent of mankind, so powerful the convictions of his own conscience, that he could
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but “*Taste the power of the world to come*” and so live as one that must die, and so die as one that must live forever. And being asked one day, why he was so sad; answered, The soul is a serious thing; it must be either sad here for a moment, or sad forever.

Cardinal Mazarine, reputed the cunningest statesman of his time, and who gave great proofs of it in the successes of the French crown, under his ministry: His aim was the grandeur of the world, to which he made all other considerations submit. But, poor man; he was of another mind a little before his death: For being awakened by the smart lashes of conscience, which represented his soul’s condition very dismal, with astonishment and tears he cried out. “O my poor soul, what will become of thee: Whither wilt thou go” And speaking one day to the Queen Mother of France, he said “Madame, your favours have undone me: Were I to live again, I would be a Capuchin, rather than a Courtier.”

Charles Vth. Emperor of Germany, after many pitched battles, many triumphs and kingdoms conquered, &c. resigned up all his pomp, and betook himself to retirement; leaving this testimony behind him, concerning the life he spent in the honours
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and pleasures of the world, and in the little time of his retreat from them all, That the sincere study, profession and practice of the christian religion, had in it joys and sweetness, which courts were strangers to.

Philip III. King of Spain, his grand-son, reflecting upon the life he had led in the world, cried out upon his death-bed. Ah! How happy were I, had I spent these twenty three years, that I have held my kingdom in a retirement——My concern is for my soul, not my body.

Count Oxenstiern, Chancellor of Sweedland, a person of the first quality, station and ability. After all his knowledge and honour, being visited in his retreat from public business by Bulstrode Whitlock, Ambassador from England, in the conclusion of their discourse, he said to the Ambassador, I have seen much, and enjoyed much of this world, but I never knew how to live till now, I thank my good God that has given me time to know him, and to know myself. All the comfort I have, and all the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is feeling the good spirit of God in my heart, and reading in this good book (holding up the bible) which came from it. And further addressed himself thus, to the Ambassador, You are now in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and
business ;

business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day, better understand and relish what I say to you; and then you will find that there is more wisdom, truth, comfort and pleasure, in retiring your heart from the world, to the good spirit of God, and in reading the bible, than in all the courts and favours of princes. Bulstrode Whitlock, himself, gives a noble testimony to the power of religion. “ I ever have thought, said he, there has been one true religion in the world, and that is, the work of the spirit of God in the heart of souls of men. There has been indeed divers forms and shapes of things, through the many dispensations of God to men, answerable to his own wise ends, in reference to the low and uncertain state of man in the world; but the old world had the spirit of God, for it strove with them, and the new world has had the spirit of God, both Jews and Gentiles; and it strives with all; and they that have been led by it, have been the good people in every dispensation of God to the world. And I myself must say, I have felt it, from a child, to convince me of my evil and vanity, and it has often given me a true measure of this poor world, and some taste of divine things; and it is my grief I did not more early apply my soul to it. Since my retirement from the great-
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ness and hurries of the world, I have felt something of the work and comfort of it, that it is both ready and able to instruct, and lead, and preserve those that will humbly and sincerely hearken to it. So that my religion is *the good spirit of God in my heart*; I mean, what that has wrought in me, and for me.

Secretary Walsingham, a man of great note, in Queen Elizabeth's time, towards the conclusion of his days, in a letter to his fellow-secretary Burleigh, then Lord Treasurer of England, writes thus. We have lived enough to our country, our fortunes, our Sovereign. It is high time we begin to live to ourselves, and to our God. Which giving occasion for some court-droll to visit, and try to divert him, "Ah! said he, while we laugh, all things are serious round about us; God is serious, when he preserveth us, and hath patience towards us; Christ is serious, when he dieth for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, when he striveth with us; the whole creation is serious, in serving God and us; they are serious in Hell and in Heaven; and, shall a man that hath one foot in the grave, jest and laugh."——O that our statesmen, would seriously and deeply weigh the conviction, advice, and conclusion of this great man.

Sir John Mafon, who though but 63 years of age, at his death, yet lived and flourished in the reign of four princes, viz. Henry 8th Edward 6th Queen Mary, and Elizabeth, and was Privy-counsellor to them all, and an eye witness of the various revolutions and vicissitudes of those times. Towards his latter end, being on his death-bed, he called his clerk and steward, and spoke thus to them. “ Lo here have I lived to see five princes, and have been Privy-counsellor, to four of them, I have seen the most remarkable observables in foreign parts, and have been present at most transactions for thirty years together, and I have learned this, after so many years experience, that seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physic, and a good conscience the best estate; and were I to live again, I would change the court for a cloister, my Privy-counsellor’s bustle for an hermit’s retirement, and the whole life I lived in the palace for an hour’s enjoyment of God in the chapel; all things else forsake me, besides my God, my duty, and my prayers.

The renowned John Locke, wrote as follows to his friend Anthony Collins, to be delivered to him after his decease. “ I know you loved me when living, and will preserve my memory when I am dead, all
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the use to be made of it is, that this life is a scene of vanity which soon passes away, and affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. 'This is what I can say upon experience, and what you will find to be true when you come to make up the account. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you.'

Extract of a letter wrote by the Earl of Essex, to his particular friend the Earl of Southhampton, sometime before his death.

“**W**ITH respect to your natural gifts or abilities, remember, First, That you have nothing, that you have not received. Secondly, That you possess them not as a Lord over them, but as an accomptant for them. Thirdly, If you employ them to serve this world, or your own worldly delight, which the prince of this world will seek to entertain you with, it is ingratitude, it is injustice, yea, it is perfidious treachery: For what would you think of such a servant of yours, who should convert your goods, committed to his charge, to the advantage or service of your greatest enemy; and what do you less than this with God, since you have all from him, and know that the world, and the
princes

princes thereof, are at a continual enmity with him : And therefore, if ever the admonition of your truest friend shall be heard by you, or if your country, which you may serve in so great and many things be dear unto you; if your God, who you must (if you deal truly with yourself) acknowledge to be powerful over all, and just in all, be feared by you; yea, if you be dear unto yourself, and prefer an everlasting happiness before a pleasant dream, which you must shortly awake out of, and then repent in the bitterness of your soul; if any of these things be regarded by you, then, I say, call yourselves to account for what is past; cancel all the leagues you have made without the warrant of a religious conscience; make a regular covenant with your God, to serve him with all your natural and spiritual, inward and outward gifts and abilities, and then he who is faithful and cannot lie, hath promised to honour those, who honour him; he will give you that inward peace of soul, and true joy of heart, which till you have, you will never rest; and which when you have, you shall never be shaken; and which you can never attain to any other way, &c.

Hugo Grotius, of whom these latter ages think they have not had a man of more universal knowledge, witness his *annals*,

nals, his book *De Jure Belli, &c.* He winds up his life and choice in this remarkable saying, which should abate the edge of other men's inordinate desire after what they falsely call learning, namely I would give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick, who was a religious poor man, that spent his whole time in labour, contemplation, and prayer. And to one that admired his great industry, he returned this by way of complaint, Ah! I have consumed my life in laboriously doing nothing. And to another, that enquired of his wisdom and learning, what course to take he solemnly answered, Be serious. Such was the sense he had how much a serious life excelled, and was of force towards a dying-hour.

Salmasius, the famous French scholar, after his many volumes of learning, by which he had acquired great veneration among men of books, confessed so far to have mistaken true learning, and that in which solid happiness consists, that he exclaimed thus against himself, " Oh! I have lost a world of time; Time, that most precious thing in the world: Whereof, had I but one year more, it should be spent in David's psalms and Paul's epistles. Oh! Sirs, said he, to those about him, mind the world less, and

God more. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding.”

Selden, one of the greatest scholars and antiquaries of his time; who had taken a diligent survey of what knowledge was considerable amongst the Jews, Heathens, and Christians; at last professeth towards the end of his days (in his conference with Bishop Usher). “That notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his enquiries, and curious in his collections, and had possessed himself of a treasure of books and manuscripts, upon all ancient subjects, yet he could rest his soul on none, save the scriptures; particularly that memorable passage, Titus 1. 12. &c. “For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. &c.

Francis Bacon, Lord High Chancellor of England, some time before his death confessed. “That to be religious, was to live

live strictly and severely ; for if the opinion of another world be false, yet the sweetest life in this world, is piety, virtue, and honesty. If it be true, there be none so wretched and miserable, as loose, carnal, and prophane persons. Cardinal Woolsey, the most absolute and wealthy Minister of State, England ever had, who in his time seemed to govern Europe, as well as England, when come to the period of his life, left the world with this close reflection upon himself. Had I been as diligent to serve God, as I was to please my King, he would not have left me now in my grey hairs. A dismal reflection for all wordly minded men ; but those most especially, who have the power and means of doing more good than ordinary in the world, and do it not, which appears to have been the case and reflection of this Great Man.

Extract of letters, wrote by David Brainard, a person of great piety, who spent much time in a religious labour, for the welfare of the Indians, some time before his death.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

THERE is but one thing, that deserves our highest care, and most ardent desires and that is, that we may answer the
great

great end for which we were made, viz. to glorify that God, who has given us our beings, and all our comforts, and to do all the good we possibly can to our fellow-men, while we live in the world : And verily life is not worth the having, if it be not improved for this noble end and purpose, yet, alas, how little is this thought of among mankind ; most men seem to live to themselves, without much regard to the glory of God, or the good of their fellow-creatures ; they earnestly desire, and eagerly pursue after the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of life, as if they really supposed that wealth, or greatness, or merit, could make their immortal souls happy. But, alas, what false and delusive dreams are these, and how miserable will those ere long be, who are not awaked out of them ; to see, that all their happiness consists in living to God, and becoming holy, as he is holy. Oh ! may you never fall into the tempers and vanities, the sensuality and folly of the present world, you are, by divine providence, left as it were alone, in a wide world to act for yourself ; Be sure then to remember, it is a world of temptation. You have no earthly parents, to be the means of forming your youth to piety and virtue ; let this excite you with greater diligence and fervency to look up
to

to the Father of mercies, for grace and assistance against all the vanities of the world. Daily endeavour to practise a life of seriousness and strict sobriety—Think of the life of Christ; and when you can find that he was pleased with jesting and vain merriment, then you may indulge it in yourself.

Be careful to make a good improvement of precious time. When you cease from labour, fill up your time in reading, meditation and prayer. And, while your hands are labouring, let your heart be employed as much as possible in divine thoughts. Never expect happiness from the world. If you hope for happiness in the world, hope for it from God, and not from the world. Don't think you shall be more happy, if you live to such or such a state of life, if you live to be for yourself, to be settled in the world, or if you should gain an estate in it; but look upon it, that you shall then be happy, when you can be constantly employed for God, and not for yourself; and desire to live in this world, only to do and suffer what God allots you. When you can be of the spirit and temper of Angels, who are willing to come down into this lower world, to perform what God commands them, tho' their desires are heavenly, and not in the least set on earthly things

things; then you will be of that temper, you ought to have, Col. iii. 2. Never think you can live to God, by your own power or strength; but always look to, and rely on him for assistance, yea, for all strength and grace. There is no greater truth than this, that we cannot do any thing of ourselves. Yet nothing but our own experience can effectually teach it to us. Indeed, we are a long time in learning that all our strength and salvation is in God.

TO A SPECIAL FRIEND.

CERTAINLY the greatest, the noblest pleasure of intelligent creatures, must result from their acquaintance with the blessed God, and with their own rational and immortal souls. And Oh! how divinely sweet and entertaining it is to look into our own souls, when we can find all our powers and passions, united and engaged in pursuit after God. Verily, there are no hours pass away with so much divine pleasure, as those that are spent in communion with God, and our own hearts. Oh! how sweet is a spirit of devotion, a spirit of seriousness and divine solemnity, a spirit of gospel simplicity, love, and tenderness. Surely this is a pious temper worthy the highest ambition, and closest pursuit of intelligent creatures, and holy christians.

Vastly

Vastly superior is the pleasure, peace, and satisfaction derived from this divine frame, to that which we (alas) sometimes pursue in things impertinent and trifling. Our own bitter experience teaches us, that in the midst of such laughter the heart is sorrowful, and there is no true satisfaction but in God.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

IT is from the sides of eternity I now address you. I am heartily sorry that I have so little strength to write, what I long so much to communicate to you. But let me tell you, my brother, eternity is another thing, than we ordinarily take it to be, in a healthful state. Oh! how vast and boundless! Oh! how fix'd and unalterable, Oh! of what infinite importance is it, that we be prepared for eternity; I have been just a dying now for more than a week; and all around me have thought me so: But in this time, I have had clear views of eternity; have seen the blessedness of the godly in some measure, and have longed to share their happy state; as well as been comfortably satisfied, that, thro' grace, I shall do so! But, Oh! what anguish is raised in my mind, to think of an eternity for those who are Christless, for those who are mistaken, and who bring their false hopes to the grave
with

with them: The fight was so dreadful, I could by no means bear it. Oh! methought, that I could now see my friends, that I might warn them to see to it, that they lay their foundation for eternity sure. Oh! my brother, let me then beseech you, now to examine, whether you are indeed a new creature? Whether you have ever acted above self? Whether the glory of God has ever been the sweetest, highest concern with you——whether God has been your portion, and a holy conformity to him, your chief delight? If you cannot answer positively, consider seriously the frequent breathings of your soul, But don't, however, put yourself off with a slight answer. If you have reason to think you are graceless, Oh! give yourself and the throne of grace no rest, till God arise and save. But if the case should be otherwise, bless God for his grace, and press after holiness.

And now, I shall conclude with the testimony of the pious Bishop Taylor, Chaplain to King Charles, the 1st. with respect to war. “As contrary as cruelty is to mercy, tyranny to charity, so is war and bloodshed, to the meekness and gentleness of the christian religion. I had often thought says he, of the prophecy. *That in the gospel our swords should be turned into plow-shares, and our spears into pruning hooks.* I knew that no title spoke by God's spirit, could return unperformed. and ineffectual; and I was certain, that such was the excellency of Christ's doctrine, that if men would obey it, christians should never war one against another.”