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THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON CIVIL  
SOCIETY.

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S, IN OXFORD,

AT THE

ASSIZES:

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

MR. JUSTICE NARES,

AND

MR. BARON EYRE;

AND

BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY;  
ON THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1773.

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BY GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE,  
AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE JUDGES.

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OXFORD:

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS, M.DCC.LXXIII.

SOLD BY DANIEL PRINCE;

AND BY JOHN AND FRANCIS RIVINGTON, LONDON.

Imprimatur,

THO: FOTHERGILL, Vice-Chan. Oxon.

*Mar. 17. 1773.*



TO THE HONOURABLE  
MR. JUSTICE NARES,  
AND THE HONOURABLE  
MR. BARON EYRE,  
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,  
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,  
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR;

52  
TIT. II. 11, 12.

THE GRACE OF GOD, WHICH BRINGETH SALVATION, HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN; TEACHING US, THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS, AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD.

**W**ERE it required, to produce from the Scriptures that passage, which exhibits, in fewest words, the fullest account of the nature and design of Christianity, this is, perhaps, the passage, that should be fixed on, for the purpose. Let us therefore survey and examine the striking features of so pleasing a portrait.

It is by no means intended to enter into a discussion at large of the various topics here suggested by the Apostle. It will be more advisable to contract our views, and confine them to a single point. It shall be this; viz. the friendly aspect which Christianity, as here represented---and it is here truly  
A repre-

represented---bears towards society, and the welfare and felicity of mankind upon earth. In other words, I would wish, by an illustration of the text, to convey to your minds some faint idea of that state of things, which would begin to shew itself in the world, were the religion of Jesus rightly understood, and zealously practised, among men. A view of the Gospel, in this light, will furnish us with proper answers to some objections made by it's enemies, as if it had been useless, nay, even prejudicial to society. An inference will likewise offer itself to the consideration of it's friends, suitable to this audience, and the present solemnity.

St. Paul, then, first declares the origin, universality, and general intent of the Gospel. It was not a production of earth: it came from above; it was *χαρις Θεου*, the *grace, or gift of God*. As a gift, we may conclude it given, like other gifts, for the benefit of the receivers. As the gift of him, who is the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation, it must be calculated to diffuse mercy and comfort among his creatures. Issuing from the God of peace and order, it could never be designed to give birth to

WAR

wars and tumults. Offspring of that Being, who, as St. John tells us, is Love, it could never be intended to produce hatred in the hearts, of which it should take possession. Proceeding from the God of holiness, and of life, it was not designed to be the means of enlarging the empire of sin and death. It came, *σωτηριος*, “bringing salvation,” or deliverance from every enemy; and it came to all, without distinction of sex or age, country or condition. *Επεφάνη ἡ χάρις τῆς Θεᾶς ἡ σωτηρίας πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*—it appeared, it shone forth, manifesting itself by it's own splendor, like the dayspring from on high; like the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, free, bright, universal; author of light and life, of joy and gladness; and hailed, as such, by all things in heaven and earth. It appeared, to dispel ignorance, as darkness; and to disseminate knowlege, as light; to inform and instruct mankind; *παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς*, taking us into training, and putting us under discipline, in the school of a divine Master, who teacheth us to avoid evil, and to pursue good; and who alone can enable us to do either, with effect. In this last particular, his school excells all others, with



respect to the benefits accruing from it to civil society, in proportion as it is better that men should practise virtue, than that they should speak, or write of it. Mankind, it is true, wanted a perfect law, or rule of conduct: but this was not all. The perfection of a law would afford small comfort to those who lived under it, if they could not observe it, and must perish for transgressing it. Men stood in need of other things; they stood in need of pardon for their past errors, and a renewal of their powers unto future obedience. Herein is the glory of the Gospel. This is the triumph of “the grace of God,” which, by the Gospel, “hath appeared unto all men, teaching us (and bestowing the virtues it enjoins) that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

ΑΠΡΟΚΑΛΕΣΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΑΠΕΘΙΑΝ, denying, disclaiming, renouncing, forsaking *impiety*; every species of irreligion; either disbelief of a Deity, or mistaken notions of his nature, attributes, providence, and of the manner in which he is to be worshipped; with all the errors

erroneous and abominable practices, consequent thereupon. How prejudicial these were to the interests of society, no one can be ignorant, to whom the history of the heathen world is, in any degree, known. And the case must be the same in every age. The actions of men must always take a deep tincture from the colour of their religious or irreligious principles. He who believes in a Deity, of whatever kind, will endeavour to please, by imitating him: and he who believes in none, like the poor demoniac in the Gospel, easily bursts all other bands, neither can any man hold him.

“ Denying ungodliness, and worldly  
 “ lusts” ----- *Κοσμιναί επιθυμίαι dicuntur eæ  
 cupiditates, says Grotius, quas major pars  
 hominum sequitur; ea enim major pars sæpe,  
 in his libris, τὰ κοινὰ vocatur nomine.*  
 Worldly lusts, or desires, are desires whose  
 objects are worldly, and by worldly men  
 coveted and sought after, by undue means,  
 or in an inordinate manner, beyond the  
 limits designed and appointed by God and  
 nature. And what is it, but the prosecu-  
 tion of such desires, that fills the world  
 with wickedness and misery; producing  
 luxury



luxury and extravagance among some ; poverty and wretchedness among others ; hateful quarrels and vexatious suits between individuals and families ; ravaging and desolating wars between princes and kingdoms ; factions and tumults in the state ; and, we may add, generally, heresies and divisions in the church, as our apostle has somewhere classed *them* likewise among the works of the *flesh* <sup>2</sup>. Let not vain man, then, under the name and notion of philosophy, insult and revile as a *monkish* and *solitary* principle, that doctrine, on which the Son of God has thought proper to lay the deep foundations of his religion, the doctrine of self-denial. In the present state of human nature, the desires of *self* are frequently the sickly cravings of a distempered being ; the gratification of them would only tend to increase and inflame the disease ; and therefore, by our heavenly physician, we are, in mercy, enjoined to *deny* them. All that he requesteth of us is, to consult our own happiness, and that of others ; “ let the desires that are  
 “ contrary to the commands of the Gospel  
 “ be examined, and it will be found, that

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 20.

“ they cannot be satisfied, without hurting  
 “ human society<sup>b</sup> ;” and if we are com-  
 manded to renounce worldly lusts, it is be-  
 cause they have deluged the earth with sin  
 and sorrow.

From the negative part of the apostle's  
 description, we pass on to that which is po-  
 sitive. Having “ denied ungodliness and  
 “ worldly lusts,” we are to live, in the first  
 place, *soberly*, σωφρονως. The noun, from  
 whence this adverb is formed, signifies, one  
 of a *sound mind*, one that is master of him-  
 self, having his appetites and passions in due  
 order and subjection; since, of every one  
 of these, if suffered to domineer, instead of  
 obeying, may be said, what has been of-  
 ten said of one of them, that it is a tempo-  
 rary madness. Thus, when the prodigal,  
 in the parable, is described, as repenting of  
 his profligacy, the expression is, προς σεαυτον  
 ηλθε, *he came to himself*. The phrase inti-  
 mates, that, while engaged in his former  
 course, he was *not himself*. The governing  
 principle had been dethroned, and he had

<sup>b</sup> Le Clerc on *the Causes of Incredulity*, Part II.  
 Chap. vi.

been

been carried away captive, at the will of his conquerors. The question, therefore, will stand thus ; whether they are likely to make the best members of society, who possess the use of their reason ; or they, who have lost it ?

If we consider sobriety, as implying the regulation of our *appetites*, it supplies us with the virtues of temperance, as opposed to intemperance of every kind, and industry, as opposed to sloth. And where is the state, that would not wish all it's subjects to be temperate and industrious ? Look at the generations of old, and consult the ages that are past. Enquire of kingdoms that were once mighty upon earth, and of empires that now live only in the records of history. Ask them, and with one voice they will tell you, that by these virtues they all arose to greatness, glory, and honour ; by their contraries they sunk into ruin, shame, and reproach. Learn we, then, as good citizens, duly to value the religion, that, upon the grounds of true reason, and eternal wisdom, with such persuasive energy recommends and enjoins the practice of these virtues, holding them forth to view, in the  
example

example of our Divine Master, and those of his first followers. A glutton, a drunkard, a debauchee, a sluggard, are monsters in the Gospel system. There we see a religion, which is, all over, sobriety and purity, fervour and alacrity. There we find prescribed to us strict temperance always, prudent abstinence often. And why? That we may not be brought under the power of an appetite, and enslaved to so merciless and unrelenting a tyrant. There we are directed, whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God; as if the world were one vast temple, and every good man, through the course of his actions, a kind of perpetual officiating priest in it. There, none are permitted to be idle; every one is to be active and diligent in some employment, not only innocent, but useful to the community. If any do not *work*, it is declared that he should not *eat*; and the portion of the *unprofitable* is said to be with that of the *disobedient*.

But sobriety goes farther. It comprehends the government not of the bodily appetites only, but of the *passions* and affections of the mind. The use of these is, to



stir up the soul, and put it upon action, to awaken the understanding, to excite the will, and to make the whole man vigorous and attentive in the prosecution of his designs. He whose designs are right, and who, being master of his passions, can direct their force that way, proceeds like the mariner, who understands his compass, and commands the winds: he raises, or sinks his affections, according to his judgment, and carefully adjusts them to the nature of things: he applies them, with all their energy, to the prosecution of his greatest interest; and makes them militate, with all their force, against whatever might obstruct it<sup>c</sup>. Christianity informs us of the proper objects, on which the passions should be fixed; and enables us to fix them on those objects. It's injunction runs thus---“Set  
 “your affections on things above;” on objects, in the pursuit of which they may put forth all their strength, and in the enjoyment of which they may acquiesce, with absolute complacency. These are the objects, to which they were originally adapt-

<sup>c</sup> See Dr. Heylyn's Dissertation on the *Passions*, in his *Theological Lectures*, Vol. i. p. 61.



ed ; and therefore, till possessed of them, they are unquiet and dissatisfied. In vain do they seek their full gratification in things below, in earthly objects, not calculated to afford it ; and when they are set upon such, otherwise than in perfect subordination to the better things above, the man becomes a sure prey to disappointment and vexation<sup>d</sup>. Upon this principle, the Gospel, in the heart where it is received, moderates and regulates the passions, in their application to terrestrial objects. It restrains the sallies of anger that it sin not, and stops the issues of dislike : it represses insolence in joy, and prevents clamour or despondency in grief : it forbids presumption in hope, and bridles the impetuosity of desire : it permits not fear to transgress the bounds of a prudent caution, and mitigates even courage, which, without it, becomes a savage ferocity : it balances the mind in every state and fortune ; it produces modesty, meekness, patience, candour, impartiality ; and, out of these ingredients, forms that *sobriety* of character, intended by our apostle. And what is it but

<sup>d</sup> See this point made out, by a copious induction of particulars, in Dr. Young's *True Estimate of Human Life*.

this same sobriety, this command of the passions, this self government, that qualifies a man to discharge properly all the relative duties of life ; that endears him to a community, and renders him a truly useful and valuable member of society ? Destitute of this, what is the world, as agitated by human passions, let loose, without restraint, in their fury, but a troubled sea, with the four winds striving on it for the mastery ; where all is froth and foam, noise and confusion !

From that part of man's duty, which regards *himself*, expressed by the word *σωφρονως*, we pass to that which respects his *neighbour*, pointed out by the term *δικαιως*. “ We should live soberly, *righteously*, or *justly* ;” that is, according to the proper and original meaning of the word, giving to all their *due*. What that due is, the Gospel hath ascertained, not, like the mere moralists, by a system of rules only, but by infusing a principle, which reduces the law to a compend, and teaches the whole at once, in it's utmost extent. The principle here meant is *charity*, which, when sincere and ardent, needeth not the assistance of precepts and direc-

directions, at every turn, but, by it's own nature and force, supersedes, and even goes beyond them all<sup>e</sup>. "For this," says our apostle elsewhere, "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law<sup>f</sup>." It can do no ill, and will do all the good in it's power. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself"---  
 "Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Let every man allow that claim of right in another, which he should think himself entitled to make, in like circumstances. A precept this, which enables every man to be his own casuist, and puts it out of his power to determine unjustly; a precept, which should be engraved on every heart, as it

<sup>e</sup> See Lord Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, Book vii. Chap. iii.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. xiii. 9.

was, by the command of the emperor Severus, on his palace, and public buildings; the universal rule of life, the moral directory of the world! Reflect, what an appearance society would wear, if men acted upon this evangelical principle. In superiors it would be equity and moderation, courtesy and affability, benignity and condescension: in inferiors, sincerity and fidelity, respect and diligence. In princes, justice, gentleness, and sollicitude for the welfare of their subjects: in subjects, loyalty, submission, obedience, quietness, peace, patience, and cheerfulness. In parents, tenderness, carefulness of their childrens good education, comfortable subsistence, and eternal welfare: in children, duty, honour, gratitude. In all men, upon all occasions, a readiness to assist, to relieve, to comfort one another<sup>s</sup>.---Can we help exclaiming, with the celebrated author of *the Spirit of Laws*---  
 “How admirable the religion, which while  
 “it seems only to have in view the felicity  
 “of the other life, constitutes the happiness  
 “of this<sup>h</sup>.”---“How good and how plea-

<sup>s</sup> See Dr. Barrow on *the Profitableness of Godliness*, Vol. I. Sermon ii.

<sup>h</sup> *Spirit of Laws*, Book xxiv. Chap. iii.



“fant would it be, for brethren to dwell  
 “together in unity,” under the influence of  
 this celestial principle, diffusing itself through  
 all the members of a community, from  
 the highest to the lowest, grateful as “the  
 “precious ointment upon the head, that ran  
 “down upon the beard, even upon Aaron’s  
 “beard, and went down to the skirts of his  
 “garment ;” cheering and refreshing, “as  
 “the dew of Hermon, or that which fell  
 “on the mountains of Sion.”

We have considered man’s duty to *himself*, and to his *neighbour* : he is to live *soberly* and *righteously*. He is also to live *godly*, εὐσεβως. The word conveys the idea of every thing that relates to the acknowledgment and worship of God ; of devotion, piety, or of *religion*, properly so called, as distinguished from *morality*. Here it is, that we must look for the main spring and principle of action ; for motives to virtue, capable of controlling the appetites, regulating the passions, and overcoming every obstacle objected by self-love to the practice of justice and charity among men. “Godliness, εὐσεβεια, is profitable unto all things, “having promise of the life that now is, as  
 “well



“ well as of that which is to come<sup>1</sup> :” and they, who assert religion to have been the invention of priests, or politicians, to keep the world in order, do thereby confess, that it is, at least, good for that purpose.

Of human words and actions, highly pernicious to society, how many are there, not cognizable at an earthly tribunal? Yet our happiness or misery, in our converse with others, depends upon the regulation of these. Now, implant but a thorough sense of religion in the mind; teach a man always to consider himself as acting, speaking, nay even thinking, under the eye of that Being, who seeth in secret, but will one day reward, or punish, openly; you stop the streams at the place of breaking forth, and staunch, at once, the fountain of corruption.

Of crimes that are cognizable by courts of judicature, how few would fall under their sentence, were it not for the obligation, which religion lays upon those persons, to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 8.

speaking the truth, by whose evidence the facts in question must be proved and ascertained?

There is a connection between religion and morality, like that between soul and body, not to be dissolved without the death of the latter. Speculative men may amuse themselves and others with disquisitions on the beauty of virtue, and the relations of things, independently of the will of God, and the motives suggested by the Scriptures. Virtue, without doubt, is beautiful; and there are relations of things, with corresponding duties resulting therefrom. But will these considerations charm to rest the eager appetites and turbulent passions of human nature, in it's present condition? "As well might you think to bind an hungry tiger with a thread."

But observe the firm basis, on which is forever fixed the morality of the Gospel. How clear in it's principles, how powerful in it's motives!---"We love God, because he first loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

“ther. For he that loveth him who be-  
 “gat, loveth him also, who is begotten of  
 “him.” The head of the most unlearned  
 cannot but comprehend the meaning of these  
 few words; and the heart of the most  
 learned must feel the force of them. Such  
 is the *ground* of that charity, which, as we  
 before observed, performeth every duty of  
 social life, and fulfilleth the law. To in-  
 culcate and produce in us this heavenly dis-  
 position, is the end of the Gospel, and of  
 all it’s doctrines. It is deduced in Scripture  
 even from those, that may seem to be of  
 the most mysterious and speculative nature;  
 the unity of the divine persons; the divi-  
 nity, and the satisfaction of Christ; doctrines  
 which cannot, therefore, be denied, or de-  
 graded, without removing, or proportion-  
 ably lessening the most endearing and affect-  
 ing incitements to the Christian life. In-  
 deed, the happy temper, of which we are  
 speaking, is the natural and kindly effect of  
 the great evangelical truths, when treasured  
 up in the mind, and made the subjects of  
 frequent meditation. The ideas of a recon-  
 ciled God; a Saviour and Intercessor on

\* See Dr. Waterland’s incomparable tract on *the Im-  
 portance of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*, chap. ii.

high ; a gracious Spirit, informing our ignorance, purifying our hearts, relieving our necessities, alleviating our cares, and comforting our sorrows --- Such ideas as these enable us to bridle the appetites of the body, and to calm the emotions of the mind ; to bear with patience and cheerfulness the calamities of life ; they sweeten the temper, and harmonize the affections, resolving them all into one, diversified according to the different situation of it's proper object ; of which *grief* laments the absence, and *fear* apprehends the loss ; *desire* pursues it ; *hope* has it in view ; *anger* rises against obstruction ; and *joy* triumphs in possession<sup>1</sup>. Thus religion fixes the heart on it's treasure, in faith without wavering, and resignation without reserve : it draws the affections upwards towards heaven, as the sun does the exhalations of the earth, to return in fruitful showers, and bless the world.

Such, then, is the friendly aspect which Christianity, as represented by the Apostle in the text, evidently bears to the true interests of civil Society. Yet a noble writer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Heylyn's Discourses, Vol. ii. p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Shaftsbury.



has objected it to the Gospel, that by confining a man's views to himself, and his spiritual concerns, it causeth him to slight the social affections, as things appertaining to this world, and of little moment. The reverse, as we have seen, is the truth. A discharge of all the social duties in this world, is, by the Gospel, pointed out, as the way to promote true self-interest, and to obtain salvation in the world to come. For the performance of these duties, the doctrines of Christianity supply new motives; and the grace, which accompanies it, endues us with new powers.

The same noble author complains, that there is in the Gospel no mention made of private friendship. Surely, if it be among those things, that are “lovely and virtuous, “and praise-worthy,” it is commanded, and will be rewarded. Evangelical principles extend it farther, and cement it better, than all others. The Saviour of the world styles his disciples, *friends*; and, among them, there was one, on account of his heavenly temper and disposition, more peculiarly favoured and beloved, than the rest. Christianity procures, for it's sincere professor, the *friendship*



*friendship* of God ; and incites him, in imitation of his dear Lord and Master, to deserve a more glorious title, than ever adorned the imperial diadem---The *Friend* of mankind.

It is yet again made matter of complaint, by the aforesaid author, that public spirit, or the love of our country is passed over in silence by the Gospel. That passion for the supposed glory of their country, which led the Romans to carry war into all the kingdoms around them, is not, indeed, inculcated by the Gospel. Had it been so, Jesus, in conformity to his doctrine, must have put himself at the head of the Jewish armies ; and it would soon have appeared, that the Son of Man came not to save mens lives, but to *destroy* them. If the love of our country signifies a true and affectionate concern for the public good, whither can we go for an example of it, in it's highest exaltation, better than to the character of our Lord ? He was born for his people ; he laboured for them ; he preached for them ; he mourned for them ; he wept for them ; he lived for them---and, to crown all, he **DIED** for them.----And blessed are those servants, whom

whom their Lord, when he cometh, shall find to be, or to have been employed, like himself, in endeavouring to promote the temporal welfare of the community, no less than the eternal salvation of individuals, by turning their fellow-citizens from sin to righteousness, and bringing them to the knowledge and obedience of the heavenly law. This is a species of patriotism disinterested and unsuspected : applauding angels view it with delight ; and by the Lord of angels it will be had in honourable and everlasting remembrance.

The celebrated Sceptic, Bayle, had asserted, that true Christians could not form a government of any duration <sup>m</sup>. “ Why not ? ”

<sup>m</sup> Plotinus, as we are told by Porphyry, desired the emperor Gallienus to rebuild a ruined city in Campania, and to give it to the philosophers, proposing to dwell there himself, with his disciples, and to establish Plato’s republic. But though he was much in the emperor’s favour, his project met with opposition at court, and came to nothing. Thus philosophy, as Tillemont observes, though patronized by princes, could never, in any age, introduce it’s rules even into one city ; and Jesus Christ hath established his all over the world, in spite of all worldly opposition from the great and learned,---A republic of *modern deists* and *moral philosophers* would be as great a curiosity as this *city of philosophers* would have been, but perhaps not quite so well regulated. Dr. Jortin’s *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. i. p. 376.

replies

replies Montesquieu----“ Citizens of this  
 “ profession being infinitely enlightened with  
 “ respect to the various duties of life, and  
 “ having the warmest zeal to fulfil them,  
 “ must be perfectly sensible of the rights of  
 “ natural defence. The more they believe  
 “ themselves indebted to religion, the more  
 “ they would think due to their country.  
 “ The principles of Christianity, deeply en-  
 “ graved on the heart, would be infinitely  
 “ more powerful than the false honour of  
 “ monarchies, than the humane virtues of  
 “ republics, or the servile fear of despotic  
 “ states. And the Christian religion, which  
 “ ordains that men should love each other,  
 “ would, without doubt, have every nation  
 “ blest with the best civil, the best political  
 “ laws; because these, next to this religion,  
 “ are the greatest good that men can give  
 “ and receive.”

The last objection that shall be mention-  
 ed, as made against the Gospel, relative to  
 the present subject---for I fear I begin to  
 trespass upon your patience---is one, which  
 is very frequently made; and therefore,

<sup>a</sup> *Spirit of Laws*, B. xxiv. Chap. i. and vi.

ought not to pass entirely unnoticed. It is this ; that Christianity seems often not only to have failed in it's design of removing evils from Society, but to have been, itself, the cause of introducing some of the worst, as it has given birth to religious controversies, factions, persecutions, wars, massacres, and the like.

The author of *the Spirit of Laws* has returned, in few words, and in his usual masterly manner, the proper answer to this objection---“ To say that religion is not a restraining motive, because it does not always restrain, is equally absurd as to say, that the civil laws are not a restraining motive. It is a false way of reasoning against religion, to collect, in a large work, a long detail of the evils it has produced °, if we do not give, at the same time, an enumeration of the advantages which have flowed from it. Were I to

• This is the method invariably pursued, in the numerous novels, and other tracts, of Voltaire. When one considers, for what end such talents were given, and to what purpose they have been, for so many years together, applied----

*Quis, talia fando,  
Temperet a lachrymis !*

“ relate



“ relate all the evils that have arisen in the  
 “ world from civil laws, and civil govern-  
 “ ment, I might tell you of frightful things.  
 “ The question is not, to know whether it  
 “ would be better, that a certain man, or a  
 “ certain people, had no religion, than to  
 “ abuse what they have; but to know, which  
 “ is the least evil, that religion be sometimes  
 “ abused, or that there be no such restraint,  
 “ as religion, on mankind.” Nothing can  
 be more judicious and solid than this re-  
 ply, as far as it goes. A consideration of  
 two may be added.

The Gospel has not always produced its  
 proper effects---Through whose fault has  
 this happened? God gave religion, as he  
 gave the earth, to man; that, in peace and  
 comfort, he might cultivate, and reap the  
 fruits of it. Instead of so doing, man lays  
 it waste, and drenches it in blood. Can we  
 blame God, or the earth, or religion? No;  
 to man alone the blame is due: on man  
 alone let it, then, be laid.

\* *Spirit of Laws*, B. xxiv. Chap. ii.



The Gospel has not always produced it's proper effects---It was foreknown, it was foretold, that it would not. Nothing has fallen out new ; nothing contrary to the expectation of it's divine author, and his servants. Christianity would have all men to be temperate, sober, pure, industrious, meek, peaceable, just, and loving ; in which case, paradise would again spring up amongst us, and earth would be a lively image of heaven. In one word, were it perfectly obeyed, it would establish the happiness that is attainable here below ; and to it, imperfectly as it is practised, is owing the quietness, security, and good order, that a great part of the world now enjoys.

But, after all, the argument against religion, drawn from the bad conduct of it's professors, though not *conclusive*, will always be *prevalent* ; and though many good answers may be given to it, the best of all would be, to forsake our sins, and amend our ways. Our good actions would then speak for us, and wipe off this imputation cast upon our faith. It was a singular honour and advantage to the cause of Christianity, that it's ancient  
writers

writers, in their apologies for it, could address themselves to the Romans in such words as these---We are grown so many in number, that if we were only to withdraw ourselves from your dominions, we should ruin you ; you could not subsist without us. Yet is our innocence as remarkable as our increase. Your jails swarm with criminals of your own religion : but you shall not find there one Christian, unless he be there because he is a Christian, and purely on account of his faith<sup>4</sup>. We are not, it will be said, in these days, to expect a return of the golden age of religion. But this may be said, and said with truth, that we know not what may be done, till we have made the experiment ; that it is in every man's power to take off his share of the objection ; and if every man were to do so, the whole would be removed.

---Let us, then, awake---and, from the rising up of the sun, to the going down of the same, call all the world to awake, with us, to righteousness---kings of the earth, and all people ; princes, and all rulers of the

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Jortin's *Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 169.

world ;

world; high and low, rich and poor, one with another. It is righteousness which "exalteth a nation;" it is righteousness which "establisheth a throne." Do we desire to live in felicity, and would we fain see good days? Would the prince have the subject loyal and obedient? Would the master have his servant honest and observant? Would the parent have his child dutiful and grateful? Would every man have his friend faithful and kind? his neighbour benevolent and charitable? Let all, without delay, become, in truth, disciples of the holy Jesus, and take away his reproach among men, by studying to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." But, chiefly, we of the clergy, who are ordained to the ministration, and set for the defence of the Gospel; we, who are stationed in these illustrious and far renowned seminaries, that have long been the delight of the nations, and a praise in the earth; here to behold the future ornaments of their country, and protectors of it's establishment, growing up under our care---we are more especially obliged to shew forth, not only with our lips, but in our lives, the praises of him, who hath brought us to his marvellous light; and

ap-

appointed us to publish the glad tidings of  
 his salvation to the sons of men. Religion,  
 bad as the times were supposed and feared to  
 be, hath not wanted friends, among the go-  
 vernors of Israel, who willingly offered them-  
 selves to stand forth in her cause. The fences  
 of the vineyard have been happily secured.  
 Let the vine yield it's produce, grateful to  
 God and man; that while some are as  
 "plants grown up in their youth," others  
 may "bring forth more fruit in their age."  
 ---"So let thy work, O Lord, appear unto  
 "thy servants, and thy glory unto their  
 "children. And the glorious majesty of the  
 "Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou  
 "the work of our hands upon us, O prosper  
 "thou our handy work."