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SUMMARY
OF THE
PRINCIPAL EVIDENCES
FOR THE
TRUTH AND DIVINE ORIGIN
OF THE
Christian Revelation,

DESIGNED CHIEFLY
FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

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PREFACE.

FOR readers of a mature age and judgment, there are so many excellent treatises on the Evidences of the Christian Religion already published, that it is perfectly needless to add to their number ; but it appeared to me, that there was still wanting something in a shorter, a cheaper, a more methodical and familiar form. This is a time, when it is peculiarly proper to communicate to young people the chief grounds of their faith, and to lay the foundations of a firm belief in the Christian Revelation ; leaving it to themselves to add to these primary evidences which reason furnishes in favor of christianity, those

further proofs of its truth, which I trust they will hereafter derive from still higher and better sources ; from an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings ; from the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit upon their understandings and their hearts ; and from the experimental conviction, which I hope they will hereafter have, of the divine efficacy of the gospel in purifying their affections, in remedying the disorders of their corrupt nature, and in communicating to them those two invaluable blessings, peace of conscience, and holiness of life.

IN a concern of such infinite importance, no species of evidence ought to be discouraged, depreciated, or withheld. And at this time more particularly, when new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on christianity are dispersed continually, with indefatigable industry, through every part of the kingdom, and every class of the com-

munity, it seems highly expedient to meet these hostile attempts with publications of an opposite tendency, and to fortify the minds of those who are just entering into the world, by plain and concise statements of the principal arguments in favor of christianity, against the efforts that will be made to mislead their judgments, corrupt their principles, and shake their belief in the gospel of Christ.

WITH a view therefore of fulfilling this duty towards the youth, more immediately under my care, I have drawn up the following little tract. My chief object has been to collect together into one view, and to compress together in a narrow compass, all the most forcible arguments for the truth of our religion, which are to be found in our best writers, with the addition of such observations of my own as occurred to me in the prosecution of the work. All these I have classed under a few short, clear,

distinct propositions; an arrangement which I have always found most convenient for the instruction of youth, and best calculated to assist their memories, to make strong and durable impressions on their understandings, and to render the important truths of religion most easy to be comprehended and retained in their minds. After this, I would recommend it to my young readers, as they advance in life, to have recourse to one or more of the well known treatises of Grotius, Addison, Clarke, Leslie, Lardner, Beattie, and Paley, on the Evidences of Christianity; to some of whom I am myself much indebted, and to whose masterly writings on that subject, this little work was meant only as a kind of clementary introduction.

I MUST however warn my young disciples, that when they have, by the course of reading here suggested, arrived at a full conviction of the divine

origin of the Christian Religion, they must not imagine that their task is finished, and that nothing more is required at their hands. The most important part of their business still remains to be accomplished. After being satisfied that the Christian Religion comes from God, their next step is to inquire carefully what that religion is, what the doctrines are which it requires to be believed, and what the duties which it requires to be performed. For this purpose it may be useful for them to begin with Gastrell's Christian Institutes, and Archbishop Secker's Lectures on the church catechism. In the first they will find the doctrines and duties of the Christian Religion ranged under their proper heads in the very words of scripture, and in the other they will see most of them clearly and concisely explained by a most able, pious, and judicious divine. After this they may proceed to study the scrip-

tures themselves, and more particularly the new testament, with the assistance of Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor, to which they should add some of the sermons of our best divines, Bishop Taylor, Barrow, Sherlock and Secker.

WHEN they have thus learnt what Christianity is, and what it demands from them, they will feel it to be their indispensable duty (as it is unquestionably their truest interest) to believe implicitly all the doctrines, and obey with cheerfulness all the commands of their Maker and Redeemer ; to sacrifice to them, and to their own future eternal welfare, all their corrupt passions and irregular desires, to preserve themselves unspotted from the world, and to implore the assistance of divine grace, co-operating with their own most earnest endeavors, to render their belief in the gospel effectual to the sanctification of their hearts, the regulation of their lives, and the salvation of their souls.

I HAVE only to add, that although this little treatise is designed principally for the instruction of youth, yet considered as a kind of recapitulation of the Evidences of Christianity, it may be found of some use to persons of a more mature age, by refreshing their memories, and bringing back to their recollection those proofs of their religion which they have formerly read in larger and more elaborate works, and which they will here see brought together into one point of view.

SUMMARY
OF THE
PRINCIPAL EVIDENCES
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TRUTH AND DIVINE ORIGIN
OF THE
CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

THE method I intend to pursue in this treatise, is to present to my young readers the following series of propositions, and then to prove distinctly the truth of each.

1. From considering the state of the heathen world, before the appearance of our Lord upon earth, it is evident

that there was an absolute necessity for a revelation of God's will, and, of course, a great probability beforehand that such a revelation would be granted.

II. At the very time when there was a general expectation in the world of some extraordinary personage making his appearance in it, a person called Jesus Christ did actually appear upon earth, asserting that he was the Son of God, and that he was sent from heaven to teach mankind true religion ; and he did accordingly found a religion, which from him was called the Christian Religion, and which has been professed by great numbers of people from that time to the present.

III. The books of the new testament were written by those persons to

whom they are ascribed, and contain a faithful history of Christ and his religion: and the account there given of both, may be securely relied upon as strictly true.

iv. The scriptures of the old testament (which are connected with those of the new) are the genuine writings of those whose names they bear, and give a true account of the Mosaic dispensation, of the historical facts, the divine commands, the moral precepts, and the prophecies which they contain.

v. The character of Christ, as represented in the gospels, affords very strong ground for believing that he was a divine person.

vi. The sublimity of his doctrines and the purity of his moral precepts confirm this belief.

vii. The rapid and successful propagation of the gospel by the first teachers of it, through a large part of the world, is a proof that they were favored with divine assistance and support.

viii. A comparison betwixt Christ and Mahomet and their respective religions, leads us to conclude, that as the religion of the latter was confessedly the invention of man, that of the former was derived from God.

ix. The predictions delivered by the ancient prophets, and fulfilled in our Saviour, show that he was the Messiah expected by the Jews, and that

he came into the world by divine appointment, to be the great deliverer and redeemer of mankind.

x. The prophecies delivered by our Saviour himself, prove that he was endued with the foreknowledge of future events, which belongs only to God and to those inspired by him.

xi. The miracles performed by our Lord, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power.

xii. The resurrection, of our Lord from the dead, is a fact fully proved by the clearest evidence, and is the seal and confirmation of his divinity and of the truth of his religion.

These are the several points I shall undertake to prove in the following pages : and if these are clearly made out, there can be nothing more wanting to satisfy every reasonable man, that the Christian Religion is a true revelation from God.

PROPOSITION I.

FROM considering the state of the heathen world, before the appearance of our Lord upon earth, it is evident that there was an absolute necessity for a divine revelation of God's will, and, of course, a great probability beforehand, that such a revelation would be granted.

THEY who are acquainted with ancient history, know perfectly well that there is no one fact more certain and more notorious than this: That for many ages before our Saviour appeared upon earth, and at the time he actually did appear, the whole heathen world, even the politest and most civilized, and most learned nations, were, with a very few exceptions, sunk in the most deplorable

rable ignorance of every thing relating to God and to religion ; in the grossest superstition and idolatry, and in the most abominable corruption and depravity of manners. They neither understood the true nature of God, nor the attributes and perfections which belong to him, nor the worship that was acceptable to him, nor the moral duties which he required from his creatures ; nor had they any clear notions or firm belief of the immortality of the soul, and a state of rewards and punishments in another life. They believed the world to be under the direction of a vast multitude of gods and goddesses, to whom they ascribed the worst passions and the worst vices that ever disgraced human nature. They worshipped also dead men and women, birds and beasts, insects and reptiles, (especially that most odious

and disgusting reptile the serpent) together with an infinite number of idols, the work of their own hands, from various materials, gold, silver, wood, and stone. With respect to their own conduct, they were almost universally addicted to the most shocking and abominable vices ; even many of their solemn religious ceremonies and acts of devotion were scenes of the grossest sensuality and licentiousness. Others of them were attended with the most savage and cruel superstitions, and sometimes even with human sacrifices.

The description given of the ancient Pagans by St. Paul, in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, is strictly and literally true. “ They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, uncleanness,

morality, the method of God's governing the world, his design in creating mankind, the original dignity of human nature, the state of corruption and depravity into which it afterwards fell ; the particular mode of divine interposition necessary for the recovery of the human race ; the means of regaining the favor of their offended Maker, and the glorious end to which God intended finally to conduct them. Even with respect to those great and important doctrines abovementioned, the immortality of the soul, the reality of a future state, and the distribution of rewards and punishments hereafter, they were full of doubt, uncertainty, and hesitation ; and rather ardently wished and hoped for, than confidently expected and believed them. But even what they *did* know with any degree of

clearness and certainty, they either would not condescend, or wanted the ability, to render plain and intelligible to the lower orders of the people. They were destitute also of proper authority to enforce the virtues they recommended; they had no motives to propose powerful enough to overrule strong temptations and corrupt inclinations: their own example, instead of recommending their precepts, tended to counteract them; for it was generally (even in the very best of them) in direct opposition to their doctrines; and the detestable vices to which many of them were addicted, entirely destroyed the efficacy of what they taught.

Above all, they were destitute of those awful sanctions of religion, which are the most effectual restraints on the

passions and vices of mankind, and the most powerful incentives to virtue, the rewards and punishments of a future state, which form so essential and important a part of the Christian dispensation.

There was, therefore, a plain and absolute necessity for a divine revelation, to rescue mankind from that gulph of ignorance, superstition, idolatry, wickedness, and misery, in which they were almost universally sunk; to teach them in what manner, and with what kind of external service, God might most acceptably be worshipped, and what expiation he would accept for sin; to give them a full assurance of a future state and a future judgment; to make the whole doctrine of religion clear and obvious to all capacities; to add weight

and authority to the plainest precepts, and to furnish men with extraordinary and supernatural assistance, to enable them to overcome the corruptions of their nature. And since it was also plainly worthy of God, and consonant to all our ideas, of his goodness, mercy, and compassion to the work of his own hands, that he should thus enlighten, and assist and direct the creatures he had made, there was evidently much ground to expect that such information and assistance would be granted; and the wisest of the ancient heathens themselves thought it most natural and agreeable to right reason to hope for something of this nature.

You may give over, says Socrates, all hopes of amending men's manners for the future, unless God be pleased to

send you some other person to instruct you ;* and Plato declares, that whatever is right, and as it should be in the present evil state of the world, can be so only by the *particular interposition of God.*† Cicero has made similar declarations ; and Porphyry, who was a most inveterate enemy to the Christian Religion, yet confesses, that there was wanting *some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy had ever yet found out.*‡

These confessions of the great sages of antiquity, infinitely outweigh the assertions of our modern infidels, “ that human reason is fully sufficient to teach man his duty, and enable him to perform it ; and that, therefore, a divine

* Plato in Apolog. Socratis.

† Plato de Rep.

‡ Augustin de Civitate Dei, l. 10. c. 32.

revelation was perfectly needless." It is true, that, in the present times, a Deist may have tolerably just notions of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, of the worship due to him, of the ground and extent of moral obligation, and even of a future state of retribution. But from whence does he derive these notions? Not from the dictates of his own unassisted reason, but (as the philosopher Rousseau himself confesses*) from those very scriptures which he despises and reviles, from the early impressions of education, from living and conversing in a Christian country, where those doctrines are publicly taught, and where, in spite of himself, he imbibes some portion of that religious knowledge which the sacred writings have every where diffused and

* Vol. ix. p. 71, 12mo. 1764.

communicated to the *enemies* as well as the friends of the gospel. But they who were destitute of these advantages, they who had nothing but reason to direct them, and therefore knew what reason is capable of doing, when left to itself, much better than any modern infidel (who never was, and never can be, precisely in the same predicament ;) these men uniformly declare, that the mere light of nature was *not* competent to conduct them into the road of happiness and virtue ; and that the only *sure and certain guide* to carry men well through this life *was a divine discovery of the truth.** These considerations may serve to shew, that, instead of entertaining any unreasonable prejudices beforehand against the possibility or probability of any divine revelation whatever,

* Plato in Phædone.

we ought, on the contrary, to be previously prepossessed in favor of it, and to be prepared and open to receive it with candor and fairness, whenever it should come supported with sufficient evidence; because, from considering the wants of man and the mercy of God, it appears highly probable that such a revelation would *some time or other* be vouchsafed to mankind.

PROPOSITION II.

At the very time when there was a general expectation in the world of some extraordinary personage making his appearance in it, a person called Jesus Christ did actually appear upon earth, asserting that he was the Son of God, and that he came from Heaven to teach mankind true religion ; and he did accordingly found a religion, which from him was called, the Christian Religion, and which has been professed by great numbers of people from that time to the present.

It was necessary just to state this proposition, as the foundation of all the reasoning that is to follow : but the truth of it is so universally acknowl-

edged, that it requires but very few words to be said in support of it.

That there was, about the time of our Saviour's birth, a general expectation spread over the eastern part of the world, that some very extraordinary person would appear in Judæa, is evident both from the sacred history and from Pagan writers. St. Matthew informs us, that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, there came wise men (probably men of considerable rank and learning in their own country) from the East, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews; for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him?" In confirmation of this, two Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, assert that there prevailed at that time, over the whole

East, an ancient and fixed opinion, that there should arise out of Judæa a person who should obtain dominion over the world.

That at this time, when Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, a person called Jesus Christ was actually born in Judæa ; that he professed to come from heaven to teach mankind true religion, and that he had a multitude of followers ; the sacred historians unanimously affirm, and several heathen authors also bear testimony to the same facts. They mention the very name of Christ, and acknowledge that he had a great number of disciples, who from him were called Christians. The Jews, though professed enemies to our religion, acknowledge these things to be true ; and none even of the earliest Pagans

who wrote against Christianity, ever pretended to question their reality.— These things, therefore, are as certain and undeniable as ancient history, both sacred and profane, and the concurrent testimony both of friends and enemies, can possibly make them.

PROPOSITION III.

THE books of the New Testament were written by those persons to whom they are ascribed, and contain a faithful history of Christ and his religion : and the account there given of both, may be securely relied upon as strictly true.

THE books which contain the history of Christ and of the Christian Religion, are the four gospels and the acts of the Apostles. That the gospels were written by the persons whose name they bear, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there is no more reason to doubt, than that the histories which we have under the names of Xenophon,

Livy, or Tacitus, were written by those authors.

A great many passages are alluded to or quoted from the Evangelists, exactly as we read them now, by a regular succession of Christian writers, from the time of the Apostles down to this hour; and at a very early period their names are mentioned as the authors of their respective gospels; which is more than can be said for any other ancient historian whatever.*

These books have always been considered by the whole Christian world, from the Apostolic age, as containing a faithful history of their religion, and therefore they ought to be received as

* Lardner's *Credibility*, b. i. and Paley's *Evidences*, vol. i.

such ; just as we allow the Koran to contain a genuine account of the Mahometan religion, and the sacred books of the Bramins to contain a true representation of the Hindoo religion.

That all the facts related in these writings, and the accounts given of every thing our Saviour said and did, are also strictly true, we have the most substantial grounds for believing :

For, in the first place, the writers had the very best means of information, and could not possibly be deceived themselves.

And, in the next place, they could have no conceivable inducement for imposing upon others.

St. Matthew and St. John were two of our Lord's Apostles ; his constant companions and attendants throughout the whole of his ministry. They were actually present at the scenes which they describe ; eye witnesses of the facts, and ear witnesses of the discourses, which they relate.

St. Mark and St. Luke though not themselves Apostles, yet were the contemporaries and companions of Apostles, and in habits of society and friendship with those who had been present at the transactions which they record. St. Luke expressly says this in the beginning of his gospel, which opens with these words : “ For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND DEATH
OF
JOHN WILMOT,
EARL OF ROCHESTER.

WHO DIED JULY 26, 1680.

WRITTEN BY HIS OWN DIRECTION ON HIS
DEATH-BED.

BY GILBERT BURNET,
Lord Bishop of Sarum.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

ALBANY:
PRINTED BY J. M'DONALD.

M DCC XCVII.

THE
L I F E
O F
GILBERT BURNET.

GILBERT BURNET, bishop of Salisbury in the latter end of the sixteenth century, was born at Edinburgh, in 1643, of an ancient family in the shire of Aberdeen. His father being bred to the law, was, at the restoration of king Charles II. appointed one of the lords of session, with the title of *Lord Grimsd*, in reward for his constant attachment to the royal party during the troubles of Great Britain. Our author, the youngest son of his father, was instructed by him in the Latin tongue: at ten years of age he was sent to continue his studies at Aberdeen, and was admitted M. A. before he was 14. His own inclination led him to the study of the civil and feudal law; and he used to say, that it was from this study he had received more just notions concerning the foundations of civil society and government, than those which some divines attain. About a year after, he changed his mind, and began to apply

to divinity, to the great satisfaction of his father. He was admitted preacher before he was 18; and Sir Alexander Burnet, his cousin-german, offered him a benefice; but he refused to accept of it.

In 1663, about two years after the death of his father, he came into England; and after six months stay at Oxford and Cambridge, returned to Scotland; which he soon left again to make a tour for some months, in 1664, in Holland and France. At Amsterdam, by the help of a Jewish Rabbi, he perfected himself in the Hebrew language; and likewise became acquainted with the leading men of the different persuasions tolerated in that country; as Calvinists, Arminians, Lutherans, Anabaptists, Brownists, Papists, and Unitarians; amongst each of which he used frequently to declare, he met with men of such unfeigned piety and virtue, that he became fixed in a strong principle of universal charity, and an invincible abhorrence of all severities on account of religious dissensions.

Upon his return from his travels, he was admitted minister of Sakon; in which station he served five years in the most exemplary manner. He drew up a memorial, in which he took notice of the principal errors in the conduct of the Scots bishops, which he observed not to be conformable to

the primitive institution; and sent a copy of it to several of them. This exposed him to their resentments; but to show he was not actuated with a spirit of ambition, he led a retired course of life for two years; which so endangered his health, that he was obliged to abate his excessive application to study. In 1669, he published his "modest and free conference between a conformist and a non conformist." He became acquainted with the dutchess of Hamilton, who communicated to him all the papers belonging to her father and her uncle; upon which he drew up the "Memoirs of the dukes of Hamilton." The duke of Lauderdale hearing he was about this work, invited him to London, and introduced him to king Charles II. He returned to Scotland, and married the lady Margaret Kennedy, daughter of the earl of Cassilis; a lady of great piety and knowledge, highly esteemed by the Presbyterians, to whose sentiments she was strongly inclined. As there was some disparity in their ages, that it might remain past dispute that this match was wholly owing to inclination, and not to avarice or ambition, the day before their marriage our author delivered the lady a deed, whereby he renounced all pretensions to her fortune, which was very considerable, and must otherwise have fallen into his hands, she herself having no intention to secure it. The same year he

published his "Vindication of the authority, constitution and laws of the church and state of Scotland;" which at that juncture was looked upon as so great a service, that he was again offered a bishopric, and a promise of the next vacant archbishopric; but he did not accept it, because he could not approve of the measures of the court, the grand view of which he saw to be the advancement of popery.

Mr. Burnet's intimacy with the duke of Hamilton, and Lauderdale occasioned him to be frequently sent for by the king and the duke of York, who had conversations with him in private. But Lauderdale conceiving a resentment against him on account of the freedom with which he spoke to him, represented at last to the king, that Dr. Burnet was engaged in an opposition to his measures. Upon his return to London, he perceived that these suggestions had entirely thrown him out of the king's favour, though the duke of York treated him with greater civility than ever, and dissuaded him from going to Scotland. Upon this, he resigned his professorship at Glasgow, and staid at London. About this time the living at Cripple-gate being vacant, the dean and chapter of St. Paul's (in whose gift it was), hearing of his circumstances and the hardships he had undergone,

sent him an offer of the benefice; but as he had been informed of their first intention of conferring it on Dr. Fowler, he generously declined it. In 1675, at the recommendation of Lord Hollis, whom he had known in France, ambassador at that court, he was, by Sir Herbottle Grimstone, master of the rolls, appointed preacher of the chapel there, notwithstanding the opposition of the court. He was soon after chosen a lecturer of St. Clement's, and became one of the preachers that were most followed in town. In 1679, he published his *History of the reformation*, for which he had the thanks of both houses of parliament. The first part of it was published in 1679, and the second in 1681. Next year he published an abridgment of these two parts.

Mr. Burnet about this time happened to be lent for to a woman in sickness, who had been engaged in an amour with the earl of Rochester. The manner in which he treated her during her illness, gave that lord a great curiosity for being acquainted with him. Whereupon, for a whole winter, he spent one evening in a week with Dr. Burnet, who discoursed with him upon all those topics upon which scepticks and men of loose morals attack the Christian religion. The happy effect of these conferences occasioned the publication of the life and death of that

earl. In 1682, when the administration was changed in favour of the duke of York, being much resorted to by persons of all ranks and parties, in order to avoid returning visits, he built a laboratory, and went for above a year through a course of chemical experiments. Not long after, he refused a living of 300 a year offered him by the earl of Essex, on the terms of his not residing there, but in London. When the inquiry concerning the popish plot was on foot, he was frequently sent for and consulted by king Charles with relation to the state of the nation. His majesty offered him the bishopric of Chichester, then vacant, if he would engage in his interests; but he refused to accept it on these terms. He preached at the rolls till 1684, when he was dismissed by order of the court. About this time he published several pieces.

On king James's accession to the throne, having obtained leave to go out of the kingdom, he first went to Paris, and lived there in great retirement, till contracting an acquaintance with brigadier Stoupe, a Protestant gentleman in the French service, he made a tour with him into Italy. He met with an agreeable reception at Rome. Pope Innocent II. hearing of our author's arrival sent the captain of the Swiss guards to acquaint him he

would give him a private audience in bed, to avoid the ceremony of kissing his holiness's slipper. But Dr. Burnet excused himself as well as he could. Some disputes which our author had here concerning religion, beginning to be taken notice of, made it proper for him to quit the city; which upon an intimation given him by prince Borghese, he accordingly did.

He pursued his travels through Switzerland and Germany. In 1688, he came to Utrecht with an intention to settle in some of the seven provinces. There he received an invitation from the prince and princess of Orange (to whom their party in England had recommended him) to come to the Hague, which he accepted. He was soon made acquainted with the secret of their counsels, and advised the fitting out of a fleet in Holland sufficient to support their designs and encourage their friends. This and the *Account of his travels*, in which he endeavoured to blend tyranny and Popery together, and represent them as inseparable, with some papers reflecting on the proceedings of England, that came out in single sheets, and were dispersed in several parts of England, most of which Mr. Burnet owned himself the author of, alarmed king James; and were the occasion of his writing twice against him to

the prince of Orange, and insisting, by his ambassador, on his being forthwith the court; which after much importunity, was done, though he continued to be trusted and employed as before, the Dutch minister consulting him daily. To put an end to these frequent conferences with the ministers, a prosecution for high treason was set on foot against him both in England and Scotland. But Burnet receiving the news thereof before it arrived at the States, he avoided the storm, by petitioning for and obtaining without any difficulty, a bill of naturalization, in order to his intended marriage with Mary Scot, a Dutch lady of considerable fortune, who, with the advantage of birth, had those of a fine person and understanding.

After his marriage with this lady, being legally under the protection of Holland, when Mr. Burnet found king James plainly subverting the constitution, he omitted no method to support and promote the design the prince of Orange had formed of delivering Great Britain, and came over with him in quality of chaplain. He was soon advanced to the see of Salisbury. He declared for moderate measures with regard to the clergy, who scrupled to take the oaths, and many were displeased with him for declaring for the toleration of nonconformists. His pastoral let-

ter concerning the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to king William and queen Mary, 1689, happening to touch upon the right of conquest, gave such offence to both houses of parliament, that it was ordered to be burnt by the hands of the common executioner. In 1698 he lost his wife by the small-pox; and as he was almost immediately after appointed preceptor to the duke of Gloucester, in whose education he took great care, this employment, and the tenderness of his children, induced him the same year to supply her loss by a marriage with Mrs. Berkely, eldest daughter of Sir Richard Blake, knight. In 1699 he published his Exposition of the 39 articles: which occasioned a representation against him in the lower house of convocation in the year 1701; but he was vindicated by the upper house. His speech in the house of lords in 1704 against the bill to prevent occasional conformity was severely attacked. He died in 1715, and was interred in the church of St. James, Clerkenwell, where he has a monument erected to him. He formed a scheme for augmenting the poor livings; which he pressed forward with such success, that it ended in an act of parliament passed in the second year of queen Anne, "for the augmentation of the livings of the poor clergy."

THE
P R E F A C E.

THE celebrating the praises of the dead, is an argument so worn out by long and frequent use ; and now become so nauseous, by the flattery that usually attends it, that it is no wonder if funeral orations, or panegyrics, are more considered for the elegance of style, and fineness of wit, than for the authority they carry with them as to the truth of matters of fact. And yet I am not hereby deterred from meddling with this kind of argument, nor from handling it with all the plainness I can : delivering only what I myself heard and saw, without any borrowed ornament.

I do easily foresee how many will be engaged for the support of their impious maxims and immoral practices, to disparage what I am to write. Others will censure it, because it

comes from one of my profession, too many supposing us to be induced, to frame such discourses for carrying on what they are pleased to call *Our Trade*. Some will think I dress it up too artificially, and others, that I present it too plain and naked.

But being resolved to govern myself by the exact rules of truth, I shall be less concerned in the censures I may fall under. It may seem liable to great exception, that I should disclose so many things, that were discovered to me, if not under the seal of confession, yet under the confidence of friendship; but this noble Lord himself not only released me from all obligations of this kind, when I waited on him in his last sickness, a few days before he died, but gave it me in charge not to spare him in any thing which I thought might be of use to the living; and was not ill pleased to be laid open, as well in the worst as in the best and last part of his life, being so sincere in his repentance, that he was not unwilling to take shame to himself, by suffer-

ing his faults to be exposed for the benefit of others.

I write with one great disadvantage—that I cannot reach his chief design, without mentioning some of his faults: but I have touched them as tenderly as occasion would bear; and I am sure with much more softness than he desired, or would have consented to, had I told him how I intended to manage this part. I have related nothing with personal reflections on any others, concerned with him, wishing rather they themselves, reflecting on the sense he had of his former disorders, may be thereby led to forsake their own; than that they should be any ways reproached by what I write; and therefore though he used very few reserves with me, as to his course of life, yet since others had a share in most parts of it. I shall relate nothing but what more immediately concerned himself; and shall say no more of his faults than is necessary to illustrate his repentance.

The occasion that led me into so particular a knowledge of him, was an intimation given me by a gentleman of his acquaintance, of his desire to see me. This was sometime in October, 1679, when he was slowly recovering out of a great disease. He had understood that I often attended on one well known to him, that died the summer before; he was also then entertaining himself in that low state of health, with the first part of the History of the Reformation then newly come out, with which he seemed not ill pleased; and we had accidentally met in two or three places some time before.

These were the motives that led him to call for my company. After I had waited on him once or twice, he grew into that freedom with me, as to open to me all his thoughts, both of religion and morality, and to give me a full view of his past life, and seemed not uneasy at my frequent visits. So till he went from London, which was in the beginning of April, I waited on him often.

As soon as I heard how ill he was, and how much he was touched with the sense of his former life, I writ to him, and received from him an answer, that, without my knowledge, was printed since his death; from a copy which one of his servants conveyed to the press. In it there is so undeserved a value put on me, that it had been very indecent for me to have published it: yet that must be attributed to his civility and way of breeding: and indeed he was particularly known to so few of the clergy, that the good opinion he had of me, is to be imputed only to his unacquaintance with others.

My end in writing, is so to discharge the last commands this lord left on me, as that it may be effectual to awaken those, who run on to all the excesses of riot; and that in the midst of these heats, which their lusts and passions raise in them, they may be a little wrought on by so great an instance of one who had run round the whole circle of

luxury; and as Solomon says of himself, Whatsoever his eyes desired, he kept it not from them; and withheld his heart from no joy. But when he looked back, on all that, on which he had wasted his time and strength, he esteemed it vanity and vexation of spirit: though he had both as much natural wit, and as much acquired by learning and both as much improved by thinking and study as perhaps any libertine of the age. Yet when he reflected on all his former courses, even before his mind was illuminated with better thoughts he counted them madnefs and folly.

But when the power of religion came to operate on him, that he added a detestation to the contempt he formerly had of them, suitable to what became a sincere penitent, and expressed himself in so clear and so calm a manner, so sensible of his failings towards his maker, and his redeemer, that as it wrought not a little on those that were a-

bout him; so, I hope, the making it public may have a more general influence, chiefly on those on whom his former conversation might have had ill effects.

I have endeavoured to give his character as fully as I could take it; but as I saw him only in one light, in a sedate and quiet temper, when he was under a great decay of strength and loss of spirits; I cannot give his picture with that life and advantage that others may, who knew him when his parts were more lively: yet the composure he was then in, may perhaps be supposed to balance any abatement of his usual vigour which the declination of his health brought him under.

I have written this discourse with as much care, and have considered it as narrowly as I could. I am sure I have said nothing but truth. I have done it slowly, and often used my second thoughts in it, not being so much concerned in the censures which might fall on myself; as cautious that nothing should

pass, that might obstruct my only design of writing, which is the doing what I can towards reforming a loose and lewd age.

And if such a signal instance, concurring with all the evidence we have for our most holy faith, has no effect on those who are running the same course it is much to be feared they are given up to a reprobate sense.

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

JOHN WILMOT,
EARL OF ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, Earl of *Rochester*, was born in April, Anno Domini 1648. His Father was *Henry*, Earl of *Rochester* but best known by the title of Lord *Wilmot*, who bore so conspicuous a part in all the late wars, that mention is often made of him in the history. He had the chief share in the honour of the preservation of CHARLES SECOND, after *Worcester*-fight, and the conveying him from place to place, till he happily escaped into *France*; but dying before the king's return, he left his son little other inheritance, than the honor and title de-

rived to him, with the pretensions such eminent services gave him to the king's favour, These were carefully managed by the great prudence and discretion of his mother, a daughter of that noble and ancient family of the *St. John's of Wiltshire*, so that his education was carried on in all things suitably to his quality.

When he was at school he was an extraordinary proficient at his book ; and those shining parts which have since appeared with so much lustre, began then to shew themselves : He acquired the Latin to such perfection, that to his dying-day he retained a great relish for the fineness and beauty of that tongue ; and was exactly versed in the incomparable authors that wrote about *Augustus'* time, whom he read often with that peculiar delight, which the greatest wits have ever found in those studies.

When he went to the university, the general joy that over-ran the whole nation upon his majestys restoration, but was not regulated with that sobriety and temperance, that became a serious gratitude to God for so great a blessing, produced some of its ill effects on him : He began to love these disorders too much.

His tutor was that eminent and pious divine Dr. *Blanford*, afterwards promoted to the sees of *Oxford* and *Worcester*. And under his inspection, he was committed to the more immediate care of Mr. *Phineas Berry*, a fellow of *Wadham* college, a very learned and good natured man ; whom he afterward used with much respect, and rewarded as became a great man. But the humour of that time wrought so much on him, that he broke off the course of his studies, to which no means could ever effectually recal him ; till when he was in *Italy* his governor Dr. *Balfour*, a worthy and learned man, now

a celebrated physician in *Scotland*, his native country, drew him to read such books as were most likely to bring him back to love learning and study : and he often acknowledged to me in particular three days before his death, how much he was obliged to love and honor this his governor to whom he thought he owed more than to all the world, next after his parents for his care and fidelity of him, while he was under his trust.

But no part of it affected him more sensibly, than that he engaged him by many tricks (so he expressed it) to delight in books and reading. So that ever after he took occasion in the intervals of those woeful extravagancies that consumed most of his time to read much : and tho' the time was generally but indifferently employed, for the choice of the subjects of his studies was not always good, yet the habitual love of knowledge, together with these fits of study, had much awak-

ened his understanding and prepared him for better things, when his mind should be so far changed as to relish them.

He came from his travels in the 18th year of his age, and appeared at court with as great advantages as most ever had. He was a graceful and well shaped person, tall, and well made, if not a little too slender. He was exactly well bred, and what by a modest behaviour natural to him, what by a civility become almost as natural, his conversation was easy and obliging. He had a strange vivacity of thought, and vigour of expression. His wit had a subtilty and sublimity both that were scarce imitable. His stile was clear and strong. When he used figures they were very lively, and yet far enough out of the common road. He had made himself master of the ancient and modern wit, and of the modern *French* and *Italian* as well as the

Englisch. He loved to talk and write of speculative matters, and did it with so fine a thread that even those that hated the subjects that his fancy run upon, yet could not but be charmed with his way of treating them. *Boileau* among the *French*, and *Cowley* among the *Englisch* wits, were those he admired most. Sometimes other mens thoughts mixed with his composures, but that flowed rather from the impressions they made on him when he read them, by which they came to return upon him as his own thoughts, than that he servilely copied them from any. For few men ever had a bolder flight of fancy more steadily governed by judgment than he had. No wonder a young man so made and so improved was very acceptable in a court.

Soon after his coming thither, he laid hold on the first occasion that offered, to shew his readiness to hazard his life in the defence and service of his country.

In the winter of 1665, he went with the earl of *Sandwich* to sea, when he was sent to lie in wait for the *Dutch East India* fleet; and was in the *Revenge* commanded by Sir *Thomas Tiddiman*, when the attack was made on the port of *Bergen* in *Norway*, the *Dutch* ships having got into that port. It was as desperate an attempt as ever was made: during the whole action, the earl of *Rochester* shewed as brave and as resolute courage as was possible. A person of honour told me he heard the Lord *Clifford*, who was in the same ship, often magnify his courage at that time very highly. Nor did the rigours of the season, the hardness of the voyage, and the extreme dangers he had been in, deter him from running the like on the very next occasion. For in the Summer following he went to sea again, without communicating his design to his nearest relations. He went aboard the ship commanded by Sir *Edward Spraggue*,

the day before the great sea-fight of that year. Almost all the volunteers that were in the same ship were killed. Mr. *Middleton*, (brother to Sir *Hugh Middleton*) was shot in his arms. During the action, Sir *Edward Spragge* not being satisfied with the behaviour of one of the captains, could not easily find a person who would cheerfully venture through so much danger, to carry his commands to that captain. This lord offered himself to the service; and went in a little boat through all the shot, and delivered his message, and returned back to Sir *Edward*: which was much commended by all that saw it. He thought it necessary to begin his life with these demonstrations of his courage in an element and way of fighting, which is acknowledged to be the greatest trial of clear and undaunted valour.

He had so entirely laid down the intemperance that was growing on him before his travels, that at his return he hat-

ed nothing more. But falling into company that loved these excesses, he was, though not without difficulty, and by many steps, brought back to it again. And the natural heat of his fancy being inflamed by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many to be more diverted by that humour, studied to engage him in deeper and deeper intemperance; which at length did so entirely subdue him, that, as he told me, for five years together he was so continually drunk: not all the while under the visible effect of it, but his blood was so inflamed, that it was not in all that time cool enough to be perfectly master of himself. This led him to say and do many wild and unaccountable things; by this, he said, he had broke the firm constitution of his health, that seemed so strong, that nothing was too hard for it; and he had suffered so much in his reputation, that he almost despaired to recover it.

There were principles in his natural temper, that being heightened by that heat carried him to great excesses—a violent love of pleasure, and a disposition to extravagant mirth. The one involved him in great sensuality; the other led him to many odd adventures and frolicks, in which he was oft in hazard of his life. The one being the same irregular appetite in mind, that the other was in his body, which made him think nothing diverting that was not extravagant.—And though in cold blood he was a generous and good natured man, yet he would go too far in his heats, after any thing that might turn to a jest or matter of diversion.

He said to me, He never improved his interest at court, to do a premeditated mischief to other persons. Yet he laid out his wit very freely in libels and satires, in which he had a peculiar talent of mixing his wit with his malice, and

fitting both with such apt words, that men were tempted to be pleased with them; from thence his composures came to be easily known, for few had such a way of tempering these together as he had. So that when any thing extraordinary that way came out, as a child is sometimes fathered by its resemblance, so was it laid at his door as its parent and author.

These exercises in the course of his life were not always equally pleasant to him; he had often sad intervals and severe reflections on them. And though then he had not these awakened in him from any principle of religion, yet the horror that nature raised in him, especially in some sicknesses, made him too easy to receive some ill principles, which others endeavoured to possess him with; so that he was soon brought to set himself so secure and fortify his mind against

that, by dispossessing it of all he could of the belief or apprehensions of religion.

The licentiousness of his temper, with the briskness of his wit, disposed him to love the conversation of those who divided their time between lewd actions and irregular mirth. And so came to bend his wit and direct his studies and endeavours to strengthen and support these ill principles both in himself and others.

An accident fell out after this, which confirmed him more in these courses.—When he went to sea in the year 1665 there happened to be in the same ship with him, Mr. *Montague*, and another gentleman of quality; these two, the former especially, seemed persuaded that they should never return into *England*. Mr. *Montague* said, he was sure of it: the other was not so positive. The Earl of *Rochester* and the last of these, entered into a formal engagement, not with

out ceremonies of religion, that if either of them died, he should appear and give the other notice of the future state, if there was any. Mr. *Montague* would not enter into the bond. When the day came that they thought to have taken the *Dutch* fleet in the port of *Bergen*, Mr. *Montague*, though he had such a strong presage in his mind of his approaching death, yet he generally staid all the while in a place of the greatest danger. The other gentleman signalized his courage in a most undaunted manner, till near the end of the action, when he fell on a sudden into a trembling that he could scarce stand: and Mr. *Montague* going up to him to hold him up, as they were in each others arms, a cannon ball killed him outright, and carried away Mr. *Montague's* belly, so that he died within an hour after.

The Earl of *Rochester* told me that these presages they had in their minds,

made some impression on him, that there were separate beings ; and that the soul, either by a natural sagacity, or some secret notice communicated to it, had a sort of divination. But that gentleman's never appearing was a great snare to him during the rest of his life. Though when he told me this he could not but acknowledge, that it was an unreasonable thing to think, that being in another state were not under such laws and limits, that they could not command their own motions, but as the Supreme Power should order them ; and that one who had so corrupted the natural principles of truth, as he had, had no reason to expect that such an extraordinary thing should be done for his conviction.

He also told me of another odd presage that one had of his approaching death in the lady *Warre*, his mother-in-law's house. The chaplain dreamed that such a day he should die, but being by all the

family put out of the belief of it, he had almost forgot it ; till the evening before at supper, there being thirteen at table, according to fond conceit that one of these must soon die one of the young ladies pointed to him that he was to die. He remembering his dream fell into some disorder, and the lady *Warre* reproving him for his superstition, he said, he was confident he was to die before morning ; but he being in perfect health it was not much minded. It was *Saturday*-night, and he was to preach the next day. He went to his chamber and sat up late, as appeared by the burning of his candle, and had been preparing his notes for his sermon, but was found dead in his bed the next morning. These things he said led him to believe the soul was a substance distinct from matter ; and this often returned into his thoughts. But that which perfected his persuasion about it, was that in the sickness which brought

him so near his death before I first knew him, when his spirits were so low and spent, that he could not move nor stir, and did not expect to live an hour. He said his reason and judgment were so clear and strong, that from thence he was fully persuaded that death was not the spending or dissolution of the soul, but only the separation of it from matter. he had in that sickness great remories for his past life, but he afterwards told me, they were rather general and dark horrors, than any convictions of sinning against God. He was sorry he lived so as to waste his strength so soon, or that he had brought such an ill name upon himself; and had an agony in his mind about it, which he knew not well how to express. But at such times though he conversed with his friends in suffering divines to be sent for, he said, he had no great mind to it: and that it was but a piece of his breeding, to desire them to

desire them to pray by him, in which he joined but little himself.

As to the supreme Being, he had always some impression of one: and professed often to me, That he had never known an entire *atheist*, who fully believed there was no God. Yet when he explained his notion of that being, it amounted to no more than a vast power that had none of the attributes of goodness and justice we ascribe to the Deity. These were his thoughts about religion, as he himself told me.

For morality, he freely owned to me, that though he talked of it as a fine thing, yet this was only because he thought it a decent way of speaking, and that as they went always in cloaths, though in their frolics they would have chosen sometimes to have gone naked, if they had not feared the people; so that though some of them found it necessary for hu-

man life to talk of Morality, yet he confessed they cared not for it, further than the reputation of it was necessary for their credit, and affairs; of which he gave me many instances, as their professing and swearing friendship, where they hated morality; their oaths and imprecations in their addresses to women, which they intended never to make good; the pleasure they took in defaming innocent persons, and spreading false reports of some, perhaps in revenge, because they could not engage them to comply with their ill designs: the delight they had in making people quarrel; their unjust usage of their creditors, and putting them off by any deceitful promise they could invent, that might deliver them from present importunity. So that in detestation of these courses, he would often break forth into such hard expressions concerning himself, as would be indecent for another to repeat.

Such had been his principles and practices in a course of many years, which had almost quite extinguished the natural propensities in him to justice and virtue. He would often go into the country, and be for some months wholly employed in study, or the sallies of his wit; which he came to direct chiefly to satire. And this he often defended to me; by saying there were some people who could not be kept in order or admonished but in this way. I replied, That it might be granted that a grave way of satire, was sometimes no unprofitable way of reproof. Yet they who used it only out of spite, and mixed lies with truth, sparing nothing that might adorn their poems, or gratify their revenge, could not excuse that way of reproach, by which the innocent often suffer; since the most malicious things, if wittily expressed, might stick to and blemish the best character in the world; and the malice of a libel

could hardly consist with the charity of an admonition. To this he answered, A man could not write with life, unless he was heated by revenge : for to make a satire without resentment on the cold notions of *philosophy*, was as if a man would in cold blood, cut mens' throats, who had never offended him. And he said, The lies in these libels came often in as ornaments that could not be spared without spoiling the beauty of the poem.

For his other studies, they were divided between the comical and witty writings of the ancients and moderns, the *Roman* authors, and books of physic, which the ill state of health he was fallen into made more necessary to himself ; and which qualified him for an odd adventure which I shall but just mention. Being under an unlucky accident which obliged him to keep out of the way, he disguised himself so that his nearest friends could not have known him, and set up in

Tower-street, for an *Italian* mountebank, where he practised physic for some weeks not without success. In his latter years he read books of history more. He took pleasure to disguise himself as a porter, or as a beggar ; sometimes to follow some mean amours, which for the variety of them he affected. At other times merely for diversion he would go about in odd shapes, in which he acted his part so naturally, that even those that were in the secret and saw him in these shapes, could perceive nothing by which he might be discovered.

I have now made the description of his former life and principles, as fully as I thought necessary to answer my end in writing. And yet with those reserves, that I hope I have given no just cause of offence to any. I have said nothing but what I had from his own mouth, and have avoided the mentioning of the more particular passages of his life, of which

he told me not a few. But since others were concerned in them, whose good only I design, I will say nothing that may provoke or blemish them. It is their reformation and not their disgrace, I desire: this tender consideration of others has made me suppress many remarkable and useful things he told me. But finding that tho' I should name none, yet I must relate such circumstances as would give great occasion for the reader to conjecture concerning the persons intended right or wrong, either of which were inconvenient enough, I have chosen to pass them quite over. But I hope those that know how much they were engaged with him in his ill courses, will be somewhat touched with this tenderness I express towards them; and be thereby rather induced to reflect on their ways, and to consider without prejudice or passion, what a sense this noble lord had of their case, when he came at last seriously to reflect upon his own.

I now turn to those parts of this narrative, wherein I myself bore some share, and which I am to deliver upon the observations I made, after a long and free conversation with him for some months. I was not long in his company when he told me, He should treat me with more freedom than he had ever used to men of my profession. He would conceal none of his principles from me, but lay his thoughts open without any disguise; nor would he do it to maintain debate or shew his wit, but plainly tell me what stuck with him. And he protested to me, that he was not so engaged to his old maxims, as to resolve not to change but if he could be convinced, he would choose rather to be of another mind. He said, he would impartially weigh what I should say before him, and tell me freely when it did convince him, and when it did not. He expressed this dis-

position of mind to me in a manner so frank, that I could not but believe him, and be much taken with his way of discourse. So we entered into almost all the parts of natural and of revealed religion, and of morality. He seemed pleased, and in a great measure satisfied, with what I said on many of these heads. And though our freest conversation was when we were alone, yet upon several occasions other persons were witnesses to it. I understood from many hands, that my company was not distasteful to him, and that the subjects about which we talked most, were not unacceptable. And he expressed himself often not ill pleased with many things I said to him, and particularly when I visited him in his last sickness : so that I hope it may not be altogether unprofitable, to publish the substance of those matters about which we argued so freely, with our reasoning upon them. And perhaps what

had some effect on him, may be not altogether ineffectual upon others.

I followed him with such arguments as I found were most likely to prevail with him. And my not urging other reasons proceeded not from any distrust I had of their force; but from the necessity of using those that were most proper for him. He was then in a low state of health, and seemed to be slowly recovering from a great disease. He was in the milk diet, and apt to fall into hectic-fits; any accident weakened him; so that he thought he could not live long. And when he went from *London*, he said, He believed he never should come to town more. Yet during his being in town, he was so well that he went often abroad, and had great vivacity of spirit. So that he was under no such decay that either darkened or weakened his understanding; nor was he any way troubled with

the spleen or vapours, or under the power of melancholy.

What he was then, compared to what he had been formerly, I could not so well judge, who had seen him but twice before. Others have told me they perceived no difference in his parts. This I mention more particularly that it may not be thought that melancholy or want of spirits made him more inclined to receive any impressions; for indeed I never discovered any such thing in him.

Having thus opened my way to the heads of our discourse, I shall next mention them. The three chief things we talked about, were morality, natural religion, and revealed religion, Christianity in particular. For morality he confessed, he saw the necessity of it, both for the government of the world, and the preservation of health, life and friendship; and was very much ashamed of his former practices, rather because he

had made himself a beast, and brought pain and sickness upon his body, and had suffered much in his reputation, than from any deep sense of a Supreme Being, or another state. But so far this went with him that he firmly resolved to change the course of his life, which he thought he should effect by the study of philosophy, and had not a few, no less solid and pleasant notions concerning the folly and madness of vice. But he confessed he had no remorse for his past actions or offences against God, but only as injuries to himself and to mankind.

Upon this subject I shewed him the effects of philosophy, for reforming the world. That it was a matter of speculation, which but few either had the leisure or the capacity to enquire into. But the principle that must reform mankind, must be obvious to every man's understanding. That philosophy in matters of morality, beyond the great lines of our

duty, had no very certain fixed rule, but the lesser offices and instances of our duty went much by the fancies of men, and customs of nations ; and consequently could not have authority enough to bear down the propensities of nature, appetite or passion. For which I instanced in these two points.

The one was about that maxim of the Stoics, to extirpate all sorts of passion and concern for any thing. That, take it on one hand, seemed desirable, because if it could be accomplished, it would make all the accidents of life easy ; but I think it cannot, because nature after all our striving against it, will still return to itself. Yet on the other hand it dissolved the bond of nature and friendship, and slackened industry which will move but dully, without an inward heat, and if it delivered a man of many troubles, it deprived him of the chief pleasures of life which arise from friendship.

The other was concerning the restraint of pleasure, how far that was to go.— Upon this, he told me the two maxims of his morality then were ; that he should do nothing to the hurt of any other, or that might prejudice his own health.— And he thought that all pleasure, when it did not interfere with these, was to be indulged as the gratification of our natural appetites. It seemed unreasonable to imagine these were put into a man only to be restrained, or curbed to such a narrowness. This he applied to the free use of wine and women.

To this I answered that if appetites being natural, was an argument for indulging them, then the revengeful might as well allege it for murder, and the covetous for stealing, whose appetites are no less keen on those objects ; and yet it is acknowledged that these appetites ought to be curbed. If the difference is urged from the injury another person receives,

the injury is as great, if a man's wife is defiled, or his daughter corrupted: and it is impossible for a man to let loose his appetites to vagrant lusts, and not transgress in these particulars. So there was no curing the disorders that must rise from thence but by regulating these appetites. And why should we not as well think that God intended our brutish and sensual appetites should be governed by our reason, as that the fierceness of beasts should be managed and tamed by the wisdom, and for the use of man? So that it is no real absurdity, to grant that these appetites were put into men, on purpose to exercise their reason in the restraint and government of them. Which to be able to do, ministers a higher and more lasting pleasure to a man, than to give them their full scope and range.— And if other rules in philosophy be observed, such as the avoiding those objects that stir passions, nothing rai-

ses higher passions than ungoverned lust, nothing darkens the understanding and depresses a man's mind more, nor is any thing managed with more frequent returns of other immoralities, than such oaths and imprecations as are only intended to compass what is desired. The expence that is necessary to maintain these irregularities, makes a man fall in his other dealings.

All this he freely confessed was true; upon which I urged that if it was reasonable for a man to regulate his appetite in things which he knew to be hurtful to him, was it not reasonable for God to prescribe a regulation of these appetites, whose unrestrained courses did produce such mischievous effects? That it could not be denied, but doing to others what we would have others do unto us, was a just rule. Those men then, that knew how extremely sensible they themselves would be of the dishonor of their fami-

lies in case their wives or daughters, needs condemn themselves, for doing that which they could not bear from another. And if the peace of mankind and the entire satisfaction of our whole life, ought to be one of the chief measures of our actions, then let all the world judge: whether a man that confines his appetite and lists contented at home is not much happier than those that in their desires run after forbidden objects.

The thing being granted to be better in itself, then the question falls between the restraint of appetite in some instances, and the freedom of a man's thoughts, the soundness of his health, his application to affairs, with the easiness of his whole life. Whether the one is not to be done before the other? As to the difficulty of such restraint, though it is not easy to be done when a man allows himself many liberties in which it is not possible to stop

yet those who avoid the occasions that may kindle these impure flames, and keep themselves well employed, find the victory and dominion over them no such impossible or hard matter as may seem at first view.

So that though the philosophy and morality of this point were plain, yet there is not strength enough in that principle to subdue nature and appetite.

Upon this I urged that morality could not be a strong thing, unless a man was determined by a law within himself: for if he only measured himself by decency, or the laws of the land, this would teach him only to use such caution in his ill practices, that they should not break out too visibly; but would never carry him to an inward and universal probity. That virtue was of so complicated a nature, that unless man became entirely within its discipline, he could not adhere

steadfastly to any one precept. For vices are often made necessary supports to one another. That this cannot be done either steadily, or with any satisfaction, unless the mind does inwardly comply with, and delight in the dictates of virtue. And that could not be effected, except a man's nature was internally regenerated and changed by a higher principle. Till that came about, corrupt nature would be strong, and philosophy but feeble ; especially when it struggled with such appetites or passions as were much kindled, or deeply rooted in the constitution of ones body.

This, he said sounded to him like enthusiasm or canting. He had no notion of it, and so could not understand it. He comprehended the dictates of reason and philosophy, in which as the mind became much conversant, there would soon follow as he believed, a greater easiness in obeying its precepts.

I told him on the other hand, that all his speculations of philosophy would not serve him in any stead, to the reforming of his nature and life, till he applied himself to God for inward assistance. It was certain that the impressions made in his reason governed him, as they were lively presented to him. But these are so apt to slip out of our memory, and we too apt to turn our thoughts from them, and at sometimes the contrary impressions are so strong that let a man set up a reasoning in his mind against them, he finds that celebrated saying of the Poet,

Video meliora proboque ; deteriora sequor.

see what is better, and approve it : but follow what is worse,

be all that philosophy will amount to. Whereas those who upon such occasions apply themselves to God, by earnest prayer, feel a disengagement from such