

THE
WORKS

OF THE

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LATE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE AT PRINCETON,

NEW-JERSEY.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

An Account of the Author's Life, in a Sermon occasioned
by his Death,

BY THE REV. DR. JOHN RODGERS,

OF NEW-YORK.

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A

PASTORAL LETTER

FROM THE

SYNOD OF NEW-YORK AND PHILADELPHIA,

*To the Congregations under their Care ; to be read from
the Pulpits on Thursday, June 29, 1775, being the
Day of the general Fast.*

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

THE Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, being met at a time when public affairs wear so threatening an aspect, and when (unless God in his sovereign Providence speedily prevent it) all the horrors of a civil war throughout this great continent are to be apprehended, were of opinion, that they could not discharge their duty to the numerous congregations under their care, without addressing them at this important crisis. As the firm belief, and habitual recollection of the power and presence of the living God, ought at all times to possess the minds of real Christians, so in seasons of public calamity, when *the Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth*, it would be an ignorance or indifference highly criminal not to look up to him with reverence, to implore his mercy by humble and fervent prayer, and, if possible, to prevent his vengeance by unfeigned repentance.

We do, therefore, brethren, beseech you in the most earnest manner, to look beyond the immediate authors either of your sufferings or fears, and to acknowledge the holiness and justice of the *Almighty* in the present visitation. *He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.—Affliction springeth not out of the dust.—He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men ;* and therefore, it becomes every person, family, city, and province, to humble themselves before his throne, to confess their sins, by which they have provoked his indignation, and intreat him to pour out upon all ranks a spirit of repentance and of prayer. Fly also for forgiveness to the atoning blood of the great Redeemer, *the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Remember and confess not only your sins in general, but those prevalent national offences which may be justly considered as the procuring causes of public judgments ; particularly profaneness and contempt of God, his name, sabbaths and sanctuary ;—pride, luxury, uncleanness, and neglect of family religion and government, with the deplorable ignorance and security which certainly ought to be imputed to this as their principal cause. All these are, among us, highly aggravated by the inestimable privileges, which we have hitherto enjoyed without interruption since the first settlement of this country. If in the present day of distress we expect that God will hear our supplications, and interpose for our protection or deliverance, let us remember what he himself requires of us is, that our prayers should be attended with a sincere purpose, and thorough endeavor after personal and family reformation : *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thy hand towards him ; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles,* Job xi. 13, 14.

The Synod cannot help thinking, that this is a proper time for pressing all of every rank, seriously to consider the things that belong to their eternal peace. Hostilities, long feared, have now taken place,—the sword has been drawn in one province,—and the whole continent, with hardly any exception, seem determined to defend their rights by force of arms. If, at the same time, the British

ministry shall continue to enforce their claims by violence, a lasting and bloody contest must be expected: Surely then it becomes those who have taken up arms, and profess a willingness to hazard their lives in the cause of liberty, to be prepared for death, which to many must be the certain, and to every one is a possible or probable event.

We have long seen with concern, the circumstances which occasioned, and the gradual increase of this unhappy difference. As ministers of the gospel of peace, we have ardently wished that it could, and often hoped that it would have been more early accommodated. It is well known to you (otherwise it would be imprudent indeed thus publicly to profess) that we have not been instrumental in inflaming the minds of the people, or urging them to acts of violence and disorder:—Perhaps no instance can be given on so interesting a subject, in which political sentiments have been so long and so fully kept from the pulpit, and even malice itself has not charged us with laboring from the press; but things are now come to such a state, that as we do not wish to conceal our opinions as men and citizens, so the relation we stand in to you seemed to make the present improvement of it to your spiritual benefit an indispensable duty. Suffer us then to lay hold of your present temper of mind, and to exhort, especially the young and vigorous, by assuring them, that there is no soldier so undaunted as the pious man, no army so formidable as those who are superior to the fear of death. There is nothing more awful to think of, than that those whose trade is war should be despisers of the name of the Lord of hosts, and that they should expose themselves to the imminent danger, of being immediately sent from cursing and cruelty on earth, to the blaspheming rage and despairing horror of the infernal pit. Let therefore every one, who from generosity of spirit, or benevolence of heart, offers himself as a champion in his country's cause, be persuaded to reverence the name, and walk in the fear of the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, and then he may, with the most unshaken firmness, expect the issue either in victory or death.

Let it not be forgotten, that though for the wise ends of his Providence, it may please God, for a season, to suffer his people to lie under unmerited oppression, yet in general we may expect, that those who fear and serve him in sincerity and truth, will be favoured with his countenance and strength. It is both the character and the privilege of the children of God, that they *call upon him in the day of trouble*, and he, who *keepeth covenant and truth forever*, has said, that *his ears are always open to their cry*. We need not mention to you in how many instances the event in battles, and success in war, have turned upon circumstances which were inconsiderable in themselves, as well as out of the power of human prudence to foresee or direct, because we suppose you firmly believe, that after all the counsels of men, and the most probable and promising means, the Lord will do *that which seemeth him good*; nor hath his promise ever failed of its full accomplishment; “the Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,” 2 Chron. xv. 2.

After this exhortation, which we thought ourselves called upon to give you at this time, on your great interest, *the one thing needful*, we shall take the liberty to offer a few advices to the societies under our charge, as to their public and general conduct; and

First, In carrying on this important struggle, let every opportunity be taken to express your attachment and respect to our sovereign king George, and to the revolution principles, by which his august family was seated on the British throne. We recommend, indeed, not only allegiance to him from duty and principle, as the first magistrate of the empire, but esteem and reverence for the person of the prince, who has merited well of his subjects on many accounts, and who has probably been misled into the late and present measures by those about him; neither have we any doubt, that they themselves have been in a great degree deceived by false information from interested persons residing in America. It gives us the greatest pleasure to say, from our own certain knowledge of all belonging to our communion, and from the best means of infor-

mation, of the far greatest part of all denominations in this country, that the present opposition to the measures of administration does not in the least arise from disaffection to the king, or a desire of separation from the parent state. We are happy in being able with truth to affirm, that no part of America would either have approved or permitted such insults as have been offered to the sovereign in Great-Britain. We exhort you, therefore, to continue in the same disposition, and not to suffer oppression or injury itself easily to provoke you to any thing which may seem to betray contrary sentiments: let it ever appear, that you only desire the preservation and security of those rights which belong to you as freemen and Britons, and that reconciliation upon these terms is your most ardent desire.

Secondly, Be careful to maintain the union which at presents subsists through all the colonies; nothing can be more manifest than that the success of every measure depends on its being inviolably preserved, and therefore, we hope, that you will leave nothing undone which can promote that end. In particular as the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia, consist of delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner, by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with respect, and encouraged in their difficult service—not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings—but adhere firmly to their resolutions; and let it be seen that they are able to bring out the whole strength of this vast country to carry them into execution. We would also advise for the same purpose, that a spirit of candor, charity and mutual esteem be preserved, and promoted towards those of different religious denominations. Persons of probity and principle of every profession, should be united together as servants of the same master, and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a state of liberty should engage all to unite in support of the common interest; for there is no example in history, in which civil liberty was destroyed, and the rights of conscience preserved entire.

Thirdly, We do earnestly exhort and beseech the societies under our care to be strict and vigilant in their private government, and to watch over the morals of their several members. It is with the utmost pleasure we remind you, that the last Continental Congress determined to discourage luxury in living, public diversions, and gaming of all kinds, which have so fatal an influence on the morals of the people. If it is undeniable, that universal profligacy makes a nation ripe for divine judgments, and is the natural mean of bringing them to ruin, reformation of manners is of the utmost necessity in our present distress. At the same time, as it has been observed by many eminent writers, that the censorial power, which had for its object the manners of the public in the ancient free states, was absolutely necessary to their continuance, we cannot help being of opinion, that the only thing which we have now to supply the place of this is the religious discipline of the several sects with respect to their own members; so that the denomination or profession which shall take the most effectual care of the instruction of its members, and maintain its discipline in the fullest vigor, will do the most essential service to the whole body. For the very same reason the greatest service which magistrates or person in authority can do with respect to the religion or morals of the people, is to defend and secure the rights of conscience in the most equal and impartial manner.

Fourthly, We cannot but recommend, and urge in the warmest manner, a regard to order and the public peace; and as in many places, during the confusions that prevail, legal proceedings have become difficult, it is hoped, that all persons will conscientiously pay their just debts, and to the utmost of their power serve one another, so that the evils inseparable from a civil war may not be augmented by wantonness and irregularity.

Fifthly, We think it of importance, at this time, to recommend to all of every rank, but especially to those who may be called to action, a spirit of humanity and mercy. *Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood.* It is impossible to appeal to the sword without being exposed to many scenes of cruelty

and slaughter ; but it is often observed that civil wars are carried on with a rancor and spirit of revenge much greater than those between independent states. The injuries received or supposed in civil wars wound more deeply than those of foreign enemies ; it is therefore the more necessary to guard against this abuse, and recommend that meekness and gentleness of spirit, which is the noblest attendant on true valor. That man will fight most bravely, who never fights till it is necessary, and who ceases to fight as soon as the necessity is over.

Lastly, We would recommend to all the societies under our care, not to content themselves with attending devoutly on general fast, but to continue habitually in the exercise of prayer, and to have frequent occasional voluntary meetings for solemn intercession with God on the important trial. Those who are immediately exposed to danger need your sympathy ; and we learn from the scriptures, that fervency and importunity are the very characters of that prayer of *the righteous man which availeth much.*

We conclude with our earnest prayer, that the God of heaven may bless you in your temporal and spiritual concerns, and that the present unnatural dispute may be speedily terminated by an equitable and lasting settlement on constitutional principles.

THE DOMINION OF PROVIDENCE OVER THE
PASSIONS OF MEN.

SERMON 44.

Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May, 1776, being the General Fast appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. Dedicated to the Hon. John Hancock, Esq. President of the Congress of the United States of America. To which is added, an Address to the natives of Scotland residing in America.

PSALM lxxvi. 10.

Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise thee; the remainder of Wrath shalt thou restrain.

THERE is not a greater evidence either of the reality or the power of religion, than a firm belief of God's universal presence, and a constant attention to the influence and operation of his providence. It is by this means that the Christian may be said, in the emphatical scripture language, "to walk with God, and to endure as seeing him who is invisible."

The doctrine of divine providence is very full and complete in the sacred oracles. It extends not only to things which we may think of great moment, and therefore wor-

thy of notice, but to things the most indifferent and inconsiderable ; “ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing,” says our Lord, “ and one of them falleth not to the ground “ without your heavenly Father ;” nay, “ the very hairs of “ your head are all numbered. It extends not only to things beneficial and salutary, or to the direction and assistance of those who are the servants of the living God ; but to things seemingly most hurtful and destructive, and to persons the most refractory and disobedient. He overrules all his creatures, and all their actions. Thus we are told, that “ fire, hail, snow, vapour, and stormy wind, “ fulfil his word,” in the course of nature ; and even to the most impetuous and disorderly passions of men, that are under no restraint from themselves, are yet perfectly subject to the dominion of Jehovah. They carry his commission, they obey his orders, they are limited and restrained by his authority, and they conspire with every thing else in promoting his glory. There is the greater need to take notice of this, that men are not generally sufficiently aware of the distinction between the law of God and his purpose ; they are apt to suppose, that as the temper of the sinner is contrary to the one, so the outrages of the sinner are able to defeat the other ; than which nothing can be more false. The truth is plainly asserted, and nobly expressed by the psalmist in the text, “ Surely the “ wrath of man shall praise thee ; the remainder of wrath “ shalt thou restrain.”

This psalm was evidently composed as a song of praise for some signal victory obtained, which was at the same time a remarkable deliverance from threatening danger. The author was one or other of the later prophets, and the occasion probably the unsuccessful assault of Jerusalem, by the army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, in the days of Hezekiah. Great was the insolence and boasting of his generals and servants against the city of the living God, as may be seen in the thirty-sixth chapter of Isaiah. Yet it pleased God to destroy their enemies, and, by his own immediate interposition, to grant them deliverance. Therefore the Psalmist says in the fifth and sixth verses of

this psalm, "The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have
" slept their sleep. None of the men of might have found
" their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob ! both the
" chariot and the horse are cast into a deep sleep." After
a few more remarks to the same purpose, he draws the in-
ference, or makes the reflection in the text, " Surely the
" wrath of man shall praise thee ; the remainder of wrath
" shalt thou restrain : which may be paraphrased thus,
The fury and injustice of oppressors shall bring in a tri-
bute of praise to thee ; the influence of thy righteous pro-
vidence shall be clearly discerned ; the countenance and
support thou wilt give to thine own people shall be glori-
ously illustrated ; thou shalt set the bounds which the bold-
est cannot pass.

I am sensible, my brethren, that the time and occasion
of this psalm, may seem to be in one respect ill suited to
the interesting circumstances of this country at present.
It was composed after the victory was obtained ; whereas
we are now but putting on the harness and entering upon
an important contest, the length of which it is impossible
to foresee, and the issue of which it will perhaps be thought
presumption to foretell. But as the truth, with respect to
God's moral government, is the same and unchangeable ;
as the issue, in the case of Sennacherib's invasion, did but
lead the prophet to acknowledge it ; our duty and interest
conspire in calling upon us to improve it. And I have
chosen to insist upon it on this day of solemn humiliation,
as it will probably help us to a clear and explicit view of
what should be the chief subject of our prayers and endea-
vors, as well as the great object of our hope and trust, in
our present situation.

The truth, then, asserted in this text, which I propose
to illustrate and improve, is,—That all the disorderly
passions of men, whether exposing the innocent to pri-
vate injury, or whether they are the arrows of divine
judgment in public calamity, shall, in the end, be to the
praise of God : Or, to apply it more particularly to the
present state of the American Colonies, and the plague
of war,—The ambition of mistaken princes, the cunning
and cruelty of oppressive and corrupt ministers, and

even the inhumanity of brutal soldiers, however dreadful, shall finally promote the glory of God, and in the mean time, while the storm continues, his mercy and kindness shall appear in prescribing bounds to their rage and fury.

In discoursing on this subject, it is my intention, through the assistance of divine grace,

I. To point out to you in some particulars, how the wrath of man praises God.

II. To apply these principles to our present situation, by inferences of truth for your instruction and comfort, and by suitable exhortations to duty in the important crisis.

In the *first* place, I am to point out to you in some particulars, how the wrath of man praises God. I say in *some* instances, because it is far from being in my power, either to mention or explain the whole. There is an unsearchable depth in the divine counsels, which it is impossible for us to penetrate. It is the duty of every good man to place the most unlimited confidence in divine wisdom, and to believe that those measures of providence that are most unintelligible to him, are yet planned with the same skill, and directed to the same great purposes as others, the reason and tendency of which he can explain in the clearest manner. But where revelation and experience enables us to discover the wisdom, equity, or mercy of divine providence, nothing can be more delightful or profitable to a serious mind, and therefore I beg your attention to the following remarks.

In the first place, the wrath of man praises God, as it is an example and illustration of divine truth, and clearly points out the corruption of our nature, which is the foundation stone of the doctrine of redemption. Nothing can be more absolutely necessary to true religion, than a clear and full conviction of the sinfulness of our nature and state. Without this there can be neither repentance in the sinner, nor humility in the believer. Without this all that is said in scripture of the wisdom and mercy of God in providing a Saviour, is without force and without meaning. Justly does our Saviour say, “The whole

“ have no need of a physician, but those that are sick. I
“ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repen-
“ tance.” Those who are not sensible that they are sinners,
will treat every exhortation to repentance, and every offer
of mercy, with disdain or defiance.

But where can we have a more affecting view of the
corruption of our nature, than in the wrath of man, when
exerting itself in oppression, cruelty and blood? It must
be owned, indeed, that this truth is abundantly manifest in
times of the greatest tranquility. Others may, if they
please, treat the corruption of our nature as a chimera:
for my part, I see it every where, and I feel it every day.
All the disorders in human society, and the greatest part
even of the unhappiness we are exposed to, arises from the
envy, malice, covetousness, and other lusts of man. If
we and all about us were just what we ought to be in all
respects, we should not need to go any further for heaven,
for it would be upon earth. But war and violence pre-
sent a spectacle still more awful. How affecting is it to
think, that the lust of domination should be so violent and
universal? That men should so rarely be satisfied with
their own possessions and acquisitions, or even with the
benefit that would arise from mutual service, but should
look upon the happiness and tranquility of others, as an
obstruction to their own? That, as if the great law of na-
ture, were not enough, “ Dust thou art, and to dust thou
“ shalt return,” they should be so furiously set for the de-
struction of each other? It is shocking to think, since the
first murder of Abel by his brother Cain, what havock has
been made of man by man in every age. What is it that
fills the pages of history, but the wars and contentions of
princes and empires? What vast numbers has lawless am-
bition brought into the field, and delivered as a prey to the
destructive sword?

If we dwell a little upon the circumstances, they become
deeply affecting. The mother bears a child with pain,
rears him by the laborious attendance of many years; yet
in the prime of life, in the vigor of health, and bloom of
beauty, in a moment he is cut down by the dreadful in-
struments of death. “ Every battle of the warrior is with

“ confused noise, and garments rolled in blood ;” but the horror of the scene is not confined to the field of slaughter. Few go there unrelated, or fall unlamented ; in every hostile encounter, what must be the impression upon the relations of the deceased ? The bodies of the dead can only be seen, or the cries of the dying heard for a single day, but many days shall not put an end to the mourning of a parent for a beloved son, the joy and support of his age, or of the widow and helpless offspring, for a father taken away in the fullness of health and vigor.

But if this may be justly said of all wars between man and man, what shall we be able to say that is suitable to the abhorred scene of civil war between citizen and citizen ? How deeply affecting is it, that those who are the same in complexion, the same in blood, in language, and in religion, should, notwithstanding, butcher one another with unrelenting rage, and glory in the deed ? That men should lay waste the fields of their fellow subjects, with whose provision they themselves had been often fed, and consume with devouring fire those houses in which they had often found a hospitable shelter.

These things are apt to overcome a weak mind with fear, or overwhelm it with sorrow, and in the greatest number are apt to excite the highest indignation, and kindle up a spirit of revenge. If this last has no other tendency than to direct and invigorate the measures of self-defence, I do not take upon me to blame it, on the contrary, I call it necessary and laudable.

But what I mean at this time to prove by the preceding reflections, and wish to impress on your minds, is the depravity of our nature. James iv. 1. “ From whence come wars and fighting among you ? come they not hence even “ from your lusts that war in your members ?” Men of lax and corrupt principles, take great delight in speaking to the praise of human nature, and extolling its dignity, without distinguishing what it was, at its first creation, from what it is in its present fallen state. These fine speculations are very grateful to a worldly mind. They are also much more pernicious to uncautious and unthinking youth, than even the temptations to a dissolute and sensu-

al life, against which they are fortified by the dictates of natural conscience, and a sense of public shame. But I appeal from these visionary reasonings to the history of all ages, and the inflexible testimony of daily experience. These will tell us what men have been in their practice, and from thence you may judge what they are by nature, while unrenewed. If I am not mistaken, a cool and candid attention, either to the past history, or present state of the world, but above all, to the ravages of lawless power, ought to humble us in the dust. It should at once lead us to acknowledge the just view given us in scripture of our lost state; to desire the happy influence of renewing grace each for ourselves; and to long for the dominion of righteousness and peace, when “men shall beat their swords
“into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
“when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”* Mic iv. 3.

* I cannot help embracing this opportunity of making a remark or two upon a virulent reflection thrown out against this doctrine, in a well known pamphlet, *Common Sense*. The author of that work expresses himself thus: “If the first king of
“any country was by election, that likewise establishes a precedent for the next; for to say, that the right of all future
“generations is taken away, by the act of the first electors,
“in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings
“forever, hath no parallel in or out of scripture, but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free will of all men
“lost in Adam; and from such comparison, and it will admit
“of no other, hereditary succession can derive no glory. For
“as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men
“obeyed; as in the one all mankind were subjected to Satan,
“and in the other to sovereignty; as our innocence was lost
“in the first, and our authority in the last; and as both disable
“us from re-assuming some former state and privilege, it unanswerably follows that original sin and hereditary succession
“are parallels. Dishonorable rank! Inglorious connexion!
“Yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.”* Without the shadow of reasoning, he is pleased to represent the doctrine of original sin as an object of contempt or abhorrence. I beg leave to demur a little to the *candor*, the *prudence*, and the *justice* of this proceeding.

1. Was it *modest* or *candid* for a person without name or character, to talk in this supercilious manner of a doctrine that

* *Common Sense*, page 11, *Bradford's Edition*.

2. The wrath of man praiseth God, as it is the instrument in his hand for bringing sinners to repentance, and for the correction and improvement of his own children. Whatever be the nature of the affliction with which he visits either persons, families, or nations; whatever be the disposition or intention of those whose malice he employs as a scourge; the design on his part is, to rebuke men for iniquity, to bring them to repentance, and to promote their holiness and peace. The salutary nature and sanctifying influence of affliction in general, is often taken notice of in scripture, both as making a part of the purpose of

has been espoused and defended by many of the greatest and best men that the world ever saw, and makes an essential part of the established Creeds and Confessions of all the Protestant churches without exception? I thought the grand modern plea had been freedom of sentiment, and charitable thoughts of one another. Are so many of us, then, beyond the reach of this gentleman's charity? I do assure him that such presumption and self-confidence are no recommendation to me, either of his character or sentiments.

2. Was it *prudent*, when he was pleading a public cause, to speak in such approbious terms of a doctrine, which he knew, or ought to have known, was believed and professed by, I suppose, a great majority of very different denominations. Is this gentleman ignorant of human nature, as well as an enemy to the Christian faith? Are men so little tenacious of their religious sentiments, whether true or false? The prophet thought otherwise, who said, *Hath a nation changed their gods which yet are no gods?* Was it the way to obtain the favor of the public, to despise what they hold sacred? Or shall we suppose this author so astonishingly ignorant, as to think that all men now, whose favor is worth asking, have given up the doctrine of the New Testament? If he does, he is greatly mistaken.

3. In fine, I ask, where was the *justice* of this proceeding? Is there so little to be said for the doctrine of original sin, that it is not to be refuted, but despised? Is the state of the world such, as to render this doctrine not only false, but incredible? Has the fruit been of such a quality as to exclude all doubts of the goodness of the tree? On the contrary, I cannot help being of opinion, that such has been the visible state of the world in every age, as cannot be accounted for on any other principles than what we learn from the word of God, that *the imagination of the heart of man is only evil from his youth, and that continually.* Gen. vi. 5.—viii. 21.

God, and the experience of his saints. Heb. xii. 11. “ Now, no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, “ but grievous : Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the “ peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are ex- “ ercised thereby.” But what we are particularly led to observe by the subject of this discourse is, that the wrath of man, or the violence of the oppressor that praiseth God in this respect, it has a peculiar tendency to alarm the secure conscience, to convince and humble the obstinate sinner. This is plain from the nature of the thing, and from the testimony of experience. Public calamities, particularly the destroying sword, is so awful that it cannot but have a powerful influence in leading men to consider the presence and the power of God. It threatens them not only in themselves, but touches them in all that is dear to them, whether relations or possessions. The prophet Isaiah says, Is. xxvi. 8, 9. “ Yea, in the way of thy “ judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee,—for “ when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of “ the world will learn righteousness.” He considers it as the most powerful mean of alarming the secure and subduing the obstinate. Is. xxvi. 11. “ Lord when thy hand is “ lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see and be “ ashamed for their envy at the people, yea the fire of “ thine enemies shall devour them.” It is also sometimes represented as a symptom of a hopeless and irrecoverable state, when public judgments have no effect. Thus says the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. v. 3. “ O Lord, are not thine “ eyes upon the truth ? thou hast stricken them, but they “ have not grieved ; thou hast consumed them, but they have “ refused to receive correction : they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.” We can easily see in the history of the children of Israel, how severe strokes brought them to submission and penitence. Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35. “ When he slew them, then “ they sought him, and they returned and inquired early “ after God, and they remembered that God was their “ rock, and the high God their redeemer.”

Both nations in general, and private persons; are apt to grow remiss and lax in a time of prosperity and seeming

security; but when their earthly comforts are endangered or withdrawn, it lays them under a kind of necessity to seek for something better in their place. Men must have comfort from one quarter or another. When earthly things are in a pleasing and promising condition, too many are apt to find their rest, and be satisfied with them as their only portion. But when the vanity and passing nature of all created comfort is discovered, they are compelled to look for something more durable as well as valuable. What therefore, can be more to the praise of God, than that when a whole people have forgotten their resting place, when they have abused their privileges, and despised their mercies, they should by distress and suffering be made to hearken to the rod, and return to their duty?

There is an inexpressible depth and variety in the judgments of God, as in all his other works; but we may lay down this as a certain principle, that if there were no sin, there could be no suffering. Therefore they are certainly for the correction of sin, or for the trial, illustration, and perfecting of the grace and virtue of his own people. We are not to suppose, that those who suffer most, or who suffer soonest, are therefore more criminal than others. Our Saviour himself thought it necessary to give a caution against this rash conclusion, as we are informed by the evangelist Luke, Luke xiii. 1. “There were present at that season
 “some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate
 “had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering
 “said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were
 “sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered
 “such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye
 “shall all likewise perish.” I suppose we may say with sufficient warrant, that it often happens, that those for whom God hath designs of the greatest mercy, are first brought to the trial, that they may enjoy in due time the salutary effect of the unpalatable medicine.

I must also take leave to observe, and I hope no pious humble sufferer will be unwilling to make the application, that there is often a discernible mixture of sovereignty and righteousness in providential dispensations. It is the prerogative of God to do what he will with his own, but he

often displays his justice itself, by throwing into the furnace those, who though they may not be visibly worse than others, may yet have more to answer for, as having been favored with more distinguished privileges, both civil and sacred. It is impossible for us to make a just and full comparison of the character either of persons or nations, and it would be extremely foolish for any to attempt it, either for increasing their own security, or impeaching the justice of the Supreme Ruler. Let us therefore neither forget the truth, nor go beyond it. "His mercy fills the earth." He is also "known by the judgment which he executeth." The wrath of man in its most tempestuous rage, fulfills his will, and finally promotes the good of his chosen.

3. The wrath of man praiseth God, as he sets bounds to it, or restrains it by his providence, and sometimes makes it evidently a mean of promoting and illustrating his glory.

There is no part of divine providence in which a greater beauty and majesty appears, than when the Almighty Ruler turns the counsels of wicked men into confusion, and makes them militate against themselves. If the psalmist may be thought to have had a view in this text to the truths illustrated in the two former observations, there is no doubt at all that he had a particular view to this, as he says in the latter part of the verse, "the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." The scripture abounds with instances, in which the designs of oppressors were either wholly disappointed, or in execution fell far short of the malice of their intention, and in some they turned out to the honor and happiness of the persons or the people, whom they were intended to destroy. We have an instance of the first of these in the history to which my text relates.* We have also an instance in Esther, in which the most mischievous designs of Haman, the Son of Hammedatha the Agagite, against Mordecai the Jew, and the nation from which he sprung, turned out at last to his own destruction, the honor of Mordecai, and the salvation and peace of his people.

* The matter is fully stated and reasoned upon by the prophet Isaiah ch. x. from the 5th to the 19th verse.

From the New Testament I will make choice of that memorable event on which the salvation of believers in every age rests as its foundation, the death and sufferings of the Son of God. This the great adversary and all his agents and instruments prosecuted with unrelenting rage. When they had blackened him with slander, when they scourged him with shame, when they had condemned him in judgment, and nailed him to the cross, how could they help esteeming their victory complete? But oh the unsearchable wisdom of God! they were but perfecting the great design laid for the salvation of sinners. Our blessed Redeemer by his death finished his work, overcame principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross. With how much justice do the apostles and their company offer this doxology to God, "They lift up their voice with one accord, and said, Lord thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts iv. 24. 28.

In all after ages, in conformity to this, the deepest laid contrivances of the prince of darkness, have turned out to the confusion of their author; and I know not, but considering his malice and pride, this perpetual disappointment, and the superiority of divine wisdom, may be one great source of his suffering and torment. The cross hath still been the banner of truth, under which it hath been carried through the world. Persecution has been but as the furnace to the gold, to purge it of its dross, to manifest its purity, and increase its lustre. It was taken notice of very early, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of christianity; the more abundantly it was shed, the more plentifully did the harvest grow.

So certain has this appeared, that the most violent infidels, both of early and later ages, have endeavored to account for it, and have observed that there is a spirit of obstinacy in man which inclines him to resist violence, and that severity doth but increase opposition, be the cause what it will. They suppose that persecution is equally proper to propagate truth and error. This though in part true, will by no means generally hold. Such an apprehension, however, gave occasion to a glorious triumph of divine providence of an opposite kind, which I must shortly relate to you. One of the Roman emperors, Julian, surnamed the apostate, perceiving how impossible it was to suppress the gospel by violence, endeavored to extinguish it by neglect and scorn. He left the Christians unmolested for sometime, but gave all manner of encouragement to those of opposite principles, and particularly to the Jews, out of hatred to the Christians; and that he might bring public disgrace upon the Galileans, as he affected to stile them, he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, and visibly refute the prophecy of Christ, that it should lie under perpetual desolation. But this profane attempt was so signally frustrated, that it served, as much as any one circumstance, to spread the glory of our Redeemer, and establish the faith of his saints. It is affirmed by some ancient authors, particularly by Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen historian, that fire came out of the earth and consumed the workmen when laying the foundation. But in whatever way it was prevented, it is beyond all controversy, from the concurring testimony of Heathens and Christians, that little or no progress was ever made in it, and that in a short time, it was entirely defeated.

It is proper here to observe, that at the time of the reformation, when religion began to revive, nothing contributed more to facilitate its reception and increase its progress than the violence of its persecutors. Their cruelty and the patience of the sufferers, naturally disposed men to examine and weigh the cause to which they adhered with so much constancy and resolution. At the same time also, when they were persecuted in one city, they

led to another, and carried the discoveries of Popish fraud to every part of the world. It was by some of those who were persecuted in Germany, that the light of the reformation was brought so early into Britain.

The power of divine providence appears with the most distinguished lustre, when small and inconsiderable circumstances, and sometimes, the weather and seasons, have defeated the most formidable armaments, and frustrated the best concerted expeditions. Near two hundred years ago, the monarchy of Spain was in the height of its power and glory, and determined to crush the interest of the reformation. They sent out a powerful armament against Britain, giving it ostentatiously, and in my opinion profanely, the name of the Invincible Armada. But it pleased God so entirely to discomfit it by tempests, that a small part of it returned home, though no British force had been opposed to it at all.

We have a remarkable instance of the influence of small circumstances in providence in the English history. The two most remarkable persons in the civil wars, had earnestly desired to withdraw themselves from the contentions of the times, Mr. Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. They had actually taken their passage in a ship for New-England, when by an arbitrary order of council they were compelled to remain at home. The consequence of this was, that one of them was the soul of the republican opposition to monarchical usurpation during the civil wars, and the other in the course of that contest, was the great instrument in bringing the tyrant to the block.

The only other historical remark I am to make, is, that the violent persecution which many eminent Christians met with in England from their brethren, who called themselves Protestants, drove them in great numbers to a distant part of the world, where the light of the gospel and true religion were unknown. Some of the American settlements, particularly those in New-England, were chiefly made by them; and as they carried the knowledge of Christ to the dark places of the earth, so they continue themselves in as great a degree of purity, of faith, and strictness of practice, or rather a greater, than is

to be found in any protestant church now in the world. Does not the wrath of man in this instance praise God? Was not the accuser of the brethren, who stirs up their enemies, thus taken in his own craftiness, and his kingdom shaken by the very means which he employed to establish it.*

II. proceed now to the second general head, which was to apply the principles illustrated above to our present situation, by inferences of truth for your instruction and comfort, and by suitable exhortations to duty in this important crisis. And,

In the first place, I would take the opportunity on this occasion, and from this subject, to press every hearer to a sincere concern for his own soul's salvation. There are times when the mind may be expected to be more awake to divine truth, and the conscience more open to the arrows of conviction, than at others. A season of public judgment is of this kind, as appears from what has been already said. That curiosity and attention at least are raised in some degree, is plain from the unusual throng of this assembly. Can you have a clearer view of the sinfulness of your nature, than when the rod of the oppressor is lifted up, and when you see men putting on the habit of the warrior, and collecting on every hand the weapons of hostility and instruments of death? I do not blame your ardor in preparing for the resolute defence of your temporal rights. But consider I beseech you, the truly infinite importance of the salvation of your souls. Is it of much moment whether you and your children shall be rich or poor, at liberty or in bonds? Is it of much moment whether this beautiful country shall increase in fruitfulness from year to year, being cultivated by active industry, and

* Lest this should be thought a temporising compliment to the people of New-England, who have been the first sufferers in the present contest, and have set so noble an example of invincible fortitude, in withstanding the violence of oppression, I think it proper to observe that the whole paragraph is copied from a sermon on Psal. lxxiv. 22. prepared and preached in Scotland, in the month of August, 1758.

possessed by independent freemen, or the scanty produce of the neglected fields shall be eaten up by hungry publicans, while the timid owner trembles at the tax gatherers approach? And is it of less moment my brethren, whether you shall be the heirs of glory or the heirs of hell? Is your state on earth for a few fleeting years of so much moment? And is it of less moment, what shall be your state through endless ages? Have you assembled together willingly to hear what shall be said on public affairs, and to join in imploring the blessing of God on the counsels and arms of the united colonies, and can you be unconcerned, what shall become of you for ever, when all the monuments of human greatness shall be laid in ashes, for “the earth *itself* and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up.”

Wherefore by beloved hearers, as the ministry of reconciliation is committed to me, I beseech you in the most earnest manner, to attend to “the things that belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes.” How soon and in what manner a seal shall be set upon the character and state of every person here present, it is impossible to know; for he who only can know does not think proper to reveal it. But you may rest assured that there is no time more suitable, and there is none so safe, as that which is present, since it is wholly uncertain whether any other shall be your’s. Those who shall first fall in battle, have not many more warnings to receive. There are some few daring and hardened sinners who despise eternity itself, and set their Maker at defiance, but the far greater number by staving off their convictions to a more convenient season, have been taken unprepared, and thus eternally lost. I would therefore earnestly press the apostles exhortation, 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Suffer me to beseech you, or rather to give you warning, not to rest satisfied with a form of godliness, denying the

power thereof. There can be no true religion, till there be a discovery of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned acceptance of Christ Jesus, as he is offered in the gospel. Unhappy they who either despise his mercy, or are ashamed of his cross! Believe it, "there is no salvation in any other. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men by which we must be saved." Unless you are united to him by a lively faith, not the resentment of a haughty monarch, but the sword of divine justice hangs over you, and the fulness of divine vengeance shall speedily overtake you. I do not speak this only to the heaven, daring profligate, or grovelling sensualist, but to every insensible secure sinner; to all those, however decent and orderly in their civil deportment, who live to themselves and have their part and portion in this life; in fine to all who are yet in a state of nature, for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The fear of man may make you hide your profanity: prudence and experience may make you abhor intemperance and riot; as you advance in life, one vice may supplant another and hold its place; but nothing less than the sovereign grace of God can produce a saving change of heart and temper, or fit you for his immediate presence.

2. From what has been said upon this subject, you may see what ground there is to give praise to God for his favors already bestowed on us, respecting the public cause. It would be a criminal inattention not to observe the singular interposition of Providence hitherto, in behalf of the American colonies. It is however impossible for me, in a single discourse, as well as improper at this time, to go through every step of our past transactions, I must therefore content myself with a few remarks. How many discoveries have been made of the designs of enemies in Britain and among ourselves, in a manner as unexpected to us as to them, and in such season as to prevent their effect? What surprising success has attended our encounters in almost every instance? Has not the boasted discipline of regular and veteran soldiers been turned into confusion and dismay, before the new and maiden courage of freemen, in

defence of their property and right ? In what great mercy has blood been spared on the side of this injured country ? Some important victories in the south have been gained with so little loss, that enemies will probably think it has been dissembled ; as many, even of ourselves thought, till time rendered it undeniable. But these were comparatively of small moment. The signal advantage we have gained by the evacuation of Boston, and the shameful flight of the army and navy of Britain, was brought about without the loss of a man. To all this we may add, that the counsels of our enemies have been visibly confounded, so that I believe I may say with truth, that there is hardly any step which they have taken, but it has operated strongly against themselves, and been more in our favor, than if they had followed a contrary course.

While we give praise to God the supreme disposer of all events, for his interposition in our behalf, let us guard against the dangerous error of trusting in, or boasting of an arm of flesh. I could earnestly wish, that while our arms are crowned with success, we might content ourselves with a modest ascription of it to the power of the Highest. It has given me great uneasiness to read some ostentatious, vaunting expressions in our news-papers, though happily I think, much restrained of late. Let us not return to them again. If I am not mistaken, not only the holy scriptures in general, and the truths of the glorious gospel in particular, but the whole course of providence, seem intended to abase the pride of man, and lay the vain-glorious in the dust. How many instances does history furnish us with, of those who after exulting over, and despising their enemies, were signally and shamefully defeated.* The truth is, I believe, the remark may be applied universally, and we may say, that through the whole frame of nature, and the whole system of human life, that which promises most, performs the least. The flowers of finest colour seldom have the sweetest fragrance. The

* There is no story better known in British history, than that the officers of the French army the night preceding the battle of Agincourt, played at dice for English prisoners before they took them, and the next day were taken by them.

trees of quickest groweth or fairest form, are seldom of the greatest value or duration. Deep waters move with least noise. Men who think most are seldom talkative. And I think it holds as much in war as in any thing, that every boaster is a coward.

Pardon me, my brethren, for insisting so much upon this, which may seem but an immaterial circumstance. It is in my opinion of very great moment. I look upon ostentation and confidence to be a sort of outrage upon Providence, and when it becomes general, and infuses itself into the spirit of a people, it is a forerunner of destruction. How does Goliath the champion armed in a most formidable manner, express his disdain of David the stripling with his sling and his stone, 1 Sam. xvii. 42, 43, 44, 45. "And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, "he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, "and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto "David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? "And the Philistine cursed David by his gods, and the "Philistine said to David, come to me, and I will give "thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of "the field." But how just and modest the reply? Then "said David to the Philistine, thou comest to me with a "sword and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come "unto thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of "the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." I was well pleased with a remark of this kind thirty years ago in a pamphlet,* in which it was observed, that there was a great deal of profane ostentation in the names given to ships of war, as the Victory, the Valient, the Thunderer, the Dreadnought, the Terrible, the Firebrand, the Furnace, the Lightning, the Infernal, and many more of the same kind. This the author considered as a symptom of the national character and manners very unfavorable, and not likely to obtain the blessing of the God of Heaven.†

* Britain's Remembrancer.

† I am sensible that one or two of these were ships taken from the French, which brought their names with them. But the greatest number had their names imposed in England, and I

3. From what has been said you may learn what encouragement you have to put your trust in God, and hope for his assistance in the present important conflict. He is the Lord of hosts, great in might, and strong in battle. Whoever hath his countenance and approbation, shall have the best at last. I do not mean to speak prophetically, but agreeably to the analogy of faith, and the principles of God's moral government. Some have observed that true religion, and in her train, dominion, riches, literature, and arts, have taken their course in a slow and gradual manner, from east to west, since the earth was settled after the flood, and from thence forebode the future glory of America. I leave this as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty, but observe, that if your cause is just,—if your principles are pure,—and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts.

If your cause is just—you may look with confidence to the Lord and intreat him to plead it as his own. You are all my witnesses, that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, I am satisfied that the confederacy of the colonies, has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition, but of a deep and general conviction, that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the tempo-

cannot help observing, that the Victory, often celebrated as the finest ship ever built in Britain, was lost in the night without a storm, by some unknown accident, and about twelve hundred persons, many of them of the first families in the nation, were buried with it in the deep. I do not mean to infer any thing from this, but, that we ought to live under the practical persuasion of what no man will doctrinally deny, that there is no warring with the elements, or him who directs their force; that he is able to write disappointment on the wisest human schemes, and by the word of his power to frustrate the efforts of the greatest monarch upon earth.

ral and eternal happiness of us and our posterity, depended on the issue. The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth, where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen, and great were the difficulties with which they had to struggle from the imperfection of human society, and the unjust decisions of usurped authority. There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage.

You shall not, my brethren, hear from me in the pulpit, what you have never heard from me in conversation, I mean railing at the king personally, or even his ministers and the parliament, and people of Britain, as so many barbarous savages. Many of their actions have probably been worse than their intentions. That they should desire unlimited dominion, if they can obtain or preserve it, is neither new nor wonderful. I do not refuse submission to their unjust claims, because they are corrupt or profligate, although probably many of them are so, but because they are men, and therefore liable to all the selfish bias inseparable from human nature. I call this claim unjust, of making laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever, because they are separated from us, independent of us, and have an interest in opposing us. Would any man who could prevent it, give up his estate, person, and family, to the disposal of his neighbour, although he had liberty to chuse the wisest and the best master? Surely not. This is the true and proper hinge of the controversy between Great-Britain and America. It is however to be added, that such is their distance from us, that a wise and prudent administration of our affairs is as impossible as the claim of authority is unjust. Such is and must be their ignorance of the state of things here, so much time must elapse before an error can be seen and remedied, and so much injustice and partiality must be expected from the arts and misrepresentation of interested persons, that for these colonies to depend wholly upon the

legislature of Great-Britain, would be like many other oppressive connexions, injury to the master, and ruin to the slave.

The management of the war itself on their part, would furnish new proof of this, if any were needful. Is it not manifest with what absurdity and impropriety they have conducted their own designs? We had nothing so much to fear as dissension, and they have by wanton and unnecessary cruelty forced us into union. At the same time to let us see what we have to expect, and what would be the fatal consequence of unlimited submission, they have uniformly called those acts *Lenity*, which filled this whole continent with resentment and horror. The ineffable disdain expressed by our fellow subject, in saying, ‘That he would not harken to America, till she was at his feet,’ has armed more men, and inspired more deadly rage, than could have been done by laying waste a whole province with fire and sword. Again we wanted not numbers, but time, and they sent over handful after handful till we were ready to oppose a multitude greater than they have to send. In fine, if there was one place stronger than the rest, and more able and willing to resist, there they made the attack, and left the others till they were duly informed, completely incensed, and fully furnished with every instrument of war.

I mention these things, my brethren, not only as grounds of confidence in God, who can easily overthrow the wisdom of the wise, but as decisive proofs of the impossibility of these great and growing states, being safe and happy when every part of their internal polity is dependant on Great Britain. If, on account of their distance, and ignorance of our situation, they could not conduct their own quarrel with propriety for one year, how can they give direction and vigor to every department of our civil constitutions from age to age? There are fixed bounds to every human thing. When the branches of a tree grow very large and weighty, they fall off from the trunk. The sharpest sword will not pierce when it cannot reach. And there is a certain distance from the seat of government, where an attempt to rule will either produce tyranny

and helpless subjection, or provoke resistance and effect a separation.

I have said, if your principles are pure—The meaning of this is, if your present opposition to the claims of the British ministry does not arise from a seditious and turbulent spirit, or a wanton contempt of legal authority ; from a blind and factious attachment to particular persons or parties ; or from a selfish rapacious disposition, and a desire to turn public confusion to private profit—but from a concern for the interest of your country, and the safety of yourselves and your posterity. On this subject I cannot help observing, that though it would be a miracle if there were not many selfish persons among us, and discoveries now and then made of mean and interested transactions, yet they have been comparatively inconsiderable both in number and effect. In general, there has been so great a degree of public spirit, that we have much more reason to be thankful for its vigor and prevalence, than to wonder at the few appearances of dishonesty or disaffection. It would be very uncandid to ascribe the universal ardor that has prevailed among all ranks of men, and the spirited exertions in the most distant colonies, to any thing else than public spirit. Nor was there ever perhaps in history so general a commotion from which religious differences have been so entirely excluded. Nothing of this kind has as yet been heard, except of late in the absurd, but malicious and detestable attempts of our few remaining enemies to introduce them. At the same time I must also, for the honor of this country observe, that though government in the ancient forms has been so long unhinged, and in some colonies not sufficient care taken to substitute another in its place ; yet has there been, by common consent, a much greater degree of order and public peace, than men of reflection and experience foretold or expected. From all these circumstances I conclude favorably of the principles of the friends of liberty, and do earnestly exhort you to adopt and act upon those which have been described, and resist the influence of every other.

Once more, if to the justice of your cause, and the purity of your principles, you add prudence in your conduct,

there will be the greatest reason to hope, by the blessing of God, for prosperity and success. By prudence in conducting this important struggle, I have chiefly in view union, firmness, and patience. Every body must perceive the absolute necessity of union. It is indeed in every body's mouth, and therefore instead of attempting to convince you of its importance, I will only caution you against the usual causes of division. If persons of every rank, instead of implicitly complying with the orders of those whom they themselves have chosen to direct, will needs judge every measure over again, when it comes to be put in execution; if different classes of men intermix their little private views, or clashing interest with public affairs, and marshal into parties, the merchant against the landholder, and the landholder against the merchant; if local provincial pride and jealousy arise, and you allow yourselves to speak with contempt of the courage, character, manners, or even language of particular places, you are doing a greater injury to the common cause, than you are aware of. If such practices are admitted among us, I shall look upon it as one of the most dangerous symptoms, and if they become general, a presage of approaching ruin.

By firmness and patience, I mean a resolute adherence to your duty, and laying your account with many difficulties, as well as occasional disappointments. In a former part of this discourse, I have cautioned you against ostentation and vain glory. Be pleased farther to observe that extremes often beget one another, the same persons who exult extravagantly on success, are generally most liable to despondent timidity on every little inconsiderable defeat. Men of this character are the bane and corruption of every society or party to which they belong, but they are especially the ruin of an army, if suffered to continue in it. Remember the vicissitude of human things, and the usual course of providence. How often has a just cause been reduced to the lowest ebb, and yet when firmly adhered to, has become finally triumphant. I speak this now while the affairs of the colonies are in so prosperous a state, lest this propriety itself should render

you less able to bear unexpected misfortunes—The sum of the whole is, that the blessing of God is only to be looked for by those who are not wanting in the discharge of their own duty. I would neither have you to trust in an arm of flesh, nor sit with folded hands and expect that miracles should be wrought in your defence—This is a sin which is in Scripture styled tempting God. In opposition to it, I would exhort you as Joab did the host of Israel, who, though he does not appear to have had a spotless character throughout, certainly in this instance spoke like a prudent general and a pious man. 2 Sam. x. 12. “Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people and for the cities of our God, and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight.”

I shall now conclude this discourse by some exhortations to duty, founded upon the truths which have been illustrated above, and suited to the interesting state of this country at the present time ; and,

1. Suffer me to recommend to you an attention to the public interest of religion, or in other words, zeal for the glory of God and the good of others. I have already endeavored to exhort sinners to repentance ; what I have here in view is to point out to you the concern which every good man ought to take in the national character and manners, and the means which he ought to use for promoting public virtue, and bearing down impiety and vice. This is a matter of the utmost moment, and which ought to be well understood, both in its nature and principles. Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue. On the other hand, when the manners of a nation are pure, when true religion and internal principles maintain their vigour, the attempts of the most powerful enemies to oppress them are commonly baffled and disappointed. This will be found equally certain, whether we consider the great principles of God's

moral government, or the operation and influence of natural causes.

What follows from this ? That he is the best friend to American liberty, who is most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy to God, I scruple not to call him an enemy to his country. Do not suppose, my brethren, that I mean to recommend a furious and angry zeal for the circumstantial of religion, or the contentions of one sect with another about their peculiar distinctions. I do not wish you to oppose any body's religion, but every body's wickedness. Perhaps there are few surer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himself more joined in spirit to a true holy person of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own. It is therefore your duty in this important and critical season to exert yourselves, every one in his proper sphere, to stem the tide of prevailing vice, to promote the knowledge of God, the reverence of his name and worship, and obedience to his laws.

Perhaps you will ask, what it is that you are called to do for this purpose farther than your own personal duty ? I answer this itself when taken in its proper extent is not a little. The nature and obligation of visible religion is, I am afraid, little understood and less attended to.

Many from a real or pretended fear of the imputation of hypocrisy, banish from their conversation and carriage every appearance of respect and submission to the living God. What a weakness and meanness of spirit does it discover, for a man to be ashamed in the presence of his fellow sinners, to profess that reverence to almighty God which he inwardly feels : The truth is, he makes himself truly liable to the accusation which he means to avoid. It is as genuine and perhaps a more culpable hypocrisy to appear to have less religion than you really have, than to appear to have more. This false shame is a more extensive evil than is commonly apprehended. We contribute constantly, though insensibly, to form each others character and manners ; and therefore, the usefulness of a strictly

holy and conscientious deportment is not confined to the possessor, but spreads its happy influence to all that are within its reach. I need scarcely add, that in proportion as men are distinguished by understanding, literature, age, rank, office, wealth, or any other circumstance, their example will be useful on the one hand, or pernicious on the other.

But I cannot content myself with barely recommending a silent example. There is a dignity in virtue which is entitled to authority, and ought to claim it. In many cases it is the duty of a good man, by open reproof and opposition, to wage war with profaneness. There is a scripture precept delivered in very singular terms, to which I beg your attention; “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.” How prone are many to represent reproof as flowing from ill nature and furliness of temper? The Spirit of God, on the contrary, considers it as the effect of inward hatred, or want of genuine love, to forbear reproof, when it is necessary or may be useful. I am sensible there may in some cases be a restraint from prudence, agreeably to that caution of our Saviour, “Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.” Of this every man must judge as well as he can for himself; but certainly, either by open reproof, or expressive silence, or speedy departure from such society, we ought to guard against being partakers of other men’s sins.

To this let me add, that if all men are bound in some degree, certain classes of men are under peculiar obligations, to the discharge of this duty. Magistrates, ministers, parents, heads of families, and those whom age has rendered venerable, are called to use their authority and influence for the glory of God and the good of others. Bad men themselves discover an inward conviction of this, for they are often liberal in their reproaches of persons of grave characters or religious profession, if they bear with patience the profanity of others. Instead of enlarging on the duty of men in authority in general, I must parti-

cularly recommend this matter to those who have the command of soldiers enlisted for the defence of their country. The cause is sacred, and the champions for it ought to be holy. Nothing is more grieving to the heart of a good man, than to hear from those who are going to the field, the horrid sound of cursing and blasphemy; it cools the ardor of his prayers, as well as abates his confidence and hope in God. Many more circumstances affect me in such a case, than I can enlarge upon, or indeed easily enumerate at present; the glory of God, the interest of the deluded sinner, going like a devoted victim, and imprecating vengeance on his own head, as well as the cause itself committed to his care. We have sometimes taken the liberty to forebode the downfall of the British empire, from the corruption and degeneracy of the people. Unhappily the British soldiers have been distinguished among all the nations in Europe, for the most shocking profanity. Shall we then pretend to emulate them in this infernal distinction, or rob them of the horrid privilege? God forbid. Let the officers of the army in every degree remember, that as military subjection, while it lasts, is the most complete of any, it is in their power greatly to restrain, if not wholly to banish, this flagrant enormity.

2. I exhort all who are not called to go into the field, to apply themselves with the utmost diligence to works of industry. It is in your power by this mean not only to supply the necessities, but to add to the strength of your country. Habits of industry prevailing in a society, not only increase its wealth, as their immediate effect, but they prevent the introduction of many vices, and are intimately connected with sobriety and good morals. Idleness is the mother or nurse of almost every vice; and want, which is its inseparable companion, urges men on to the most abandoned and destructive courses. Industry, therefore is a moral duty of the greatest moment, absolutely necessary to national prosperity, and the sure way of obtaining the blessing of God. I would also observe, that in this, as in every other part of God's government, obedience to his will is as much a natural mean, as a meritorious cause, of the advantage we wish to reap from it. In-

dustry brings up a firm and hardy race. He who is inured to the labor of the field, is prepared for the fatigues of a campaign. The active farmer who rises with the dawn and follows his team or plow, must in the end be an overmatch for those effeminate and delicate soldiers, who are nursed in the lap of self-indulgence, and whose greatest exertion is in the important preparation for, and tedious attendance on, a masquerade, or midnight ball.

3. In the last place, suffer me to recommend to you frugality in your families, and every other article of expence. This the state of things among us renders absolutely necessary, and it stands in the most immediate connexion both with virtuous industry, and active public spirit. Temperance in meals, moderation and decency in dress, furniture and equipage, have, I think, generally been characteristics of a distinguished patriot. And when the same spirit pervades a people in general, they are fit for every duty, and able to encounter the most formidable enemy. The general subject of the preceding discourse has been the wrath of man praising God. If the unjust oppression of your enemies, which withholds from you many of the usual articles of luxury and magnificence, shall contribute to make you clothe yourselves and your children with the works of your own hands, and cover your tables with the salutary productions of your own soil, it will be a new illustration of the same truth, and a real happiness to yourselves and your country.

I could wish to have every good thing done from the purest principles and the noblest views. Consider, therefore, that the Christian character, particularly the self-denial of the gospel, should extend to your whole deportment. In the early times of Christianity, when adult converts were admitted to baptism, they were asked among other questions, Do you renounce the world, its shews, its pomp, and its vanities? I do. The form of this is still preserved in the administration of baptism, where we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. This certainly implies not only abstaining from acts of gross intemperance and excess, but a humility of carriage, a restraint and moderation in all your desires. The same thing, as

it is suitable to your Christian profession, is also necessary to make you truly independent in yourselves, and to feed the source of liberality and charity to others, or to the public. The riotous and wasteful liver, whose craving appetites make him constantly needy, is and must be subject to many maliers, according to the saying of Solomon, "The borrower is servant to the lender." But the frugal and moderate person, who guides his affairs with discretion, is able to assist in public councils by a free and unbiassed judgment, to supply the wants of his poor brethren, and sometimes, by his estate and substance to give important aid to a sinking country.

Upon the whole, I beseech you to make a wise improvement of the present threatening aspect of public affairs, and to remember that your duty to God, to your country, to your families, and to yourselves, is the same. True religion is nothing else but an inward temper and outward conduct suited to your state and circumstances in providence at any time. And as peace with God and conformity to him, adds to the sweetness of created comforts while we possess them, so in times of difficulty and trial, it is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier.—God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable, and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.

A D D R E S S

TO THE

NATIVES OF SCOTLAND RESIDING IN

A M E R I C A.

Countrymen and Friends,

AS soon as I had consented to the publication of the foregoing sermon, I felt an irresistible desire to accompany it with a few words addressed to you in particular. I am certain I feel the attachment of country as far as it is a virtuous or laudable principle, perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say, as far as it is a natural and pardonable prejudice. He who is so pleased may attribute it to this last when I say, that I have never seen cause to be ashamed of the place of my birth; that since the revival of arts and letters in Europe in the close of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, the natives of Scotland have not been inferior to those of any other country, for genius, erudition, military prowess, or any of those accomplishments which improve or embellish human nature. When to this it is added, that since my coming to America at an advanced period of life, the friendship of my countrymen has been as much above my expectation as desert, I hope every reader will consider what is now to be offered as the effect not only of unfeigned good will, but of the most ardent affection.

It has given me no little uneasiness to hear the word *Scotch* used as a term of reproach in the American controversy, which could only be upon the supposition that strangers of that country are more universally opposed to the liberties of America than those who were born in South-

Britain, or in Ireland. I am sensible that this has been done in some news-papers and contemptible anonymous publications, in a manner that was neither warranted by truth, nor dictated by prudence. There are many natives of Scotland in this country, whose opposition to the unjust claims of Great-Britain has been as early and uniform, founded upon as rational and liberal principles, and therefore likely to be as lasting, as that of any set of men whatever. As to Great-Britain itself, time has now fully discovered, that the real friends of America in any part of that kingdom were very few, and those whose friendship was disinterested, and in no degree owing to their own political factions, still fewer. The wise and valuable part of the nation were, and as yet are, in a great measure ignorant of the state of things in this country; neither is it easy for the bulk of a people to shake off their prejudices, and open their eyes upon the great principles of universal liberty. It is therefore at least very disputable, whether there is any just ground for the distinction between Scots and English on this subject at all.

This dispute, however, I do not mean to enter upon, because it is of too little moment to find a place here, but supposing that, in some provinces especially, the natives of Scotland have been too much inclined to support the usurpations of the parent state, I will first endeavour to account for it, by assigning some of its probable causes; and then offer a few considerations which should induce them to wipe off the aspersions entirely, by a contrary conduct.

As to the first of these, I will mention what I suppose to have been the first and radical cause, and which gave birth to every other, of the disaffection of some of the natives of Scotland to the just privileges of America. What I have in view was the friends of liberty in many places of America, taking the part of, and seeming to consider themselves as in a great measure engaged in the same cause with, that very distinguished person, John Wilkes Esq. of London. This was done not only in many writings and news-paper dissertations, but one or two colonies, in some of their most respectable meetings, manifested their

attachment to him, and seemed to consider him as their patron and friend. No. 45, which was the most offensive number of a worthless paper, was repeated and echoed, by the most silly and ridiculous allusions to it, through every part of the country, and by many who could not tell what was signified by the term.

It will not be necessary to say much on the prudence of such conduct, because I suppose those who expected Wilkes's mob would pull down the parliament-house, or that there would be insurrections all over the kingdom in behalf of America, are by this time fully satisfied of their mistake. It appears now in the clearest manner, that, till very lately, those who seemed to take the part of America in the British Parliament, never did it on American principles. They either did not understand, or were not willing to admit, the extent of our claim. Even the great Lord Chatham's bill for reconciliation would not have been accepted here, and did not materially differ from what the ministry would have consented to. The truth is, the far greatest part of the countenance given in Britain to the complaints of this country, was by those who had no other intention in it than to use them as an engine of opposition to the ministry for the time being. It is true, some of them have now learned to reason very justly, and upon the most liberal principles; but their number is not great, and it was not the case with any one speaker or writer, whose works I have had the opportunity of perusing, till the very last stage of the quarrel.

What effect this Wilkism (if I may speak so) of many Americans, may be supposed to have had upon the minds of gentlemen from Scotland, it is not difficult to explain. That gentleman and his associates thought proper to found the whole of their opposition to the then ministry, upon a contempt and hatred of the Scots nation; and by the most illiberal methods, and the most scandalous falsehoods, to stir up a national jealousy between the northern and southern parts of the island. There was not a vile term or hateful idea, which ancient vulgar animosity had ever used, though long union had made them scarcely intelligible, which he did not rake up and attempt to bring into cre-

dit, by writing and conversation. The consequence of this is well known. Wilkes and some others were burnt in effigy in Scotland, and it produced so general an attachment to the king and ministry, as has not yet spent its force. In these circumstances is it to be wondered at, that many who left Scotland within the last fifteen years, when they heard Wilkes and those who adhered to him, extolled and celebrated by the sons of liberty, should be apt to consider it as an evidence of the same spirit, and that they were engaged in support of the same cause. Perhaps we may go a little higher with this remark in tracing political appearances to their source. It is generally said that the King himself has discovered a violent rancorous personal hatred against the Americans. If this be true, and I know nothing to the contrary, it may be easily accounted for upon the very same principles.

I am far from supposing that this was a good reason for any man's being cool to the American cause, which was as different from that of Wilkes, as light is from darkness. It was indeed doing great dishonor to the noble struggle, to suppose it to have any connexion with who should be in or out of court-favor at London; and therefore it was always my opinion, that those who railed against the king and ministry only, did not carry the argument home, nor fully understand the nature of their own plea. In order to justify the American opposition, it is not necessary to shew that the persons in power have invaded liberty in Britain; it is sufficient to say that they, with the concurrence of the whole nation, have refused to suffer it to continue in the colonies.—This leads me to the second part of my design, which was to lay before you the reasons which, I think, should induce every lover of justice and of mankind, not only to be a well-wisher, but a firm and stedfast friend to America, in this important contest.

It has been often said, that the present is likely to be an important æra to America. I think we may say much more; it is likely to be an important æra in the history of mankind. In the ancient migrations, a new country was generally settled by a small unconnected, and often an ig-

norant band. The people and the soil were alike uncultivated, and therefore they proceeded to improvement by very slow degrees ; nay, many of them fell back and degenerated into a state vastly more savage than the people from whence they came. In America we see a rich and valuable soil and an extensive country, taken possession of by the power, the learning, and the wealth of Europe. For this reason it is now exhibiting to the world a scene which was never seen before. It has had a progress in improvement and population so rapid as no political calculators have been able to ascertain. I look upon every thing that has been said upon this subject to be mere conjecture, except in such places as there has been an actual numeration. When men say that America doubles its number in fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years, they speak by guess, and they say nothing. In some places that may be under or over the truth ; but there are vast tracts of land that fill every year with inhabitants, and yet the old settled places still continue to increase.

It is proper to observe that the British settlements have been improved in a proportion far beyond the settlements of other European nations. To what can this be ascribed ? Not to the climate ; for they are of all climates : Not to the people ; for they are a mixture of all nations. It must therefore be resolved singly into the degree of British liberty which they brought from home, and which pervaded more or less their several constitutions. It has been repeated to us, I know not how often, by the mercenary short-sighted writers in favor of submission to, or reunion with, Great-Britain, that we have thriven very much in past times by our dependance on the mother country, and therefore we should be loth to part. These writers forget that the very complaint is, that she will not suffer us to enjoy our ancient rights. Can any past experience shew that we shall thrive under new impositions ? I should be glad any such reasoners would attempt to prove that we have thriven by our dependance, and not by the degree of independence which we have hitherto enjoyed. If we have thriven by our dependance, I conceive it is a necessary consequence that those provinces must have

thriven most which have been most dependant. But the contrary is self-evident. Those which have hitherto enjoyed the freest form of government, though greatly inferior in soil and climate, have yet out-stripped the others in number of people and value of land, merely because the last were more under the influence of appointments and authority from home.

When this is the undeniable state of things, can any person of a liberal mind wish that these great and growing countries should be brought back to a state of subjection to a distant power? And can any man deny, that if they had yielded to the claims of the British parliament, they would have been no better than a parcel of tributary states, ruled by lordly tyrants, and exhausted by unfeeling pensioners, under the commission of one too distant to hear the cry of oppression, and surrounded by those who had an interest in deceiving him. It ought therefore, in my opinion, to meet with the cordial approbation of every impartial person, as I am confident it will of posterity, that they have united for common defence, and resolved that they will be both free and independent, because they cannot be the one without the other.

As this measure, long foreseen, has now taken place, I shall beg leave to say a few things upon it; in which I mean to show, 1. That it was necessary. 2. That it will be honorable and profitable. And 3. That, in all probability, it will be no injury, but a real advantage, to the island of Great-Britain.

1. It had become absolutely necessary. All reconciliation, but upon the footing of absolute unconditional submission, had been positively refused by Great-Britain; unless, therefore, the colonies had resolved to continue in a loose and broken state, with the name of a government which they had taken arms to oppose, the step which they have now taken could not have been avoided. Besides, things had proceeded so far, and such measures had been taken on both sides, that it had become impossible to lay down a scheme by which *they* should be sure of our dependence, and *we*, at the same time, secured in our liberties. While things continued in their ancient state, there was

perhaps a power on the part of each, of which they were hardly conscious, or were afraid and unwilling to exert. But after the encroachments had been made and resisted, to expect any thing else than a continual attempt to extend authority on the one hand, and to guard against it on the other, is to discover very little knowledge of human nature. In such a situation, though every claim of America should be yielded, she would soon be either in a state of continual confusion, or absolute submission. The king of England, living in his English dominions, would not, and indeed durst not, assent to any act of an American legislature, that was, or was supposed to be, hurtful to his English subjects. This is not founded on conjecture, but experience. There is not (at least dean Swift affirms it) any dependance of Ireland upon England, except an act of the Irish parliament, that the king of England shall be king of Ireland. This last has a separate independent legislature, and in every thing else but the above circumstance seems to be perfectly free; yet if any man should assert, that the one kingdom is not truly subject to the other, he would in my opinion know very little of the state and history of either.

2. A state of independency will be both honorable and profitable to this country. I pass over many advantages in the way of commerce, as well as in other respects, that must necessarily accrue from it, that I may dwell a little on the great and leading benefit, which is the foundation of all the rest. We shall have the opportunity of forming plans of government upon the most rational, just, and equal principles. I confess I have always looked upon this with a kind of enthusiastic satisfaction. The case never happened before since the world began. All the governments we have read of in former ages were settled by caprice or accident, by the influence of prevailing parties, or particular persons, or prescribed by a conqueror. Important improvements indeed have been forced upon some constitutions by the spirit of daring men, supported by successful insurrections. But to see government in large and populous countries settled from its foundation, by deliberate counsel, and directed immediately to the public

good of the present and future generations, while the people are waiting for the decision with full confidence in the wisdom and impartiality of those to whom they have committed the important trust, is certainly altogether new. We learn indeed from history, that small tribes and feeble new settlements, did sometimes employ one man of eminent wisdom, to prepare a system of laws for them. Even this was a wise measure, and attended with happy effects. But how vast the difference, when we have the experience of all past ages, the history of human society, and the well known causes of prosperity and misery in other governments, to assist us in the choice.

The prospect of this happy circumstance, and the possibility of losing it, and suffering the season to pass over, has filled me with anxiety for some time. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, there has been great unanimity and public spirit. The inhabitants of every province, and persons of all denominations, have vied with each other in zeal for the common interest. But was it not to be feared that some men would acquire over-bearing influence? that human weakness and human passions would discover themselves, and prevent the finishing of what had been so happily begun. In the time of the civil wars in England, had they settled a regular form of government as soon as the parliament had obtained an evident superiority, their liberties would never have been shaken, and the revolution would have been unnecessary. But by delaying the thing too long, they were broken into parties, and bewildered in their views, and at last tamely submitted without resistance to that very tyranny against which they had fought with so much glory and success. For this reason I think that every candid and liberal mind ought to rejoice in the measures lately taken through the States of America, and particularly the late declaration of independence, as it will not only give union and force to the measures of defence while they are necessary, but lay a foundation for the birth of millions, and the future improvement of a great part of the globe.

I have only further to observe, 3. That I am confident the independence of America will, in the end, be to the

real advantage of the island of Great Britain. Were this even otherwise, it would be a weak argument against the claim of justice. Why should the security or prosperity of this vast country be sacrificed to the supposed interest of an inconsiderable spot? But I cannot believe that the misery and subjection of any country on earth, is necessary to the happiness of another. Blind partiality and self-interest may represent it in this light but the opinion is delusive, the supposition is false. The success and increase of one nation is, or may be, a benefit to every other. It is seldom, indeed, that a people in general can receive and adopt these generous sentiments, they are nevertheless perfectly just. It is industry only, and not possessions, that makes the strength and wealth of a nation; and this is not hindered but encouraged, provoked, and rewarded by the industry of others.*

But to leave the general principle, or rather to apply it to the case of Great Britain and America: What profit has the former hitherto received from the latter? and what can it reasonably expect for the future? Only its trade, and such part of that trade as tends to encourage the industry and increase the number of the inhabitants of that island. It will be said, they intend to raise a large, clear, net revenue upon us, by taxation. It has been shewn by many, that all the taxes which they could raise would only serve to feed the insatiable desire of wealth in placemen and pensioners, to increase the influence of the crown, and the corruption of the people. It was by the acquisition of numerous provinces that Rome hastened to its ruin. But even supposing it otherwise, and that without any bad consequence among themselves, they were to acquire a great addition to their yearly revenue, for every shilling they gained by taxes, they would lose ten in the way of trade. For a trifling addition to the sums of public money to be applied or wasted by ministers of state, they would lose ten times the quantity distributed among useful manufacturers, the strength and glory of a state. I think this has been sometimes compared to the difference

* See David Hume's Essay on the jealousy of trade.

between draughts of spirituous liquors to intoxicate the head or weaken the stomach, and cool refreshing food to give soundness, health and vigor to every member of the body.

The trade, then, of America, as soon as peace is settled, will be as open to them as ever. But it will be said, they have now an exclusive trade, they will then but share it with other nations. I answer, an exclusive trade is not easily preserved, and when it is preserved, the restriction is commonly more hurtful than useful. Trade is of a nice and delicate nature ; it is founded upon interest. It will force its way wherever interest leads, and can hardly by any art be made to go in another direction. The Spaniards have an exclusive trade, as far as they please to confine it, to their own plantations. Do they reap much benefit from it ? I believe not. Has it made their own people more industrious at home ? Just the contrary. Does it, in the natural course of things, make a people less careful to work as well, and as cheap as others, to procure voluntary purchasers, when they know they can send their goods to those who are obliged to take them ? Does it not both tempt and enable great merchants in the capital, to import from other nations what they can export to such a forced market, to advantage ? By this means a considerable profit may come into the coffers of a few particulars, while no essential service is done to the people, and the ultimate profit is carried to that country where the goods are produced or fabricated. It has been repeatedly said by political writers in England, that the balance of trade is against that country to every nation, excepting Portugal and their own plantations. I will not answer for the truth or universality of this assertion, but if it is true in any measure, I will venture to affirm upon the principles of general reason, that the cause which produces it, is no other than the exclusive trade they have hitherto enjoyed to the American settlements.

But the circumstance which I apprehend will contribute most to the interest of Great Britain in American Independence is, its influence in peopling and enriching this great continent. It will certainly tend to make the

American States numerous, powerful, and opulent, to a degree not easily conceived. The great and penetrating Montesquieu, in his *Spirit of Laws*, has shewn in the clearest manner, that nothing contributes so much to the prosperity of a people, as the state of society among them, and the form of their government. A free government overcomes every obstacle, makes a desert a fruitful field, and fills a bleak and barren country with all the conveniences of life. If so, what must be the operation of this powerful cause upon countries enjoying in the highest degree every advantage that can be derived from situation, climate, and soil? If the trade of America has hitherto been of so great benefit to England, how much more valuable may it be when these countries shall be still more highly improved, if she shall continue to enjoy it? This argument is liable to no objection but what may arise from the loss of an exclusive trade, which I have already considered. It may be added, however, that there is not now nor ever has been, any aversion in the Americans to the people of Great Britain, so that they may be sure of our trade if they treat us as well as others, and if otherwise, they do not deserve it.

I might illustrate the argument by stating the probable consequences of a contrary supposition. If Great Britain should prevail, or overcome the American States, and establish viceroys with absolute authority in every province; all men of spirit and lovers of freedom would certainly withdraw themselves to a corner, if such could be found, out of the reach of tyranny and oppression. The numbers of the people at any rate would sensibly decrease, their wealth would be speedily exhausted, and there would remain only a nominal authority over a desolate country, in return for a vast expence laid out in the conquest, and in place of a great and profitable trade, by which both nations were made happy. One of the arguments, if they may be called so, made use of against this country, and on which an obligation to obedience has been founded, is taken from the expence they have been at in blood and treasure for our protection in former wars. This argument has been often answered in the fullest manner, but if they shall

continue to urge it, how fearful to think of the obligations we shall be under, after this war is finished? Then shall we owe them all the sums which they shall have laid out in subduing us, and all that we have spent in attempting to prevent it; all the blood which they shall have shed in attacking us, and all that we shall have spilt in our own defence. There is unquestionably a loss to Great Britain by the one side of the account as well as the other; and it tends to show, in the clearest manner, the unspeakable folly, as well as great injustice of the promoters of this war.

Thus I have stated to you, though very briefly, the principles on which I think the American cause ought to be pleaded, and on which it ought to be espoused and supported, by every lover of justice and of mankind. But though the general plea in justice were less clear than it is, there is a light in which the conduct of the opposers of it has always appeared to me unreasonable and ungenerous to the highest degree. That resistance to Great Britain has been determined on, in the most resolute manner, through all the colonies, by a vast majority, is not only certain, but undeniable. In the beginning of the controversy, some writers, with an impudence hardly to be paralleled, called the fact in question, attempted to deceive the people in this country, and effectually deceived the people of England, by making them believe that it was only a few factious and violent men that had engaged in the contest. It is not very long since a writer had the courage to assert, that "nine tenths of the people of Pennsylvania were against independence." The falshood of such misrepresentations is now manifest, and indeed was probably known from the beginning by those who desired to have them believed. Taking this for granted, then, for an inconsiderable minority, whether natives or strangers, to set themselves in opposition to the public councils is contrary to reason and justice, and even to the very first principles of the social life.

If there is any principle that was never controverted upon the social union, it is, that as a body, every society must be determined by the plurality. There was a time when it was not only just and consistent, but necessary,

that every one should speak his mind freely and fully of the necessity or expediency of resisting the authority of Great Britain. But that time is over long ago. The measures being resolved upon, and the conflict begun, one who is barely neuter can scarce be forgiven; a secret plodding enemy must be considered as a traitor. Every person who continued among us after the decisive resolutions formed by all the colonies, ought to be considered as pledging his faith and honor to assist in the common cause. Let me try to illustrate it by a similar case. Suppose that a ship at sea springs a leak, which exposes the whole company to the most imminent danger of perishing. Suppose a council is called of all the persons on board, to determine what port they shall endeavor to gain. Then it is not only the right but the duty of every one to speak his own judgment, and to press it upon others by every argument in his power. Suppose a great majority determines to push for a certain place, and to go to the pump by turns every quarter of an hour; but that two, or three, or one, if you please, is of opinion that they should have gone another course, because of the wind, current, or any other circumstance, and that it would be best to change hands at the pump only every half hour. All this is well. But if after the determination, this same gentleman, because his advice was not followed, should refuse to pump at all, should silyly alter the ship's course, or deaden her way by every means in his power, or even should only by continual complaints and despondent fears, discourage others, on whose activity the common safety depended, I desire to know what treatment he would receive or deserve? Without doubt he would be thrown over board in less time than I have taken to state the case. I am not able to perceive the least difference between this supposition and what takes place in America at the present time.

If this argument is just with respect to every inhabitant of the country, it ought to have some additional weight with those who are not natives, and whose residence is not certain or has not been long. There is a great degree of indecency in such taking any part against what the majority of the inhabitants think to be their interest and that

of their country. Were they even wrong, their mistake should be lamented, not resisted ; on the contrary, it would be the part both of generosity and justice to support them effectually in a contest which wisdom would have declined. We see indeed, every day, melancholy instances of a base and selfish temper operating different ways. Many when they do not obtain that rank and honor which their pride and partiality think their due, or if their advice is not followed, immediately renounce the service of their country, and it may go to destruction for them. In opposition to this, let me recommend the example of the illustrious Fabius of Rome. He had given strict orders to all his officers not to engage the enemy, but to keep at a distance. Unluckily his lieutenant-general, by his own rashness, got entangled with a part of the army under his command, and was engaged. Fabius, preferring his country's good to fame, rivalry, and safety, came immediately to his support with all expedition, and thereby gained a glorious and complete victory.

I hope you will take in good part the above reflections, which I think contain nothing that is virulent or indecent against any man or body of men. They are the effects of judgment and conviction. The author, as is probably known to many of you, has been personally abused in news-papers at home, for the part he was supposed to have taken in the American cause, which was in some degree indeed the motive to this address. He hopes that an honest and faithful support of liberty and equal government in this part of the world, will be no just reproach to his character, either as a scholar, a minister, or a Christian ; and that it is perfectly consistent with an undiminished regard for the country which gave him birth.

The above is submitted to your candid perusal, by,

Gentlemen,

Your sincere friend, and

Obedient humble servant,

The AUTHOR.

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 DELIVERED AT A PUBLIC THANKSGIVING  
 AFTER PEACE.

## SERMON 45.

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 PSALM iii. 8.

*Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.*

MY BRETHREN,

**W**E are met together in obedience to public authority, to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving to God, for the goodness of his providence to the United States of America, in the course of a war which has now lasted seven years, with a powerful and formidable nation. We are particularly called upon to give thanks for the signal successes with which it hath pleased him to bless our arms and those of our allies, in the course of the last year, and the campaign which is now drawing to a close. I need say nothing of the importance of the great contest in which we have been so long engaged or the interesting alternative which depends upon the issue, as these seem to have been felt in the fullest manner by all ranks in this country from the beginning. The language even of the common people will convince every man of reflection that they are universally sensible how much is at stake. My proper business therefore is to engage every pious hearer to adore the providence of God in general, to offer with sincerity

and gratitude the sacrifice of praise for his many mercies, and to make a wise and just improvement of the present promising situation of public affairs.

Many who now hear me are witnesses, that it has never been my practice for reasons which appear to me to be good, to intermix politics with the ordinary service of the sanctuary, on the weekly returns of the christian sabbath, further than fervent supplications to the Throne of Grace for divine direction to the public counsels, and assistance to those who are employed in the public service. But on days of this kind it becomes part of a minister's duty to direct the attention of the hearers to events of a public nature. This you know I did with great concern and at considerable length six years ago on a public Fast Day. I would therefore willingly in this more advanced period, take a view of what is past, and endeavor to direct you in what remains, of your duty to God, to your country, and to yourselves.

For this purpose I have chosen the words of the Psalmist David now read ; which are part of a psalm generally thought to have been composed by the royal author before the war with Absalom his unnatural son, was wholly finished, but when he had such presages of success as made him speak the language of faith and confidence. “ I laid  
“ me down and slept : I awaked, for the Lord sustained  
“ me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that  
“ have set themselves against me round about. Arise O  
“ Lord, save me, O my God ; for thou hast smitten all  
“ mine enemies upon the cheek-bone : thou hast broken  
“ the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the  
“ Lord ; thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.”

In discoursing upon this subject, I propose, through the assistance of divine grace,

I. To explain and state the proper meaning of this expression or sentiment of the inspired psalmist, “ salvation  
“ belongeth unto the Lord.”

II. To lay before you a succinct view of what the United States of America owe to Divine Providence in the course of the present war,



III. To make a practical improvement of the subject for your instruction and direction.

First then, I am to explain and state the proper meaning of this expression or sentiment of the inspired psalmist, "salvation belongeth unto the Lord." This I mean to do by adhering strictly to what appears to be the mind of the spirit of God, in the passage before us, as well as in a manner agreeable to the analogy of faith. As religion is the same in substance in every age, the reflections of pious persons in the course of providence arise from the same examples, and lead to the same end. The words may justly be supposed to contain the Psalmist's thankful acknowledgment of the past mercies of God, as well as the foundation of his future security. They carry in them a general confession of the influence of divine providence upon every event, and in particular with respect to *salvation*, or deliverance from impending danger. In this view when he says, "salvation belongeth unto the Lord," it seems to imply the three following things.

I. That "salvation belongeth unto the Lord," as distinguished from human or created help, and therefore all confidence in man stands opposed to the sentiment expressed by the holy Psalmist in the text. It is not opposed to the use or application of, but to an excessive or undue reliance on human means, or second causes of any kind. It implies, that success in any attempt is to be ultimately attributed to God. That it is he who by his providence provides outward means, who raises up friends to his people, or causes *their enemies to be at peace with them*. That it is he who in cases of difficulty and danger, directs their hands to war and their fingers to fight, and finally crowns their endeavors with success. Whether therefore the outward advantages are great or small, whether the expectation or the probability of success has been strong or weak, he who confesses that salvation belongeth unto God, will finally give the glory to him. Confidence before, and boasting after the event, are alike contrary to this disposition. If any person desires to have his faith in this truth, confirmed or improved, let him read the history of mankind, in a cool and considerate manner, and with a

serious frame of spirit. He will then perceive that every page will add to his conviction. He will find that the most important events have seemed to turn upon circumstances the most trivial and the most out of the reach of human direction. A blast of wind, a shower of rain, a random shot, a private quarrel, the neglect of a servant, a motion without intention, or a word spoken by accident and misunderstood, has been the cause of a victory or defeat which has decided the fate of empires. Whoever with these facts in his view, believes the constant influence and over-ruling power of Divine Providence, will know what the Psalmist means when he says, "Salvation be-  
" longeth unto the Lord."

2. In this sentiment, the Psalmist seems to have had in view the *omnipotence* of Providence; that nothing is impossible with God; that there is no state so dangerous, no enemy so formidable, but he is able to work deliverance. He has not only the direction and government of means and second causes, but is himself superior to all means. The word *salvation*, when it is applied in scripture to temporal danger, generally signifies a great and distinguished deliverance. Thus it is used by Moses, Exodus xiv. 13. "Stand still and see the salvation of God;" and in the same manner, 1 Sam. xiv. 45. "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?" When, therefore, a person or people are threatened with evils of the most dreadful kind; when they are engaged in a conflict very unequal; when they are driven to extremity, and have no resource left as means of defence: then if the cause in which they are engaged is righteous and just, they may cry to God for relief. The sentiment expressed by the Psalmist ought to bear them up against despair; and they may say as the angel to the father of the faithful, "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" There are many instances in scripture of signal deliverance granted to the servants of God, some of them even wholly miraculous, which teach us to set our hope in his mercy, and not to suffer his mighty works to slip out of our minds. This is the exercise of faith in an unchangeable God—"the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

3. This sentiment has respect to the mercy and goodness of God, or his readiness to hear the cry of the oppressed, and send deliverance to his people. This circumstance is necessary to be taken in, to make him the proper object of faith and trust; and it must be combined with the other, to give us a complete view of the influence of Providence. Power and wisdom alone, give an imperfect display of the divine character. It would give little support under the pressure of affliction, to have a general or theoretical persuasion, that all things are possible with God: but if we believe his readiness to interpose, and see our title clear to implore his help, we have that hope which is justly called, "the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." In this sense, salvation belongeth unto God; it is his prerogative; it is his glory. The promise so often repeated in the same or similar terms, is addressed both to nations and particular persons. "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble, to deliver him, and to honor him. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth him out of all his troubles. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Having briefly stated these known and general truths, I proceed to the second and principal thing proposed, which was to lay before you a succinct view of what the United States of America owe to Divine Providence, in the course of the present war. On considering this part of the subject, a difficulty presents itself as to the manner of handling it. I am desirous of doing it some measure of justice, and at the same time of avoiding excessive prolixity, or a tedious enumeration of particular facts. To unite these two purposes as much as possible, I will divide what I have to say into distinct branches; and after a few words of illustration on each of them, leave it to every hearer to add such further examples as may have fallen within his own observation. The branches I would separately consider, are the following: 1. Signal successes or particular and providential favors to us in the course of the war. 2. Preservation from difficulties and evils which seemed to be in

our situation unavoidable, and at the same time next to insurmountable. 3. Confounding the counsels of our enemies, and making them hasten on the change which they desired to prevent.

1. Signal successes or providential favors to us in the course of the war. Here I must mention what happened at the beginning of the contest, and prevented us from being crushed in the very out-set, although it is now in a manner wholly forgotten. Let us remember our true situation, after we had made the most public and peremptory declarations of our determination to defend our liberties. There was a willing spirit, but unarmed hands. Our enemies have all along charged us with a deliberate concerted purpose of breaking with them, and setting up an independent empire. The falshood of this accusation might be made to appear from many circumstances; as there being no pre-contract among the states themselves, nor any attempt to engage allies or assistance in Europe, and several others. But though there were no other argument at all, it is sufficiently proved by the total want of arms and ammunition to supply us even during the first stages of resistance. The nakedness of the country in this respect is well known; and our enemies endeavored to avail themselves of it by taking every measure to prevent their being brought to us. This difficulty was got over by many providential supplies, without the care or foresight of those who were at the head of affairs, and particularly by many unexpected captures from our enemies themselves.

How contrary to human appearance and human conjectures have many circumstances turned out? It was universally supposed at first that we should be able to do nothing at all at sea, because of the great naval power of the enemy; yet the success of our private vessels has been one of the most powerful means of distressing them, and supporting us. I cannot help in particular taking notice, that the eastern states which were the first objects of their vengeance, were actually in their possession, and seemed to be devoted to pillage and destruction; yet in a short time they were delivered, and have in the course of the war

acquired a greater accession of wealth and power than it is probable they could have done in the same period of security and peace.

It falls to be taken notice of under this branch of the subject, that our most signal successes have generally been when we had the weakest hopes or the greatest fears. What could be more discouraging than our situation at the close of the year 1776? when, after general Howe's arrival with so powerful and well appointed an armament, our army enlisted but for a few months, was almost entirely dispersed? Yet then did the surprise of the Hessians at Trenton, and the subsequent victory at Princeton, raise the drooping spirits of the country, and give a new turn to our affairs. These advantages redounded greatly to the honor of the commander in chief who planned, and the handful of troops with him, who executed the measures, as is confessed by all; yet were they of still greater moment to the cause of America in general, than they were brilliant as military exploits. This place and neighborhood having been the scene of these actions, cannot but make them and their consequences fresh in the memory of every one who now hears me.

The great victory over general Burgoyne and his army, (weakened at Bennington, and taken prisoners at Saratoga,) which opened the eyes of Europe in general, and in some degree even of Britain, happened at a time when many were discouraged. It happened when after the losses of Brandy-Wine and Germantown, the British were in possession of Philadelphia, and the Congress of the United States were obliged to fly to a distant part of the country. It happened not long after our disgraceful flight from Ticonderoga, and the scandalous loss of that post, which was every where said and thought to be the key of the continent, and the possession of it essential to our security. We must not omit to observe that this victory over a numerous army of British regulars, was obtained by an army composed in a great measure of militia suddenly collected, and freemen of the country who turned out as volunteers.

In the same manner our late astonishing success in the south began when our affairs in that part of the continent wore a most discouraging aspect. The year 1781, which began with mutiny in the northern army, and weakness in the southern, produced more instances of gallantry and military prowess than all the former, and was closed with a victory more glorious to us, and more humiliating to the enemy, than any thing that had before happened during the course of the war.

It was surely a great favor of Providence to raise up for us so great and illustrious an ally in Europe. This Prince has assisted us, as you all know, in a very powerful and effectual manner, and has granted that assistance upon a footing so generous as well as just, that our enemies will not yet believe, but there must be some secret and partial stipulations in favor of himself and his subjects, although no such thing exists.

Let me add to all these the providing for us a person who was so eminently qualified for the arduous task of commander in chief of the armies of the United States. I must make some apology here. None who know me, I think will charge me with a disposition to adulation or gross flattery of living characters. I am of opinion and have often expressed it, that the time for fixing a man's character is after death has set his seal upon it, and favor, fear and friendship are at an end. For this reason I do not mean to give a general or full character of the person here in view. But in speaking of the kindness of Providence to the United States, it would be a culpable neglect not to mention that several of his characteristic qualities seem so perfectly suited to our wants, that we must consider his appointment to the service, and the continued health with which he has been blessed, as a favor from the God of heaven. Consider his coolness and prudence, his fortitude and perseverance, his happy talent of engaging the affection of all ranks, so that he is equally acceptable to the citizen, and to the soldier—to the state in which he was born, and to every other on the continent. To be a brave man, or skilful commander, is common to him with many others; but this

country stood in need of a comprehensive and penetrating mind, which understood the effect of particular measures in bringing the general cause to an issue. When we contrast his character and conduct with those of the various leaders that have been opposed to him, when we consider their attempts to blast each others reputation, and the short duration of their command, we must say that Providence has fitted him for the charge, and called him to the service.

This head can hardly be better closed than with the extraordinary interposition of divine Providence for the discovery of the black treachery of Arnold, who intended to put one of the most important fortresses, and the general himself, into the enemies hands. This design was ripe for execution, and the time of execution was at hand. As there was no suspicion of the traitor, no measures were, or could be taken for preventing it. The meeting of the spy with two friends of America, which was entirely casual, the unaccountable embarrassment of that artful person, when with a little address, he might easily have extricated himself; and indeed, the whole circumstances of that affair, clearly point out the finger of God.

I might have added many more instances of the favor of providence in particular events, but what have been mentioned, I think are fully sufficient for the purpose, for which they are adduced, and will lead the hearers to the recollection of others of a similar kind.

The second part of my observations, must be on the difficulties and dangers, which seemed to be in our situation, unavoidable, and, at the same time, next to insurmountable. The first of this kind, which I shall mention, is dissension, or the opposition of one colony to another. On this our enemies reckoned very much, from the beginning. Even before the war broke out, reasoners seemed to build their hopes, of the colonies not breaking off from the mother country for ages, upon the impossibility of their uniting their strength, and forming one compact body, either for offence or resistance. To say the truth, the danger was great and real. It was on this account,



foreseen and dreaded, and all true patriots were anxious to guard against it. Great thanks, doubtless, are due to many citizens in every state, for their virtuous efforts to promote the general union. These efforts have not been without effect; but I am of opinion, that union has been hitherto preserved and promoted, to a degree that no man ventured to predict, and very few had the courage to hope for. I confess myself, from the beginning, to have apprehended more danger from this, than from any other quarter, and must now declare, that my fears have been wholly disappointed, and my hopes have been greatly exceeded. In the public councils, no mark of dissension, in matters of importance, has ever appeared; and I take upon me further to say, that every year has obliterated colonial distinctions, and worn away local prejudices, so that mutual affection, is at present more cordial, and the views and works of the whole more uniform, than ever they were at any preceding period.

Having mentioned the union and harmony of the United States, it will be very proper to add, that the harmony, that has prevailed in the allied army, is another signal mercy, for which we ought to be thankful to God. It is exceedingly common for dissension to take place, between troops of different nations, when acting together. In the English history, we meet with few examples of conjunct expeditions, with sea and land forces, in which the harmony has been complete. Our enemies did not fail to make use of every topic, which they apprehended, would be inflammatory and popular, to produce jealousies between us and our allies. Yet it has been wholly in vain. Not only, have the officers and soldiers of the American and French armies, acted together, with perfect cordiality, but the troops of our allies have met with a hearty welcome wherever they have been, from the people of the country; and indeed, just such a reception as shows they were esteemed to be of the utmost importance and utility to the American cause.

Another difficulty we had to encounter, was the want of money and resources for carrying on the war. To remedy this evil an expedient was fallen upon which I do

not look upon myself as obliged either to justify or approve. It was, however embraced by the plurality as necessary, and upon the whole, less hazardous than any other, which in our situation was practicable. The difficulty of raising, clothing, paying and supporting an army with a depreciated currency, which its own nature, the arts of interested persons, and the unwearied attempts of our enemies were pushing on to annihilation, may be easily perceived. Yet the war has not only been supported, but we have seen the fall and ruin of the money itself without the least injury to the public cause. Without injury did I say, it was to the unspeakable benefit of the public cause. Many private persons indeed, have suffered such injury as not only merits pity, but calls for redress, and I hope the time will come, when all the redress shall be given that the nature of the thing and the state of the country, will admit. In the mean time, when we reflect upon what is past, we have a proof of the general attachment of the country to the cause of liberty, the strongest perhaps that can well be conceived, and we see a circumstance from which we feared the greatest evil, adding its force to many others, in blinding our enemies, misleading their measures, and disappointing their expectations.

Another difficulty we had before us was the being obliged to encounter the whole force of the British nation, with an army composed of raw soldiers, unacquainted with military discipline. The difficulty was increased by our own conduct, viz. filling our army with soldiers enlisted for short periods. The views of those who preferred this method was certainly very honorable, though the wisdom of it is at least very disputable. They hoped it would make every man in America a soldier in a short time. This effect indeed, it has in a good degree produced by the frequent calls of the militia, wherever the enemy appeared. They also apprehended danger from a standing army, unconnected with civil life, who after they had conquered their enemies might give cause of jealousy to their friends. The history of other countries in general, and in particular that of the civil wars in England against Charles the first, seemed to give plausi-

bility to this reason, though from several circumstances there was less cause of fear in America, than would have been in one of the European states. However the measure was resolved upon by the plurality at first, and we felt the inconvenience of it very severely; but it pleased God to preserve us from utter destruction, to set bounds to the progress of our enemies, and to give time to the states to make better and more effectual provision for their final overthrow.

The only other danger I shall mention, was that of anarchy and confusion, when government under the old form was at an end, and every state was obliged to establish civil constitutions for preserving internal order, at the very same time that they had to resist the efforts of a powerful enemy from without. This danger appeared so considerable that some of the king of Great Britain's governors ran off early, as they themselves professed, in order to augment it. They hoped that universal disorder would prevail in every colony, and not only defeat the measures of the friends of liberty, but be so insupportable to the people in general, as to oblige them to return to their subjection, for their own sakes, and to be rid of a still greater evil. This danger, through the divine blessing, we happily and indeed entirely escaped. The governors by their flight ripened every measure, and hastened on the change, by rendering it visibly necessary. Provincial conventions were held, city and county committees were every where chosen, and such was the zeal for liberty, that the judgments of these committees was as perfectly submitted to, and their orders more cheerfully and completely executed, than those of any regular magistrates, either under the old government, or since the change. At the same time, every state prepared and settled their civil constitutions which have now all taken place, and except in very few instances, without the least discord or dissatisfaction. Happily for us in this state, our constitution has now subsisted near seven years, and we have not so much as heard the voice of discontent. I speak on this head, of what is known to every hearer, and indeed to the whole world; and yet I am persuaded that to those who reflect upon it,

it will appear next to miraculous. Although so much was to be done, in which every man was interested, although the colonies were so various and extensive, and the parliament of Great Britain was threatening, and its army executing vengeance against us, yet the whole was completed in little more than a year, with as much quietness and composure, as a private person would move his family and furniture from one house, and settle them in another.

The third branch of my observations shall consist of a few instances, in which the counsels of our enemies have been confounded, and their measures have been such as to hasten on the change, which they desired to prevent. As to the first of these, nothing can be more remarkable, than the ignorance and error in which they have continued from the first rise of the controversy, to the present time; as to the state of things, and the dispositions of men in America. Even those at the head of affairs in Great Britain, have not only constantly given out, but in my opinion have sincerely believed, that the great body of the people were upon their side, and were only misled into rebellion by a few factious leaders. At the same time, the very same persons, without being sensible of the absurdity; have affirmed, that this country was groaning under the oppression of its rulers, and longed to be delivered from it. Now these things could not both be true. If the first had been true, these leaders must have been popular and acceptable in a high degree, and have had the most extensive influence. If the last had been true, they must have been inwardly and universally detested. But how many circumstances might have convinced them of the falsehood of both these assertions? The vast extent of the states, and the concurrence of all ranks and classes of men, which was so early, so uniform and so notorious, plainly prove, that no such thing could have happened, without a strong and rooted inclination in the people themselves, and such as no address or management of interested persons could have produced. Besides, those who know how fluctuating a body the Congress is, and what continual changes take place in it, as to men, must perceive the ab-

furdity of their making or succeeding in any such attempt. The truth is, the American Congress owes its existence and its influence, to the people at large. I might easily show, that there has hardly any great or important step been taken, but the public opinion has gone before the resolutions of that body ; and I wish I could not say, that they have been sometimes very slow, in hearing and obeying it.

As to the other assertion, it was still more manifestly false, and they had greater opportunities of perceiving it to be so. If Congress, or those in public trust, in any state, had tyrannized over the people, or wantonly oppressed them, the usurpation would, in the nature of things, have come to a speedy period. But what if I should say, that this pretence of our enemies, in an equivocal sense, is indeed true ; and yet this truth, doth but the more clearly demonstrate their error and delusion. It is true, that Congress has, in many instances, been obliged to have recourse to measures, in themselves hard and oppressive, and confessed to be so ; which yet, have been patiently submitted to, because of the important purpose that was to be served by them. Of this kind, was the emission of paper money ; the passing of tender laws ; compelling all into the militia ; draughting the militia to fill the regular army ; pressing provisions and carriages ; and many others of the like nature. Two things are remarkable in this whole matter : one, that every imposition, for the public service, fell heaviest upon those who were the friends of America ; the lukewarm or contrary minded, always finding some way, of shifting the load from their own shoulders : The other that from the freedom of the press in this country, there never were wanting, the boldest and most inflammatory publications, both against men and measures. Yet neither the one nor the other, nor both united, had any perceptible influence in weakening the attachment of the people. If this account is just, and I am confident it is known to be so, by almost all who now hear me, what less than judicial blindness, could have made our enemies so obstinate, in the contrary sentiments ? Such however we know has been the case,

and as the whole of their proceedings have been grounded on mistakes, it is no wonder that they have been both injudicious and unsuccessful.

This matter may be explained in the following manner. They supposed that they had only a few discontented particulars to apprehend and punish, and an army to conquer, in no respects comparable to their own ; but in addition to this they had the lost affections of a whole people to recover. The first, which was almost of no consequence at all, they bent their whole force to effect in council and in the field. The other they supposed was already done, or not worth the doing ; and therefore every measure they took had a quite different intention, and a quite opposite effect. In all this they were fortified and confirmed by the sentiments, discourse and conduct of the disaffected in America. These unhappy people, from the joint influence of prejudice, resentment and interest, were unwearied in their endeavors to mislead their friends. Their prejudice deserves to be mentioned first. This was great indeed. They had generally such an exalted idea of the power of Britain, that they really considered it as madness to resist. I could mention many sentiments uttered by them, which could hardly fail of making the hearers to smile at their gross ignorance, and more than childish timidity. Resentment also joined its force. They were sometimes roughly handled by the multitude at the beginning of the controversy. This led them to wish for revenge, and as they could not inflict it themselves, to call for it from their friends in England. To these two circumstances we may add that the road to favor was plainly that of flattery ; and therefore their opinions and intelligence were generally such as they supposed would be most acceptable to those who had it in their power to provide for them, or promote them. Such was the effect of these circumstances united, that time will constrain every body to confess, that the partizans and friends of the English in America, have done more essential injury to their cause, than the greatest and boldest of their enemies.

The above distinction between overcoming the armed force of the states, and regaining the people's hearts, is

the true key to explain the proceedings, and account for the events of the war. Every measure taken by Great-Britain, from the beginning, instead of having the least tendency to gain the affections of the people of this country, had, and one would think must have been seen to have, the most powerful influence in producing the contrary effect. Without mentioning every separate particular, I will only consider a little the cruelty and severity with which the war has been carried on; because I am firmly of opinion, that the spirit and temper of our enemies in this contest, has been the principal cause of the disappointment of their attempts. In this the cabinet and counsellors in Great-Britain, and the officers and soldiers of their armies in America, have nothing to reproach each other with. If the barbarity of the army has ever squallied, certainly it has never exceeded the cruelty of several of the acts of parliament. I will not enumerate these acts, which are so well known, and which some years ago were so often mentioned in every publication; but shall only tell you with what view I desire you to recollect them. Every one of these acts, on their being known in America, served to increase the union of the states, to fill the heart of the citizens with resentment, and to add vigor to the soldier's arm.

After the example of their employers at home, the commanders of the British armies, their officers and soldiers, and indeed all their adherents, seemed to have been animated with a spirit of implacable rancor, mingled with contempt towards the Americans. This is to be understood of the general run or greatest number of every class, always admitting that there were particular exceptions, whose honor and principle controuled or overcame the national prejudice. Neither perhaps is it in any of them to be ascribed so much to the national character, as to the nature and subject of the quarrel. It has been long observed, that civil wars are carried on with much greater fury, and attended with acts of greater barbarity, than wars between independent nations. The fact, however, of their barbarity is certain; and no less so is the powerful



influence which this conduct has had in defeating their expectations, either of reconciliation or submission.

The barbarous treatment of the American prisoners through the whole war, but especially at the beginning, when their enemies were confident of success, is a melancholy subject indeed, and will be a stain upon the British name to future ages. No part of America can be ignorant of this, having witnesses in every state, in the few that returned alive out of their hands. But we in this state, through which they passed to their homes, can never forget the appearance of the emaciated spectres who escaped or were exchanged from British dungeons or prison-ships. Neither was it possible for the people in general not to be struck with the contrast when exchanges took place, and they saw companies of British prisoners going home hale and hearty, bearing every mark of their having been supplied with comfortable provisions, and treated with humanity in every other respect. I am not to enlarge upon these known and fertile subjects. The only reason of their being introduced is to shew the effect which spectacles of this kind must have had upon the public mind, and their influence in rendering the return of the people of this country to submission to the parent state altogether impossible.

The inhuman treatment of the American prisoners by the British, was not more remarkable than their insolence and rapacity towards the people of the country wherever their power extended. The abuse and contempt poured upon the inhabitants in discourse, and the indiscriminate plunder of their property, could not but in the most powerful manner alienate their affections. Many who hear me at present, have had so full conviction of this truth in their own experience, that it is unnecessary to offer any proof of it. It is of importance however to observe, that this impolitic oppression was the true and proper cause of the general concurrence of the inhabitants of this state to the American standard, in the beginning of the year 1777, and their vigorous exertions ever since against the incursions of the enemy from New-York. I confess I was not so much surprised at such conduct when

they possessed this part of the country ; because they were then flushed with victory, and had scarcely an idea that they would fail of final success. But when we consider that their conduct has been the same, or even worse, in the southern states, we can hardly help wondering at their insatiation. Surely there was time enough before the year 1780, to have convinced them that insolence and cruelty were not the means of bringing back a revolted people ; and yet by all accounts their treatment of the inhabitants in Georgia, South and North Carolina, in that year, was even more barbarous than had been experienced by the people here three years before.

I shall only further mention, that it seems plainly to have been not by accident, but in consequence of general orders or a prevailing disposition, that they treated wherever they went, places of public worship (except those of the episcopal denomination,) with all possible contempt and insult. They were in general used not only for hospitals, but store-houses, barracks, riding schools and prisons, and in many places they were torn to pieces wantonly and without any purpose to be served by it, but wreaking their vengeance on the former possessors. What influence must this have had upon the minds of the people ? What impression must have been made upon the few who remained, and were witnesses to these acts of profanation, when in those places where they had been accustomed to hear nothing but the word and the worship of God, their ears were stunned with the horrid sound of cursing and blasphemy. This was done very early in Boston, and repeated in every part of the continent with increasing rage.

I have chosen on this part of the subject to insist only on what was general, and therefore must be supposed to have had an extensive influence. It would have been easy to have collected many particular acts of barbarity, but as these might be accounted for from the degeneracy and savage disposition of the persons who were severally guilty of them, they would not have been so conclusive for the purpose for which they were adduced. I shall therefore omit every thing of this kind, except one of the earli-

est instances of their barbarity, because it happened in one of the streets of this place, viz. massacring in cold blood, a minister of the gospel, who was not, nor ever had been in arms, and received his death wound, while on his knees begging mercy.

Upon the whole nothing appears to me more manifest than that the separation of this country from Britain, has been of God ; for every step the British took to prevent, served to accelerate it, which has generally been the case when men have undertaken to go in opposition to the course of Providence, and to make war with the nature of things.

I proceed to make some practical improvement of the subject, for your instruction and direction. And,

In the first place, it is our duty to give praise to God for the present happy and promising state of public affairs. This is what we are called to, and making profession of, by our meeting together at the present time. Let it then be more than a form. Let the disposition of your hearts be correspondent to the expressions of your lips. While we who are here alive before God this day, recollect with tenderness and sympathy with surviving relations, the many valuable lives that have been lost in the course of the war, let us give thanks to God who hath spared us as monuments of his mercy, who hath given us the satisfaction of seeing our complete deliverance approaching, and those liberties civil and religious, for which we have been contending, established upon a lasting foundation. It will be remembered by many, that I have early and constantly expressed my disapprobation of self-confidence, and vain-glorious boasting. To many American soldiers I have said, seldom boast of what you have done, but never of what you only mean to do. This was not occasioned by any doubt or hesitation I ever had as to the probable issue of the war, from the apparent state of things, and the course of human events, but by a deep conviction of the sinfulness of this practice, either in a nation or person. Now therefore that we have come so far in opposition to a formidable enemy, it is certainly our duty to say that "salvation" on belongeth unto the Lord." This indeed is not

only the duty of every person with respect to what is past, but is the way to support and animate us in what remains of the warfare, and dispose us to make a suitable improvement of the settlement which we hope is not very distant.

2. We ought to testify our gratitude to God for the many signal interpositions of his providence on our behalf, by living in his fear, and by a conversation such as becometh the gospel. This is not only a tribute we owe to him for every mercy, and therefore for those of a public nature, but it is the only way by which public prosperity can become a real mercy to us. Eternity is of yet greater moment than any earthly blessing. Their state is little to be envied who are free as citizens, but slaves as sinners. All temporal comforts derive their value from their being the fruits of divine goodness, the evidence of covenant love, and the earnest of everlasting mercy. It is therefore our indispensable duty to endeavor to obtain the sanctified improvement of every blessing, whether public or personal. There is the greater necessity of insisting on this at present, that though a time of national suffering or jeopardy has some advantages for alarming the consciences of the secure, it hath also some disadvantages, and frequently occasions such distraction of mind as is little favourable to the practice of piety. We know by sad experience that the regular administration of divine ordinances, the observation of the Sabbath, and the good order of the country in general, have been much disturbed by the war. The public service seemed many times to justify what would otherwise have been highly improper. This contributed to introduce a licentiousness of practice, and to protect those from restraint or reproof, who I am afraid in many cases, rather yielded to inclination than submitted to necessity. Now therefore, when by the blessing of God our distresses are removed, we ought to return to punctuality as to public order, as well as conscientious strictness in every part of our practice.

3. In the third place it is our duty to testify our gratitude to God, by usefulness in our several stations, or in other words by a concern for the glory of God, the

public interest of religion, and the good of others. This is the duty of every person, even of the lowest station, at all times. Even the meanest and most unconnected hath still some small bounds, within which his influence and example may be useful. But it is especially the duty of those who are distinguished from others by their talents, by their station, or by office and authority. I shall at present consider it chiefly as the duty of two sorts of persons, ministers and magistrates, those who have the direction of religious societies, and those who are vested with civil authority. As to the first of these, they are under the strongest obligations to holiness and usefulness in their own lives, and diligence in doing good to others. The world expects it from them, and demands it of them. Many of this class of men, have been peculiarly the objects of the hatred and detestation of the enemy, in the course of this war. Such therefore as have been spared to see the return of peace and security; are bound by the strongest ties, to improve their time and talents, in their master's service. But what I have peculiarly in view, is strictness in religious discipline, or the inspection of the morals of their several societies. By our excellent constitution, they are well secured in their religious liberty. The return which is expected from them to the community, is that by the influence of their religious government, their people may be the more regular citizens, and the more useful members of society. I hope none here will deny that the manners of the people in general, are of the utmost moment to the stability of any civil society. When the body of a people are altogether corrupt in their manners, the government is ripe for dissolution. Good laws may hold the rotten bark some longer together, but in a little time all laws must give way to the tide of popular opinion, and be laid prostrate under universal practice. Hence it clearly follows, that the teachers and rulers of every religious denomination, are bound mutually to each other, and to the whole society, to watch over the manners of their several members.

(2) Those who are vested with civil authority, ought also with much care, to promote religion and good morals among all under their government. If we give credit to the holy scriptures, he that ruleth must be just, ruling in the fear of God. It is a truth of no little importance to us in our present situation, not only that the manners of a people are of consequence to the stability of every civil society ; but that they are of much more consequence to free states, than to those of a different kind. In many of these last, a principle of honor and the subordination of ranks, with the vigor of despotic authority, supply the place of virtue, by restraining irregularities and producing public order. But in free states, where the body of the people have the supreme power properly in their own hands, and must be ultimately resorted to on all great matters, if there be a general corruption of manners, there can be nothing but confusion. So true is this, that civil liberty cannot be long preserved without virtue. A monarchy may subsist for ages, and be better or worse under a good or bad prince ; but a republic once equally poised, must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty, and by some tumultuous revolution, either return to its first principles, or assume a more unhappy form.

From this results a double duty, that of the people themselves, who have the appointment of rulers, and that of their representatives, who are intrusted with the exercise of this delegated authority. Those who wish well to the state ought to chuse to places of trust, men of inward principle, justified by exemplary conversation. Is it reasonable to expect wisdom from the ignorant, fidelity from the profligate, assiduity and application to public business from men of a dissipated life ? Is it reasonable to commit the management of public revenue, to one who hath wasted his own patrimony ? Those therefore who pay no regard to religion and sobriety, in the persons whom they send to the legislature of any state, are guilty of the greatest absurdity, and will soon pay dear for their folly. Let a man's zeal, profession, or even principles as to political measures, be what they will, if he is without personal integrity and private virtue as a

man, he is not to be trusted. I think we have had some instances of men who have roared for liberty in taverns, and were most noisy in public meetings, who yet have turned traitors in a little time. Suffer me on this subject to make another remark. I have not yet heard of any Christian state in which there were not laws against immorality. But with what judgment will they be made, or with what vigor will they be executed, by those who are profane and immoral in their own practice? Let me suppose a magistrate on the bench of justice, administering an oath to a witness, or passing sentence of death on a criminal, and putting him in mind of a judgment to come. With what propriety, dignity, or force can any of these be done by one who is known to be a blasphemer or an infidel, by whom in his convivial hours every thing that is serious and sacred is treated with scorn?

But if the people in general ought to have regard to the moral character of those whom they invest with authority, either in the legislative, executive or judicial branches, such as are so promoted may perceive what is and will be expected from them. They are under the strongest obligations to do their utmost to promote religion, sobriety, industry, and every social virtue, among those who are committed to their care. If you ask me what are the means which civil rulers are bound to use for attaining these ends, further than the impartial support and faithful guardianship of the rights of conscience; I answer that example itself is none of the least. Those who are in high station and authority, are exposed to continual observation; and therefore their example is both better seen and hath greater influence than that of persons of inferior rank. I hope it will be no offence in speaking to a Christian assembly, if I say that reverence for the name of God, a punctual attendance on the public and private duties of religion, as well as sobriety and purity of conversation, are especially incumbent on those who are honored with places of power and trust.

But I cannot content myself with this. It is certainly the official duty of magistrates to be "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." That society will



suffer greatly, in which there is no care taken to restrain open vice by exemplary punishment. It is often to be remarked, in some of the corrupt governments of Europe, that whatever strictness may be used, or even impartiality in rendering justice between man and man, yet there is a total and absolute relaxation as to what is chiefly and immediately a contempt of God. Perhaps a small trespass of a poor man on property, shall be pursued by a vindictive party, or punished by a tyrannical judge, with the utmost severity; when all the laws against swearing, sabbath-breaking, lewdness, drunkenness and riot, shall be a dead letter, and more trampled upon by the judges themselves, than by the people who are to be judged. Those magistrates who would have their authority both respected and useful, should begin at the source, and reform or restrain that impiety towards God, which is the true and proper cause of every disorder among men. O the short-sightedness of human wisdom, to hope to prevent the effect, and yet nourish the cause! Whence come dishonesty and petty thefts? I say, from idleness, sabbath-breaking, and uninstructed families. Whence come deceits of greater magnitude, and debts unpaid? From sloth, luxury, and extravagance. Whence come violence, hatred, and strife? From drunkenness, rioting, lewdness, and blasphemy. It is common to say of a dissolute liver, that he does harm to none but himself; than which I think there is not a greater falsehood that ever obtained credit in a deceived world. Drunkards, swearers, profane and lascivious jesters, and the whole tribe of those who do harm to none but themselves, are the pests of society, the corruptors of the youth, and in my opinion, for the risk of infection, thieves and robbers are less dangerous companions.

Upon the whole, my brethren, after we have contended in arms for liberty from foreign domination, let us guard against using our liberty as a cloak for licentiousness; and thus poisoning the blessing after we have attained it. Let us endeavor to bring into, and keep in credit and reputation, every thing that may serve to give vigor to an equal republican constitution. Let us cherish

a love of piety, order, industry, frugality. Let us check every disposition to luxury, effeminacy, and the pleasures of a dissipated life. Let us in public measures put honor upon modesty and self-denial, which is the index of real merit. And in our families let us do the best by religious instruction, to sow the seeds which may bear fruit in the next generation. We are one of the body of confederated states. For many reasons, I shall avoid making any comparisons at present, but may venture to predict, that whatever state among us shall continue to make piety and virtue the standard of public honor, will enjoy the greatest inward peace, the greatest national happiness, and in every outward conflict will discover the greatest constitutional strength.

CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY.

SERMON 46.

Preached at Princeton, September, 1775, the Sabbath preceding the ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT; and again with Additions, September 23, 1787. To which is added, AN ADDRESS to the SENIOR CLASS, who were to receive the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS.

1 THESS. ii. 12.

*That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory.*

THE present state was intended to be, and I think must, by every person of reflection, be admitted to be a continual trial of the faith and constancy of a Christian. It is therefore a duty we owe to others in general, but in a special manner, the elder to the younger, to give them faithful warning of the temptations and dangers, to which they must, of necessity, be exposed, if they mean to walk in the paths of piety and virtue. It hath often occurred to me, in meditating on this subject, that as false money is most dangerous, when it is likest to the true, so those principles, and that character, which approach the nearest to true religion, if notwithstanding they are essentially different from it, will be most ready to impose on an uncautious and unsuspecting mind. Therefore, if there

is such a thing as a *worldly virtue*, a system of principles and duty, dictated by the spirit of the world, and the standard of approbation or blame with the men of the world, and if this is at bottom, essentially different from, and sometimes directly opposed to the spirit of the gospel, it must be of all others, the most dangerous temptation, to persons of a liberal education and an ingenious turn of mind.

This, if I am not mistaken, is really the case. There are some branches of true religion which are universally approved, and which impiety itself cannot speak against; such as truth and integrity in speech, honesty in dealing, humanity and compassion to persons in distress. But there are other particulars, in which the worldly virtue, and the Christian virtue, seem to be different things. Of these I shall select one, as an example, viz. Spirit, dignity, or greatness of mind. This seems to be entirely of the worldly cast: It holds a very high place in the esteem of all worldly men: The boldest pretensions are often made to it, by those who treat religion with neglect, and religious persons with disdain or defiance. It is also a virtue of a very dazzling appearance; ready to captivate the mind, and particularly to make a deep impression on young persons, when they first enter into life. At the same time, the gospel seems to stand directly opposed to it. The humility of the creature, the abasement and contrition of the sinner, the dependence and self-denial of the believer, and above all, the shame and reproach of the cross itself, seem to conspire in obliging us to renounce it.

What shall we say then, my brethren? Shall we say that magnanimity is no virtue at all, and that no such excellence belongs to human nature? Or shall we admit that there is beauty and excellence in it—confessing at the same time, that it does not belong to religion, and only say, that though we want this, we have many other and better qualities in its place? To this I can never agree; for every real excellence is consistent with every other; nay every real excellence is adorned and illustrated by every other. Vices may be inconsistent with each other, but virtues never can. And, therefore, as magnanimi-

ty is an amiable and noble quality—one of the greatest ornaments of our nature, so I affirm that it belongs only to true and undistorted religion, and that every appearance of the one, without the other, is not only defective, but false.

The Holy Scriptures, it is true, do chiefly insist upon what is proper to humble our pride, and to bring us to a just apprehension of our character and state. This was wise and just, because of that corruption and misery into which we are fallen, the contrary would have been unjust. It is evidently more necessary, in the present state of human nature, to restrain pride, than to kindle ambition. But as the scripture points out our original dignity, and the true glory of our nature, so every true penitent is there taught to aspire after the noblest character, and to entertain the most exalted hopes. In the passage which I have chosen as the subject of my discourse, you see the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to walk suitably to the dignity of their character, and the importance of their privileges, which is a short but just description of true and genuine greatness of mind.

My single purpose, from these words, at this time, is to explain and recommend magnanimity as a christian virtue; and I wish to do it in such a manner, as neither to weaken its lustre, nor admit any degree of that corrupt mixture, by which it is often counterfeited, and greatly debased. Some infidels have in terms affirmed, that Christianity has banished magnanimity, and by its precepts of meekness, humility, and passive submission to injury, has destroyed that nobleness of sentiment, which rendered the ancients so illustrious, and gives so much majesty and dignity to the histories of Greece and Rome. In opposition to this, I hope to be able to shew that real greatness is inseparable from sincere piety; and that any defect in the one, must necessarily be a discernible blemish in the other. With this view, I will, first, give you the principles of magnanimity in general, as a natural quality; secondly, I will shew what is necessary to give it real value, as a moral virtue; thirdly, shew that it shines with the most perfect brightness as a Christian grace;

and afterwards improve the subject, by a practical, application of what may be said, for your instruction and direction.

First, then, let me state the principles of magnanimity, in general, as a natural quality. I think it must be admitted, that as there is a real difference between bodies, as to size and bulk, as well as other sensible qualities, so there is a real character of greatness, or meanness, applicable to the mind, distinct from its other qualities or powers. It is, however, I apprehend, a simple impression, which cannot be explained, or further analysed, but may easily be felt, and is best illustrated by its effects. These may be summed up in the following particulars: To magnanimity it belongeth to attempt, 1. Great and difficult things: 2. To aspire after great and valuable possessions; 3. To encounter dangers with resolution; 4. To struggle against difficulties with perseverance; and, 5. To bear sufferings with fortitude and patience.

1. It belongs to magnanimity to attempt great and difficult things. Those who, from a love of sloth and ease, neglect the exercise or improvement of their powers, and those who apply them with ever so great assiduity and attention, to things mean or of small consequence, are plainly destitute of this quality. We perceive a meanness and want of spirit in this respect, when particular persons fall below their rank in life; or when, as is too frequently the case in any rank, they fall below human nature itself. When a prince, or other person of the first order and importance in human life, busies himself in nothing but the most trifling amusements, or arts of little value, we call it mean; and when any man, endowed with rational powers, loses them through neglect, or destroys them by the most grovelling sensuality, we say he is acting below himself. The contrary of this, therefore, or the vigorous exertion of all our powers, and particularly the application of them to things of moment and difficulty, is real magnanimity.

2. It belongs to magnanimity to aspire after great and valuable possessions. It is more difficult properly to illustrate this as a branch of magnanimity, because of its fre-

quent perversion, which will be afterwards explained. It seems however, to be necessarily included in the general character. A great mind has great capacities of enjoyment as well as action. And as there is a difference between the blessings in our view, both in point of dignity and extent, such a man will not be easily satisfied, or put up with what is either mean or scanty, while he can acquire and possess a better and more extensive portion. The large and increasing desires of the human mind, have often been made an argument for the dignity of our nature, and our having been made for something that is great and excellent.

3. It belongs to magnanimity to encounter dangers with resolution. This is inseparable from, and constitutes a leading part of the character. Even the most excellent and valuable services to mankind, if they are attended with no difficulty at all, or meet with no opposition, though they retain the character of utility, yet, for want of this circumstance, they lose that of greatness.— Courage is always considered as a great quality; it has had the admiration, or rather adoration, of mankind in every age. Many when they speak of magnanimity, mean nothing else but courage, and when they speak of meanness, have little other idea but that of timidity.— Neither is there, I think, any human weakness that is more the object of contempt and disdain, than cowardice, which when applied to life in general, is commonly called pusillanimity.

4. It belongs to greatness, to struggle against difficulties with steadiness and perseverance. Perseverance is nothing else but continued and inflexible courage. We see some persons, who shew the greatest activity and boldness for a season, but time and opposition weakens their force, and seems, if I may speak so, to exhaust their courage, as if they wasted the power by the exertion. Perseverance, therefore, is necessary to greatness. Few things are more contrary to this character, than fickleness and unsteadiness. We commonly join together the characters of weak and changeable.



5. In the last place, it belongs to greatness to bear sufferings with fortitude and patience. This is a kindred quality to the former, and is necessary to complete the character of magnanimity. Such is the state of human things, that suffering is in one way or another, wholly unavoidable. It often happens, that difficulties cannot be removed, or enemies cannot be conquered ; and then it is the last effort of greatness of mind, to bear the weight of the one, or the cruelty of the other, with firmness and patience. This virtue has always been of the greatest reputation. It is a well known saying of a heathen philosopher, that a great man, suffering with invincible patience, under a weight of misfortunes, is a sight, which even the gods must behold with admiration.

Having thus pointed out the principles, or rather enumerated the chief effects of magnanimity, as a natural quality, let us now, in the second place, consider what is necessary to give it real value, as a moral virtue. This is of the utmost importance, and must appear so to all who will consider the subject with attention. That I may set the matter in as clear a light as possible, observe, that to render magnanimity a valuable quality, it must further have the following characters.

1. The object of our desires must be just as well as great. Some of the noblest powers of the human mind, have often been exerted in invading the rights, instead of promoting the interest and happiness of mankind. As the history of the world is little else than the history of human guilt ; so, many of the most illustrious names, transmitted down to us, have been those of the most active and successful destroyers of their fellow-creatures. There may be, and there have been in such persons, many or most of the ingredients of natural greatness of mind ; but these have only served to make the characters, in the eye of reason, more hideous and detestable.

2. Our desires ought to be governed by wisdom and prudence, as well as justice. If any person either forms difficult projects, or aspires after great possessions, and in prosecution of his purposes, exerts ever so much courage, fortitude and patience ; yet, if these designs are less

useful, or these possessions less valuable, than others to which he might have applied the same talents, it cannot deserve the name of true magnanimity. If any person, for example, forms a resolution of exerting his skill, in such feats or performances as have nothing or very little valuable in them, but that they are difficult and uncommon, I think no man will pretend that he has any title to the character of greatness of mind, otherwise a rope-dancer might be a hero: or, if any person should spend a whole life, in the most unwearied application to the single purpose of accumulating wealth, however vast his desires, or however astonishing his success, his merit would be very small. Nay, we must be sensible that he has lost many opportunities of doing signal service to mankind, and of acquiring more valuable and durable enjoyments, while in pursuit of this, which after all will disappoint his hopes.

3. The principle of action must be honorable as well as the achievements illustrious. If a person does things ever so extraordinary in their nature, overcomes the greatest difficulties, or braves the most formidable dangers, merely to make his name famous, we must at once perceive how much it detracts even from his name itself. This is not the language of religion only, it is the language of reason, and the dictate of the human heart. An insatiable thirst for praise, is so far from being amiable, that it is hateful or contemptible. I am sensible that a thirst for fame, is not only apparent in, but seems to have been confessed by many of the most distinguished heroes of antiquity; but as it certainly does abate in a good degree, the lustre of their good actions, so the indulgence that is given them, upon this head, is wholly owing to the disadvantages they lay under, in a state of heathenism, and their ignorance of a better and nobler principle.—“Nothing,” says an eminent author, “can be great, the contempt of which is great;” and therefore, if a contempt of riches, a neglect of fame, and a readiness to sacrifice both to duty and usefulness, is one of the most glorious characters we can conceive, it is plain, that not the deeds, but the principle is the evidence, and not the

head nor the hands of man, but the heart is the seat of genuine greatness.

4. In the last place, in order to real greatness, every attempt must be possible and rational, perhaps probable. Nothing is more common than to find persons, under the pretence of great and illustrious designs, prosecuting what is not of any value when obtained, and at the same time scarcely possible, and no way probable to be obtained at all. This is declining altogether from the line of greatness, and going into the path of extravagance. Again, should any man undertake what he was altogether unable to perform, however excellent the design were in itself, we would not dignify it even with the name of ambition; he would acquire and deserve the character, not of greatness, but of folly or madness.

On the whole, it is plain that these moral principles, must enter into the composition of true greatness, and that, when they are wanting, the natural characters mentioned before, degenerate into vice, and assume the names of pride, ambition, temerity, ferocity and obstinacy.

This leads me, in the third place, to shew, not only that there is nothing in real religion contrary to magnanimity, but that there, and there only it appears in its beauty and perfection. Let me briefly run over, and apply to religion, the above-mentioned ingredients of magnanimity.

I. It is to attempt great and difficult things. Religion calls us to the greatest and most noble attempts, whether in a private or a public view. In a private view, it calls us to resist and subdue every corrupt and sinful passion, however strongly the indulgence is solicited by the tempting object, or recommended by the artful seducer. The importance and difficulty of this struggle, appears not only from the holy scriptures, but from the experience and testimony of mankind in every age. What cautions are given by Solomon upon this subject? "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." The wisest Heathens have inculcated the necessity of self-government, and the danger of surrounding temptation, by many

instructive images. But why should I extend this part of the subject? How few are successful in this attempt? This alone is a sufficient proof, that it is great and difficult, and every person exercised to godliness, will be abundantly sensible of it, from the state of his own heart.

In a public view, every good man is called to live and act for the glory of God, and the good of others. Here he has as extensive a scene of activity as he can possibly desire. He is not indeed permitted to glory or to build an altar to his own vanity; but he is both permitted and obliged to exert his talents, to improve his time, to employ his substance, and to hazard his life in his Maker's service, or his country's cause. Nor am I able to conceive any character more truly great, than that of one, whatever be his station or profession, who is devoted to the public good under the immediate order of Providence. He does not seek the bubble reputation in the deadly breach, but he complains of no difficulty, and refuses no service, if he thinks he carries the commission of the King of kings.

2. The truly pious man aspires after the greatest and most valuable possessions. He despises, indeed, the uncertain and the unsatisfying enjoyments of time. His desires after present enjoyments are subjected to the will of God. He has given them up without reserve, yet his heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of these things, and therefore he both asks and hopes to receive what is suitable and necessary, and believes that a little that a just man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. But the glorious object of the Christian's ambition, is the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The honorable relation he stands in to God, as his adopted child in Christ Jesus, inclines and authorises him to hope for this purchased possession, and enables him to look down with becoming indifference, on all the glory of this transitory world. Let the rich man glory in his riches, and the wise man glory in his wisdom; he only glories in this, that he knoweth the Lord, and shall be with him for ever.

3. True piety encounters the greatest dangers with resolution. The fear of God is the only effectual mean to deliver us from the fear of man. Experience has abundantly shewn, that the servants of Christ have adhered to his cause, and made profession of his name, in opposition to all the terrors which infernal policy could present to them, and all the sufferings with which the most savage inhumanity could afflict them. But as this belongs to the case of persecution for conscience sake, which, by the peculiar kindness of Providence is exceedingly rare among us, it is proper to observe, that every Christian has frequent opportunities of manifesting a holy resolution in encountering the reproach and derision of worldly men, for adhering to his duty. And when we consider how hard it is to bear reproach and scorn, called, in scripture, *the trial of cruci mockings*, there will appear to be no small measure of dignity and heroism in him, who can calmly submit to it from every quarter, rather than depart from his duty. There are not a few, who are apt to boast of their spirit and resolution, who are yet unable to bear reproach, and meanly make the sentiments of others, and the caprice of fashion, the rule of duty, in place of the clear dictates of conscience and the word of God. How contemptible is this, compared to the conduct of that man, who seeks no fame, but by honest means, and fears no reproach for honest actions, but contents himself with a silent and believing regard to him who seeth in secret, and who shall at last bring every work into judgment.

4. True piety perseveres with constancy in opposition to continual trial. This is indeed what distinguishes the Christian warfare from that of every other. It continues through life, and the last enemy to be overcome is death. In all the conflicts between men on earth, the issue may be speedily expected, and the reward immediately bestowed; but in religion, it is only he who shall endure to the end that shall be saved. This adds greatly to the difficulty, and seems to shew, not only the excellence and beauty, but the real dignity and magnanimity of the Christian character.

5. In the last place, true piety endures suffering with patience and fortitude. If we reflect upon the number of suffering martyrs, whose testimonies are upon record, we shall see with what calmness and composure, with what undaunted firmness, and sometimes with what exultation and triumph they have gone to a scaffold, or been tied to a stake. Can any person, think you, who hath gone to the field of battle in quest of glory, or who hath braved the danger of the seas in quest of wealth or power, be once compared with those who have cheerfully given up the precious life, or submitted their bodies to the torture, to keep their consciences undefiled? But, my brethren, Christian patience is much more frequently tried in another manner. The believer has made an unreserved surrender of himself and his all, to the disposal of Providence: His faithfulness to this promise, is brought almost every day to the trial. For the Christian then to suffer reproach, without rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, to be submissive under the loss of substance, and say with Job, Job i. 21. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—to yield up relations, and to say with David, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I shall go to him but he shall not return to me." To look forward to approaching death, and say with the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." This is magnanimity indeed; this is the most solid glory to which any child of Adam can possibly attain. I proceed in the last place, to make some practical improvement of what hath been said.

1. You may learn, from what hath been said, that whenever honor differs from conscience, it is a treacherous guide; wherever spirit and dignity of mind, as a worldly virtue, differs from true religion, and even from the simplicity of the gospel, it is false and spurious. The gospel, it is true, will not suffer men to seek revenge, or to delight in it. It will humble them in the sight of God, and make them self-denied in the presence of men, yet it will constrain them not to refuse any duty to the one, or any

useful service to the other. It will not suffer them to be ambitious of higher places of honor and trust, but it will make them active and zealous in the duties of that place, in which they already are. It will not suffer them to resent injuries and gratify revenge; but it will make them withstand a king upon his throne, if he presume to interfere in the matters of their God. What is there here that is not noble?

After all, the testimony in favor of true piety, is universal, if carefully attended to. Every one must acknowledge, that ostentation, and love of praise, and whatever is contrary to the self-denial of the gospel, tarnishes the beauty of the greatest actions. Courage and modesty, merit and humility, majesty and condescension, appear with ten-fold glory, when they are united; it is impossible to separate them; to divide, is to destroy them. They are like light and shade in a picture, which are necessary to each other, and which, by their union, constitute the beauty and augment the lustre of the piece. So true is this, that the highest polish that any person can receive in commerce with the world, is to have an apparent disposition to prefer the interest of others to his own, to guard against every degree of offence, and to be always ready to oblige. I have often been pleased with that observation of a foreigner of high rank,\* that worldly politeness is only an imperfect imitation of Christian charity; it is nothing else but a studied appearance of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the interest of others, which a true Christian hath, as the rule of his duty, and the disposition of his heart.

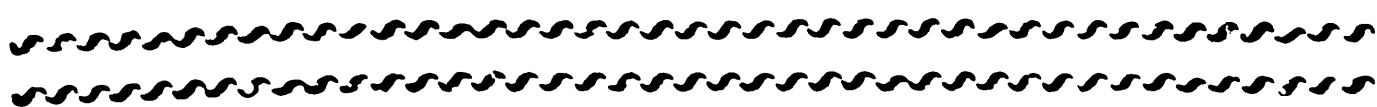
2. Suffer me to observe, that as Christian magnanimity is more excellent than that of the world, it is also more practicable, and, in fact, more universal. Worldly magnanimity is what always requires such talents, as do not fall to the lot of many, and such opportunities for its exercise, as seldom occur. The road to heroism is not open to every man. But that magnanimity, which is the fruit of true religion, being indeed the product of divine grace, is a virtue of the heart, and may be attained by persons of

\* The prince of Conti.



mean talents and narrow possessions, and in the very lowest stations of human life. In fact, there have been, and are daily examples of it in every rank. We see the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, as manifest in those of early years, and the weaker sex, as in any other; and whoever will visit the solitary walks of life, may find, in the lowest stations, humility, thankfulness, patience under affliction, and submission to Providence, such as would do honor to the most approved virtue, and the most enlightened mind. To despise riches, and restrain the motions of envy and impatience, in a needy state, is perhaps as truly noble as to improve them wisely in a higher.

Thus the honor which is chiefly desirable, is equally open to the rich and to the poor, to the learned and to the unlearned, to the wise and to the unwise, as it cometh from God, who is no respecter of persons. One of the best and happiest effects of serious reflection is, to bring us, in a great measure, all upon a level; as, indeed, in one most important respect, the magistrate with his robes, the scholar with his learning, and the day-laborer that stands unnoticed, are all upon the same footing—for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.



A N  
A D D R E S S

T O T H E

STUDENTS OF THE SENIOR CLASS,

*On the Lord's Day preceding Commencement,*

*September 23, 1775.*

GENTLEMEN,

**A**S you have now finished the usual course of study in this place, and are to enter upon public life in a variety of ways, as each shall be determined by inclination or other circumstances, I willingly embrace the opportunity of addressing an exhortation to you, at this important and interesting period of your lives. I do not mean to say much, if any thing, that you have never heard before, but to lay hold of your present situation, with some hope, that what may be said now, will remain upon your memory, and have an influence upon your future conduct. That I may speak with the greater clearness and precision, I will divide what I have to say, into three branches. 1. Your duty to God, and the interest of your souls. 2. The prosecution of your studies, or the improvement of your talents, as members of society. 3. Prudence in your commerce with the world in general, your outward provision, and other circumstances in life.

7 I. As to the first of these, it is to all men of the greatest moment. Some of you, I know, and more, I hope, are intended for the service of Christ in the ministry. To this we have the universal suffrage, that true religion is absolutely necessary, with which I heartily agree. But I wish those who are destined for other employments, may not sometimes make a comparison here, unjust in itself, and dangerous, perhaps even ruinous, to their own souls. Because true religion is necessary to a minister, and they are conscious to themselves, or at least suspect, that they are without religion; instead of laying to heart the things that belong to their peace, they only determine that they will follow some other calling. But alas! though the difference to the public is very great, the difference to the persons themselves, seems to me but very small. A clergyman without religion, to be sure is a dreadful character, and, when visible, a detestable one; but truly, one would think, at the close of life, it will be but little comfort to a man, that he must go to the place of torment, not as a minister, but as a lawyer, physician, soldier, or merchant. Therefore suffer me to say to you, and to all who now hear me, that the care of your souls is the one thing needful. All mankind, of every rank, denomination and profession, are sinners by nature. The ministers of the New Testament have received a commission to preach the gospel to every creature: "He that believeth shall be saved, and "he that believeth not shall be damned."

While I say this, I beg of you to consider that the advantages which you have enjoyed, will be an aggravation of your guilt, if they are unimproved. There is an equity as well as wisdom often to be observed in the providence of God. Unless reasons of sovereignty, that is, reasons unknown to us, prevent it, judgment will be inflicted, when a person or people is ripe for the stroke. Therefore, as some plants and seeds, both from their own nature, and from the soil and situation in which they are placed, ripen sooner than others, so some persons, by the early pains taken upon them, and the privileges they have enjoyed, fill up the measure of their iniquities sooner than others, and are more speedily overtaken with deserv-

ed vengeance. There are many common sayings that are the effects of error and prejudice ; for example, that which you will be told by many, that the children of good men are as bad as any. If this is intended to insinuate that a regular and pious education affords no ground to hope for good behaviour in after life, it is at once contrary to reason and experience. But if we should say that when young persons piously educated, burst restraining bonds asunder, and are seduced into vicious courses, they commonly run faster and farther than others, it is a certain fact, which may be easily accounted for, and affords an important instruction to all.

After intreating you to lay religion to heart, I must beseech you to guard against being too easily satisfied in a matter of infinite moment. Do not think it enough to be prudent, cautious, or decent in your conduct, or to attain a character formed upon worldly principles, and governed by worldly motives. I am not against (as you all know) introducing every argument against sin, and shewing you that loose practices are ruinous to name, body and estate. Neither is it wrong that you should fortify every pious resolution by the addition of these motives. But alas ! the evil lies deeper. “ Except a man be born “ again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” True religion must arise from a clear and deep conviction of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned reliance on the pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace of God.

Suffer me, upon this subject, earnestly to recommend to all that fear God, to apply themselves from their earliest youth, to the exercises of piety, a life of prayer and communion with God. This is the source from which a real Christian must derive the secret comfort of his heart, and which alone will give beauty, consistency, and uniformity, to an exemplary life. The reason why I have mentioned it on this occasion is, that youth, when the spirits are lively and the affections vigorous and strong, is the season when this habit must be formed. There are advantages and disadvantages attending every stage of life. An aged Christian will naturally grow in prudence, vigilance, use-

fulness, attention to the course of providence, and subjection to the divine will, but will seldom attain to greater fervor of affection, and life in divine worship, than he had been accustomed to from his early years. On the contrary, he will generally see it necessary instead of trusting to occasional impulses, to guard and strengthen the habit by order and form.

Be companions of them that fear God. Esteem them always most highly, and shun, as a contagious pestilence, the society not only of loose persons, but of those especially whom you perceive to be infected with the principles of infidelity, or enemies to the power of religion.—Many of these are much more dangerous to pious persons than open profligates. As for these last, decency is against them; the world itself condemns them; reason despises them, and prudence shuns them. He must have a very mean taste indeed, who is capable of finding pleasure in disorder and riot. If I had no higher pleasure on earth than in eating and drinking, I would not choose to eat and drink with the drunken. Order, neatness, elegance, and even moderation itself, are necessary to exalt and refine the pleasures of a sensual life. Therefore I will not allow myself to suppose, that I shall afterwards hear of any of you roaring and swearing in taverns, or wasting your bodies and estates by lewdness and debauchery, or that you take pleasure in those who do so. But be especially careful to avoid those who are enemies to vital piety, who do not pretend to speak directly against religion, but give every vile name they can think of to all who seem to be in earnest on that subject, and vilify the exercises of religion, under the names of whining, cant, grimace, and hypocrisy. These are often unhappily successful in making some uncautious persons ashamed of their Redeemer's name, his truths, his laws, his people, and his cross.

I need hardly observe, that this is not to be understood as recommending pharisaical pride and superciliousness; far less, a rash and presumptuous judging of the state of others. It is not only lawful, but our duty, to have a free communication with our fellow-citizens, for the purposes of social life: it is not only lawful, but our duty to be

courteous, and to give every proper evidence of respect and attention to others, according to their rank and place in society. What I mean to caution you against is, an unnecessary, voluntary intercourse, such as has inclination for its motive, and pleasure for its object. With respect to this, we need not hesitate to say, with the inspired prophet, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but "a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

II. I come now to speak a little upon the prosecution of your studies, and the improvement of your talents. Your education in a seminary of learning, is only intended to give you the elements and first principles of science, which should whet your appetite for more, and which will enable you to proceed with an assured hope of success. It hath been generally a favorite point with me, to recommend the union of piety and literature, and to guard young persons against the opposite extremes. We see sometimes the pride of un sanctified knowledge do great injury to religion; and on the other hand, we find some persons of real piety, despising human learning, and disgracing the most glorious truths, by a meanness and indecency hardly sufferable in their manner of handling them. On this account, industry and application to study, is of the utmost importance to those who are intended for the office of the ministry.

But I have it further in view, to recommend to you all, without exception, a life of diligence and application. Avoid sloth, as a dangerous enemy. Fear it, hate it, and despise it. It is a common saying, that men do not know their own weakness; but it is as true, and a truth more important, that they do not know their own strength. I desire that you will receive the following information from me, which I dare say, every person of judgment and experience will confirm, that multitudes of moderate capacity have been useful in their generation, respected by the public, and successful in life, while those of superior talents from nature, by mere slothfulness and idle habits, or self-indulgence, have lived useless, and died contemptible. There is also a disposition in young people, which you

know I have often set myself to oppose, to think that loose, irregular sallies, and sometimes even vicious liberties, are a sign of spirit and capacity. The very contrary is the truth. It requires no genius at all to do mischief. Persons of the greatest ability have generally been lovers of order. Neither is there any instance to be found, of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application.

Suffer me here, in a particular manner, to recommend to you a firmness of mind, and steady perseverance, as of the utmost moment to your progress and success. Whatever a man's talents from nature may be, if he apply himself to what is not altogether unsuitable to them, and holds on with steadiness and uniformity, he will be useful and happy; but if he be loose and volatile, impatient of the slowness of things in their usual course, and shifting from project to project, he will probably be neither the one nor the other.

I am somewhat at a loss what to say, as to character and reputation; yet it is so important a point, that it must not be omitted. True religion should furnish you with a higher and nobler principle to govern your conduct, than the desire of applause from men. Yet, in subordination to what ought to be the great purpose of life, the approbation of the supreme Judge, there is a just and laudable ambition to do what is praise-worthy among men. This ought not to be extinguished in the minds of youth; being a powerful spur and incitement to virtuous or illustrious actions. A truly good man will seek no praise but by honest means, and will be superior even to disgrace itself, if brought upon him by adherence to his duty. Yet he will also be tender and careful, not to give just cause to any to impeach his conduct. If I might be permitted to direct your views upon this subject, I would say, consider that your character is already beginning to form. Every step you take further in life, will both ascertain and spread it. You ought also to be informed, that notwithstanding all the hackneyed complaints of the partiality and censoriousness of the world, a man's real character, in point of ability, is *never* mistaken, and but *seldom* in point of morals. That there are many malicious and censorious persons, I



agree: but lies are not half so durable as truth. There is an impartiality in a diffusive public, which will shew itself where means of information are afforded to it. Therefore reverence the judgment of mankind without idolizing it. Be as cautious as possible to do nothing that deserves censure, and as little concerned as possible what reproaches may fall upon you undeserved. It is not a contradiction, but perfectly consistent to say, a man should be tender and even jealous of his character, and yet not greedy of praise. There is an amiableness and dignity in the first, but a meanness and littleness in the last.

Another advice, near a-kin to the last, is, do as much as you can to deserve praise, and yet avoid as much as possible the hearing of it. This is but another view of the same subject; and that it may be the more useful, and my intention in it the more manifest, I will extend it both to praise and dispraise. When you come into public life, and become the objects of general attention, not only guard against fishing for applause, and being inquisitive after what people think or say of you, but avoid knowing it as much as you decently can. My reason for this is, that whether you will or not, you will hear as much of the slanders of your enemies as you will bear with patience, and as much of the flattery of your friends, or interested persons, as you will bear with humility. Therefore, prepare yourself for both, but seek for neither. Several eminent authors, as you doubtless know, have given it as an advice to young clergymen, and other public speakers, to get a friend who is a good judge, and intreat him to make remarks upon their composition, carriage, delivery, &c. with fidelity. I have nothing to say against the goodness of the advice in itself, but at the same time, I have no great conviction of the necessity or even the utility of it. It is very seldom that advice is asked in this manner, but with a view to obtain a compliment; and still seldomer that it is given with sufficient freedom and impartiality. If any man has humility and self-denial enough to wish to know his own faults, there will be little difficulty in discovering them. Or if we could suppose, there were difficulty to himself, his enemies or rivals, or talkative peo-

ple, though they be neither the one nor the other, will supply the defect. Perhaps you will think, that in the strictures of malice and envy, there is generally an acrimony that has no great tendency to reform; like a rusty knife, which makes a very painful wound, though not very deep. I agree to this fully, and yet affirm, that there so much the more virtue, so much the more wisdom, and perhaps I may add, so much the more pleasure in making this use of them.

I conclude this part of my subject, with advising you to maintain a friendship with one another, and to carry the intimacies of early life through the whole of it. To this I add, that you ought to desire and cultivate the correspondence of men of piety and learning. Man made for society, derives his chief advantages of every kind, from the united efforts of many conspiring to the same end.—As to piety, nothing is more essential to it, than social communication. It properly consists in the supreme love of God, and fervent charity to all men. The Christian also hath need of the assistance of others in his passage through this world, where he has so much opposition to encounter. Those who deserve this character, are said to be pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Therefore they ought to keep together, lest they lose their way. They comfort each other in distress, they assist each other in doubts and difficulty, they embolden each other by their example, and they assist each other by their prayers.

This is no less the case in respect to literature. It has been observed, that great and eminent men have generally, in every nation, appeared in clusters. The reason of this probably is, that their society and mutual intercourse greatly adds to their improvement, and gives force and vigor to the talents which they may severally possess. Nothing is so powerful an incitement to diligence, or so kindles the best sort of ambition, as the friendship, advice, and assistance of men of learning and worth. The approbation of one such, is of more value to a noble mind, than peals of applause from an undiscerning multitude. Besides, the assistance which men of letters give to each other, is really necessary in the execution of particular works of

great compass and utility. If it is by the labors of preceding ages, that it is now possible in one life to attain to such a degree of knowledge as we have sometimes seen, so it is by the concurrence of many friends lending their assistance, that one man has been sometimes able to present to the public, a system of science, which, without that aid, he alone would have in vain attempted to bring to perfection. There is no circumstance which throws this new country so far back in point of science, as the want of public libraries, where thorough researches might be made, and the small number of learned men to assist in making researches practicable, easy or complete.

III. The last head on which I promised to give you my advice, was prudence in your communication with the world in general, your outward provision and other circumstances that conduce to the happiness and comfort of life. On this subject, I begin with what I have often recommended to you, frugality in the management of your affairs, order and exactness in your dress, furniture, books, and keeping of accompts. Nothing could be further from my mind than to recommend the temper or conduct of avaricious men, whose sordid souls have no higher ambition, and indeed, hardly any other desire than that of getting pelf. This is not only unbecoming a gentleman and a scholar, but, in my opinion, wholly inconsistent with the character. I never knew an instance of a person in whom this disposition took place in early life, that could apply to study, or that became eminent in any thing that was good. The opposite vice is the common fault of youth, and it is against this I would caution you. The frugality I would recommend, is that of an independent mind, that fears and scorns subjection to others, and remembers the just saying of Solomon, that *the borrower is servant to the lender*. That frugality which arises from order and œconomy, is not only consistent with, but it is the parent of liberality of sentiment and generosity of conduct. It is indeed the source of beneficence, for no man can bestow out of an empty purse. On the other hand, covetousness and profusion are by no means repugnant to each other ;

and indeed they are more frequently joined than many apprehend. The stricture of Sallust in the character of Catiline, *alieni appetens, sui profusus*, has been often cited, and may generally be applied to loose and profligate livers. I hope therefore you will learn betimes to distinguish between the virtue and the vice, and to adhere to the one as much as you despise the other.

I will make an observation here, which may be applied not only to the distinction of character in this instance, but in almost every other that has been, or shall be mentioned. It will be much your interest, if you learn betimes to make not a hasty but a deliberate and candid judgment, when you infer character from appearances. The habits of life which men contract, give a bias to their opinions and even a tincture to their conversation and phraseology. Persons inclined to levity and dissipation, will often ascribe to covetousness, what arises from very different causes. I have known, even in youth, a person declining to engage in a party of pleasure, accused by his companions as mean and sneaking, and afraid of his purse, when, in reality, it was not that he loved money more, but pleasure less. It may sometimes happen, that a person of principle will see it proper to decline meetings of festivity, though not directly sinful, as an unnecessary waste of time, or from some other circumstance to him dangerous and ensnaring. I have also seen persons more advanced in years, who from a habit, perhaps a necessary habit of strict temperance, and retired manner of life, were very sparing of personal expence, and even not much disposed to social intercourse, and therefore called close or covetous, and yet when applied to, for pious or charitable purposes, would be much more liberal than others of an opposite turn of mind. Observations perfectly similar might be made upon the opposite character of liberality. It is not every kind of openness of heart that indicates profusion. We are told by Solomon, Prov. xi. 25. "That the liberal soul shall be made fat," and by the prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxxii. 8. "That the liberal desireth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall be established." From these contrasted remarks, I infer, that as it is seldom necessary

to judge peremptorily of others, so forbearance and the most charitable allowance, is both our duty and interest.

In the next place, I recommend to you, humility of heart and meekness of carriage. I consider in this place, the grace of humility as a virtue especially serviceable to your earthly comfort. I consider and mean to treat it as a maxim of worldly prudence. The scripture seems to point it out as peculiarly necessary for this purpose, and to annex the promise of earthly happiness to the practice of it: Matth. v. 5. "Blessed are the meek," says our Saviour, "for they shall inherit the earth." I would understand him as saying, every good man shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, but those who excel in meekness, shall of all others have comfort on earth. In many different views, we may see the propriety of this connexion. Nothing is more offensive to others, than a proud, assuming manner. It not only magnifies every fault, but vitiates even good conduct. It is not only odious to virtuous persons, but it is equally, if not more so, to those who are without principle. Some vices recommend a man to the vicious in the same line, as one drunkard is pleased with the sight of another; but nothing is so hateful to a proud man, as another of the same character, nor is offence sooner given or taken than between those, who in this respect, perfectly resemble one another. This vice is not only odious to persons of understanding and reflection, but to the most ignorant, being as easily perceived as it is universally hated.

The moral virtue of meekness and condescension, is the best ground work even of worldly politeness, and prepares a man to receive that polish, which makes his behaviour generally agreeable, and fits him for intercourse with persons in the higher ranks of life. The same virtue, by the composure and self-command that accompanies it, enables a man to manage his affairs to advantage, in whatever calling he may be engaged, or in whatever station he may be placed. A good shopkeeper is commonly remarkable for this quality. People love to go where they meet with good words and gentle treatment; whereas the peevish and petulant may be said to have a

repelling quality about them, that will not suffer any body to approach them.

To complete the whole, meekness of spirit is as useful to a man's self, as meekness of carriage is acceptable to others. The meek suffer much less from the unavoidable evils of life, than those of a contrary disposition. Many cross accidents of the less important kind, are in a manner annihilated when they are borne with calmness. The injury they do us, is not owing half so much to their weight or severity, as to the irritability of ~~their~~<sup>our</sup> own minds. It is evident that the same disposition must greatly alleviate calamities of a heavier kind; and from analogy you may perceive, that as it mitigates the sorrows, it multiplies and adds to the sweetness of the comforts of life. A moderate portion, gives greater satisfaction to the humble and thankful, than the most ample possessions to the proud and impatient.

Nearly allied to the above virtue, is the government of your passions, and therefore of this I shall say but little. Every one must be sensible how important it is, both for the success of your worldly callings, and your usefulness in public life, to have your passions in due subjection. Men of furious and ungoverned tempers, prone to excess in attachment and resentment, either as to persons or things, are seldom successful in their pursuits, or respected and useful in their stations. Persons of ungoverned passions, are almost always fickle and changeable in their measures, which is of all things the most fatal to important undertakings. These generally require time and patience to bring them to perfection. As to public and political life in particular, the necessity of self government is so great, and so universally acknowledged, that it is usual to impute it in eminent men, not to principle, but to address and policy. It is commonly said, that politicians have no passions. Without inquiring into this, I shall only say, that whatever truth may be in it, is still in favor of my argument. The hypocrisy does honor to the virtue. If the appearance be so necessary or so useful, what must be the value of the reality?

I will here take an opportunity of confuting, or at least correcting a common saying or proverbial sentiment, many of which indeed that obtain belief in a blinded world, are nothing but false colouring and deception. It is usual to say, in defence of sudden and violent passion, that it is better to speak freely and openly, than to harbor and cover secret heart malice. Perhaps I might admit that this would be true, if the inward rage were to be as violent, and continue as long, and return as often, as indulged passion. Every person must agree, that wherever there is a deep and lasting hatred, that never forgets nor forgives, but waits for the opportunity of vengeance, it deserves to be considered as a temper truly infernal. But in most instances of offence between man and man, to restrain the tongue is the way to govern the heart. If you do not make mention of an injury, you will truly and speedily forgive it, and perhaps literally forget it. Rage is in this respect like a fire, if a vent is given to it, it will increase and spread, while there is fuel to consume, but if you can confine and stifle it, you will completely extinguish it.

To the government of the passions succeeds the government of the tongue. This indeed will in a great measure, be the effect of the former, and therefore is recommended by all the same arguments, yet it deserves very particular attention, separately as a maxim of prudence. There are great indiscretions in speech, that do not arise from passion, but from inattention and want of judgment as to the propriety of time and place, and indeed many other sources. I would therefore earnestly recommend to you, to habituate yourselves to restraint in this respect, especially in the early part of life. "Be swift to hear," says St. James, "and slow to speak." Forwardness in speech is always thought an assuming thing in youth, and in promiscuous companions, is often considered as an insult, as well as an indiscretion. It is very common for the world in general, and still more so for men of judgment and penetration, to form an opinion of a character on the whole, from some one circumstance, and I think there are few things more unfavorable in this way than a talka-



tive disposition. If the first time I am in company, especially with a young man, he talks incessantly and takes the whole conversation to himself, I shall hardly be brought to have a good opinion of him, whether what he says be good or evil, sense or nonsense. There are some persons, who, one might say, give away so much wisdom in their speech, that they leave none behind to govern their actions.

But the chief danger of an ungoverned tongue, is, that it kindles the fire of contention among others, and makes enemies to a man's self. Solomon says, "Where no tale-bearer is, the strife ceaseth." A little experience will shew you, how unsafe it is to use much freedom in speech with absent persons. In that case you put yourself wholly in the power of those that hear you, and are in danger, not only from their treachery or malice, but from their mistakes, ignorance and imprudence. Perhaps it would be too rigid to say, that you ought never to speak to a man's prejudice in his absence, what you would be unwilling to say in his presence. Some exceptions to this rule, might easily be conceived. But both prudence and candor require that you should be very reserved in this respect, and either adhere strictly to the rule, or be sure that good reasons will justify a departure from it.

This will be a very proper place to give you some directions, as to the most proper conduct, when you suffer from the tongues of others. Many and grievous are the complaints of what men suffer from the envenomed shafts of envy and malice. And there certainly is a strong disposition in some to invent, and in many to believe slanderous falsehoods. The prevalence of party, in religion or politics, never fails to produce a plentiful crop of this poisonous weed. One of the most important rules upon this subject is, that when an accusation is in any degree well-founded, or suspicious appearances have given any occasion for it, the first duty is to reform what is really wrong, and keep at a distance from the disputed limit.

This will bring good out of evil, and turn an injury into a benefit. But in cases, as it may often happen, when the slander is perfectly groundless, I hold it to be

in general the best way wholly to despise it. Time and the power of truth, will of themselves do justice in almost every case of this kind; but if you shew an impatience under it, a disposition to resent it, or a solicitude to refute it, the far greatest part of mankind will believe it not the less, but the more. If slander were a plant or an animal, I would say it was of a very strange nature, for that it would very easily die, but could not easily be killed. It discovers a greatness of mind, and a conscious dignity, to despise slanders which of itself commands respect; whereas to be either offended or distressed by them, shews a weakness not amiable, whether the accusation be true or false.

This rule I do not say is wholly without exception. There may be cases where vindications may be necessary and effectual, but they are not many. And I think I have seen in the course of my life, reason to make the following distinction. If the accusation or slander be special, and relate to a particular fact, fixed by time, place and other circumstances, and if it be either wholly false, or essentially mistaken in its nature and tendency, the matter may be explained, and justice may be done. But if it be a general character, that happens to be imputed to a man, he ought to attempt no refutation of it, but by conduct: the more he complains of it, the more he speaks of it, the more he denies it, it will be the more believed. For example, if it be affirmed that a man spoke profanely in a certain company, at a certain place and time, when he was not present at all, it may be easily and completely refuted; but if he is accused of being proud, contentious, covetous, or deceitful, although these accusations are pretended to be supported by a train of facts, it is better to let them wholly alone, and suffer his conduct to speak for itself. There are instances in history, of accusations brought with much plausibility, and urged with great vehemence, which yet have been either from the beginning disbelieved, or by time confuted; which occasioned the Latin proverb, *Magna est veritas et prævalebit*.

All the above-mentioned particulars may be said to be the happy effects of wisdom and benevolence united; or rather, perhaps, in the light in which they have been sta-

ted to you, they are chiefly the proper fruits of that wisdom which is "profitable to direct." But I must add another advice, which is the immediate effect of benevolence and good-will; that is, be ready to assist others, and do good as you have opportunity. As every thing is liable to be abused, sometimes the maxims of prudence take a wrong direction, and close the heart against impressions of sympathy and tenderness towards others in distress. Sometimes indeed, the coolness and composure of spirit, and that self-command, which is the effect of reflection and experience, is mistaken for a callous and unfeeling heart, though it is a very different thing. To give way to the agitation of passion, even under the finest feelings, is the way to prevent, instead of promoting usefulness. A parent overwhelmed with surprise and anxiety, at a calamitous accident that has befallen a child, shall be incapable either of reflection or activity, and shall sometimes even need the assistance which he ought to give. But independently of this, there are certainly some persons who contract a habit of indifference as to the wants or desires of others, and are not willing to put themselves to any inconvenience, unless their own particular concerns may be promoted at the same time.

In opposition to this, I mean to recommend to you a disposition to oblige, not merely by civil expressions, and an affable deportment, but by taking a real interest in the affairs of others. Be not unwilling to lend your advice, your assistance, your interest, to those that need them. Those who cannot spare pecuniary assistance, may do many acts of valuable friendship. Let every neighbor perceive that you are not ready to quarrel needlessly, nor insist pertinaciously on trifles; and if you live to obtain credit and influence, let them be employed to assist the deserving of every class. If you undertake to do the business of others, attend to it with the same fidelity, and if possible, with greater punctuality than you would to your own. Some are ready to excuse or justify a contrary conduct, by complaining of the ingratitude or injustice of mankind. But in my opinion, these complaints are contrary to truth and experience. There may be many particular

persons both ungrateful and unjust ; but in the world in general, there will be found a clearness of discernment, and an exactness of retribution. Our Saviour tells us, with respect to one fault, that of rash judging, what is equally true as to injuries of every kind, “ with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.” Luke vi. 38.

This, in my opinion, may and ought to be understood both ways. As the churlish Nabal generally meets with his match, so persons of a humane and friendly disposition shall reap the fruits of it to them or theirs. The truth is, the disposition itself is not in its perfection, but when there is no regard to an immediate return. If you give, looking for a speedy recompense, it is not giving, but selling. You may, however, safely trust to the promise of God : “ Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.” Eccl. xi. 1.

I have known many instances of kindnesses that were both remembered and requited, after they had been long forgotten by him who bestowed them. Nay, sometimes they may be repaid in another generation. It is no inconsiderable legacy for a man to leave to his children, that he had always been a friend to others, and never refused his assistance to those who stood in need of it.

It will not be an improper place here to introduce a few words upon a subject, which has been often handled by writers of the first class : I mean private friendship. Some writers against religion, have actually made it an objection against Christianity, that it does not recommend private friendship, or the love of our country. If this were true, it would be no fault, because the universal benevolence recommended by the gospel, includes all private affections, when they are consistent with it, and is far superior to them when they are contrary to it. But in fact, the instances of private friendship mentioned and alluded to in scripture, are a sufficient recommendation of it ; and even our blessed Saviour himself is said to have distinguished the youngest of his disciples with particular affection. I will therefore observe, with most authors,

that there is no true friendship, but what is founded upon virtuous principles, and directed to virtuous purposes. To love a person who is not worthy of love, is not a virtue, but an error. Neither is there any dependance to be placed in trying cases, upon persons unprincipled at bottom. There never was a true friend, who was not an honest man. But besides this important truth, it is further to be observed, that there is a species of friendship which is neither founded on virtue nor vice, but mere weakness of mind. Some persons, having no resources in themselves, are obliged to have recourse to some other, upon whom they may lean, and without whom they seem as if they could neither think, act, nor even exist. This sort of friendship is to be seen particularly in princes and persons of high rank, and is generally called favoritism; but the same thing may be observed in all ranks, though, in the lower, it is not so conspicuous. We may say of it, that it is like some of those plants that are false and spurious in their kind, which have some of the appearances, but want the most valuable and essential qualities of those that are genuine. Such friendships are commonly contracted by caprice or accident, and uncertain in their duration, being liable to be dissolved by the same means. Valuable friendship is the result of judgment as well as affection; it is one of the greatest comforts of life as well as one of the greatest ornaments to human nature, and its genuineness may be discerned by the following mark: that though it is particular, it is not exclusive. When there is a great, but virtuous attachment to a person who deserves it, it will make a man not less, but more friendly to all others, as opportunity or circumstances shall call him to serve them.

You will perhaps be surprised that as I have so often expressed a desire of your being accomplished in every respect, that I have heretofore said nothing or but little on that politeness and grace in behaviour, which is so much talked of, and which, in some late writings, has been so highly extolled. What has been already explained to you, I hope will lay the foundation for the most solid, valuable and durable politeness. Think of others as rea-

son and religion require you, and treat them as it is your duty to do, and you will not be far from a well-polished behaviour. As to any thing further, that is external in mode and propriety of carriage, it can never be learned but by intercourse with the best company. As to the writings above referred to, the chief of which are Rochefoucault's *Maxims*, and Chesterfield's *Letters*. I think of them as of many other free writings, that when viewed properly, that may be as useful, as by being viewed otherwise, they are generally pernicious. They contain a digested system of hypocrisy, and betray such pride and self-sufficiency, and such hatred or contempt of mankind, as may well be an antidote against the poison which they mean to convey. Nay, one would think the publication of such sentiments is ridiculous, because it is telling you that they desire to be polite, and at the same time that this politeness consists in taking you by the weak side, and displaying their own address by over-reaching yours.

I must also observe, that such writers give in general, a very unjust as well as dishonorable view of nature and mankind. I remember, indeed, Dean Swift says,

“ As Rochefoucault his maxims drew

“ From nature, I believe them true.”

What must I say to this ? Shall I say that he did not draw his maxims from nature ? I will not, because I think he did. Am I obliged then to admit them to be true ? By no means. It is nature, but it is just such a view of nature, as a man without principle must take. It is in himself, that all the error and exaggeration is to be found.

Those who discover an universal jealousy, and indiscriminate contempt for mankind in general, give very little reason to think well of themselves. Probably men are neither so good as they pretend, nor so bad as they are often thought to be. At any rate, candour in sentiment as well as conduct, as it is an important duty of religion, so it is a wise maxim for the conduct of life ; and I believe these two things are very seldom if ever found either separate from, or opposed to each other.

The last advice that I shall offer you, is to preserve a sacred and inviolable regard to sincerity and truth. Those who have received their education here, or at least who have completed it, must know how much pains have been taken to establish the universal and unalterable obligation of truth. This is not however mentioned now to introduce the general subject, or to shew the guilt, folly and danger of deliberate interested falsehood, but to warn you against the smaller breaches of truth now so very common, such as want of punctuality in appointments, breach of promise in small matters, officious falsehoods, that is, deceiving children, sick persons or others for their good ; jocular deceptions, which are not intended to continue long, or be materially hurtful to others. Not one of these is without sin before God, and they are much more hurtful than is commonly supposed. So very sacred a thing indeed is truth, that the very shadow of departure from it is to be avoided. Suppose a man only to express his present purpose as to futurity, for example, to say he will go to such a place to-morrow, though there is no proper obligation given, nor any right to require performance, yet if he does so often, he will acquire the character of levity and unsteadiness, which will operate much to his disadvantage. Let me therefore recommend to you a strict, universal and scrupulous regard to truth—It will give dignity to your character—it will put order into your affairs ; it will excite the most unbounded confidence, so that whether your view be your own interest, or the service of others, it promises you the most assured success. I am also persuaded, that there is no virtue that has a more powerful influence upon every other, and certainly, there is none by which you can draw nearer to God himself, whose distinguishing character is, that he will not, and he cannot lie.



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A SERIOUS

I N Q U I R Y

INTO THE

NATURE AND EFFECTS

OF THE

S T A G E ;

Being an attempt to show, that contributing to the support of a public theatre, is inconsistent with the character of a Christian.

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THE reader will probably conjecture, and therefore I do readily acknowledge, that what gave occasion both to the writing, and publishing the ensuing treatise, was the new tragedy of Douglas, lately acted in the theatre at Edinburgh. This, universal uncontradicted fame says, is the work of a minister of the church of Scotland. One of that character and office employing his time in writing for the stage, every one will allow, is a very new and extraordinary event. In one respect neither author nor actors have suffered any thing from this circumstance : for doubtless, it contributed its share in procuring that run upon the representation, which continued for several days. Natural curiosity prompted many to make trial, whether there was any difference

between a play written by a clergyman, and one of another author. And a concern of the fate of such a person excited the zeal and diligence of friends, to do all in their power to procure a full house, that the bold adventurer might be treated with respect and honor.

Some resolutions of the presbytery of Edinburgh seem to threaten, that public notice will be taken of this author and his associates by their superiors in the church. Whether this will be carried on, and if it be, whether they will be approved or censured; and if the last, to what degree, I pretend not to foretel. But one thing is certain, that it hath been, and will be, the subject of much thought and conversation among the laity of all ranks, and that it must have a very great influence upon the state of religion among us, in this part of the nation. That this influence will be for the better, though I resolve to examine the subject with all impartiality, I confess, I see little ground to hope. There is no doubt that it will be condemned by the great plurality of those who go by the appellation of the stricter sort. With them, it will bring a great reproach upon the church of Scotland, as containing one minister who writes for the stage, and many who think it no crime to attend the representation. It is true, no other consequences are to be apprehended from their displeasure, than the weakest of them being provoked to unchristian resentment, or tempted to draw rash and general conclusions from the conduct of a few to the character of the whole, or perhaps some of them separating from the established church, none of which effects of late have been much either feared or shunned. However, even on this account, it were to be wished, either that it had never happened, or that it could be shewn, to the conviction of unprejudiced minds, that it was a just and commendable action.

But, to be sure, the chief danger is, that in case it be really a bad thing, it must give very great offence, in the Scripture sense of that word, to those who are most apt to take it, viz. such as have least religion, or none at all. An offence is a stumbling-block over which the weak and unsteady are in danger of falling; that is

to say, it emboldens them to commit, and hardens them in the practice of sin. Now, if the stage is unlawful or dangerous to a Christian, those who are by inclination so addicted to it that it is already difficult to convince them of their error, must be greatly confirmed in this error, by the example and countenance of such as call themselves ministers of Christ. It has accordingly already occasioned more discourse among the gay part of the world, in defence or commendation of the stage, than past perhaps for some years preceding this event.

Nothing therefore can be more seasonable at this time, or necessary for the public good, than a careful and accurate discussion of this question, whether supporting and encouraging stage-plays, by writing, acting, or attending them, is consistent, or inconsistent, with the character of a Christian? It is to no purpose to confine the inquiry to this. Whether a minister is not appearing in an improper light, and misapplying his time and talents when he dedicates them to the service of the stage? That point would probably be given up by most, and those who would deny it do not merit a confutation. But if the matter is rested here, it will be considered only as a smaller misdemeanor, and though treated, or even condemned as such, it will still have the bad effect (upon supposition of theatrical amusements being wrong and sinful) of greatly promoting them, though we seem to be already as much given to them as even worldly considerations will allow.

The self-denying apologies common with authors, of their being sensible of their unfitness for the task they undertake, their doing it to stir up a better hand, and so on, I wholly pass, having never read any of them with approbation. Prudence is good, and I would not willingly lose sight of it, but zeal and concern for the glory of God, and faithfulness to the souls of others, are duties equally necessary in their place, but much more rare. How far I am sensible of my own unfitness for treating this subject, and of the reputation that is risked by attempting it, the world is not obliged to believe upon my own testimony; but in whatever degree it be, it is greatly overbalanced at present, by a view of the declining state of religion a-

mong us, the prevalence of national sins, and the danger of delolating judgments.

It is some discouragement in this attempt, that it is very uncertain whether many of those, for whose sakes it is chiefly intended, and who stand most in need of information upon the subject, will take the pains to look into it. Such a levity of spirit prevails in this age, that very few persons of fashion will read or consider any thing that is written in a grave or serious style. Whoever will look into the monthly catalogues of books, published in Britain for some years past, may be convinced of this at one glance. What an immense proportion do romances, under the titles of lives, adventures, memoirs, histories, &c. bear to any other sort of production in this age? Perhaps therefore it may be thought that it would have been more proper to have gratified the public taste, by raising up some allegorical structure, and handling this subject in the way of wit and humor; especially as it seems to be a modern principle, that ridicule is the test of truth, and as there seems to be so large a fund for mirth, in the character of a stage-playing priest. But, though I deny not the lawfulness of using ridicule in some cases, or even its propriety here, yet I am far from thinking it is the test of truth. It seems to be more proper for correction than for instruction; and though it may be fit enough to whip an offender, it is not unusual, nor unsuitable, first to expostulate a little with him, and shew him that he deserves it. Besides, every man's talent is not equally fit for it, and indeed, now the matter seems to have been carried beyond a jest, and to require a very serious consideration.

There is also, besides some discouragement, a real difficulty in entering on this disquisition. It will be hard to know in what manner to reason, or on what principles to build. It were easy to shew the unlawfulness of stage-plays, by such arguments as would appear conclusive to those who already hate both them and their supporters: but it is not so easy to make it appear to those who chiefly frequent them, because they will both applaud and justify some of the very things that others look upon as the worst effects of the practice, and will deny the very principles

on which they are condemned. The truth is, it is our having different views of the nature of religion, that causes different opinions upon this subject. For many ages there was no debate upon it at all. There were players, but they did not pretend to be Christians themselves, and they had neither countenance nor support from any who did. Whereas now, there are abundance of advocates for the lawfulness, some for the usefulness, of plays; not that the stage is become more pure, but that Christians are become less so, and have lowered the standard or measure requisite to attain and preserve that character.

But there is still another difficulty, that whoever undertakes to write against plays, though the provocation is given by what they are, is yet always called upon to attack them, not as they are, but as they might be. A writer on this subject is actually reduced to the necessity of fighting with a shadow, of maintaining a combat with an ideal or imaginary sort of drama, which never yet existed, but which the defenders of the cause form by way of supposition, and which shall appear, in fact, in that happy future age, which shall see, what these gentlemen are pleased to style, a well regulated stage. However little support may seem to be given by this to a vicious and corrupted stage there is no attender of plays but, when he hears this chimera defended, imagines it is his own cause that is espoused, and with great composure and self-satisfaction, continues his practice. A conduct not less absurd, than if one who was expressly assured a certain dish of meat before him was poisoned, should answer thus, All meat is not poisoned, and therefore I may eat this with safety.

It is very plain, that were men but seriously disposed, and without prejudice desiring the knowledge of their duty, it would not be necessary, in order to show the unlawfulness of the stage, as it now is, to combat it in its imaginary reformed state. Such a reformation, were not men by the prevalence of vicious and corrupt affections, in love with it, even in its present condition, would have been long ago given up as a hopeless and vi-

sionary project, and the whole trade or employment detested, on account of the abuses that had always adhered to it. But since all advocates for the stage have and do still defend it in this manner, by forming an idea of it separate from its evil qualities; since they defend it so far with success, that many who would otherwise abstain, do, upon this very account, allow themselves in attending the theatre sometimes, to their own hurt and that of others; and, as I am convinced on the most mature deliberation, that the reason why there never was a well regulated stage, in fact, is because it cannot be, the nature of the thing not admitting of it; I will endeavor to shew, that PUBLIC THEATRICAL REPRESENTATIONS, either tragedy or comedy, are, in their general nature or in their best possible state, unlawful, contrary to the purity of our religion; and that writing, acting or attending them, is inconsistent with the character of a Christian. If this be done with success, it will give great weight to the reflections which shall be added upon the aggravation of the crime, considering the circumstances that at present attend the practice.

But, though I have thus far complied with the unreasonable terms imposed by the advocates for this amusement, they must not proceed to any higher demand, nor expect, because they have prevailed to have plays considered in the way that they themselves desire, that therefore the same thing must be done by religion, and that it must be lowered down to the descriptions they are sometimes pleased to give of it. I will by no means attack plays upon the principles of modern relaxed morality. In that case, to be sure, it would be a lost cause. If some late writers on the subject of morals be permitted to determine what are the ingredients that must enter into the composition of a good man, that good man, it is agreed, may much more probably be found in the play-house than in any other place. But what belongs to the character of a Christian must be taken from the holy Scriptures, the word of the living God. Notwithstanding therefore, that through the great degeneracy of the age, and very culpable relaxation of discipline, not

a few continue to be called Christians, who are a reproach to the name, and support and countenance one another in many practices contrary to the purity of the Christian profession, I shall beg leave still to recur to the unerring standard, and to consider, not what many nominal Christians are, but what every real Christian ought to be.

In so doing I think I shall reason justly; and at the same time it is my resolution, not only to speak the sense, but, as often as possible, the very language and phrases of the Scripture, and of our pious fathers. These are either become venerable to me for their antiquity, or they are much fitter for expressing the truths of the gospel, and delineating the character and duty of a disciple of Christ, than any that have been invented in later times. As the growth or decay of vegetable nature is often so gradual as to be insensible; so in the moral world, verbal alterations, which are counted as nothing, do often introduce real changes, which are firmly established before their approach is so much as suspected. Were the style, not only of some modern essays, but of some modern sermons, to be introduced upon this subject, it would greatly weaken the argument, though no other alteration should be made. Should we every where put virtue for holiness, honor, or even moral sense for conscience, improvement of the heart for sanctification, the opposition between such things and theatrical entertainments would not appear half so sensible.

By taking up the argument in the light now proposed, I am saved, in a great measure, from the repetition of what has been written by other authors on the subject. But let it be remembered, that they have clearly and copiously shewn the corruption and impurity of the stage and its adherents, since its first institution, and that both in the heathen and Christian world. They have made it undeniably appear, that it was opposed and condemned by the best and wisest men, both heathens and Christians in every age*. Its very defenders do all pretend to

* Particularly at Athens, where it first had its birth, both tragedy and comedy were soon abolished by public authority; and among the Romans, though this and other public shows

blame the abuse of it. They do indeed alledge that this abuse is not essential to it, but may be separated from it; however, all of them, so far as I have seen, represent this separation as only possible or future; they never attempt to assign any æra in which it could be defended as it then was, or could be affirmed to be more profitable than hurtful. Some writers do mention a few particular plays of which they give their approbation. But these have never yet, in any age or place, amounted to such a number, as to keep one society of players in constant employment, without a mixture of many more that are confessedly pernicious. The only reason of bringing this in view at present when it is not to be insisted on, is, that it ought to procure a fair and candid hearing to this attempt to prove, That the stage, after the greatest improvement of which it is capable, is still inconsistent with the purity of the Christian profession. It is a strong presumptive evidence in favor of this assertion, that, after so many years trial, such improvement has never actually taken place.

were permitted in a certain degree, yet so cautious were that wise people of suffering them to be frequent, that they did not permit any public theatre, when occasionally erected, to continue above a certain number of days. Even that erected by M. Scæurus, which is said to have cost so immense a sum as a million sterling, was speedily taken down. Pompey the Great was the first who had power and credit enough to get a theatre continued.

The opinion of Seneca may be seen in the following passage:—*Nil est tam damnosum bonis moribus, quam in aliquo spectaculo delectare. Tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia surrepunt.*

As to the primitive Christians, see *Constit. Apost. lib. 8. cap. 32.* where actors and stage-players are enumerated among those who are not to be admitted to baptism. Many different councils appoint that they shall renounce their arts before they be admitted, and if they return to them shall be excommunicated. *Tertullian de Spectaculis, cap. 22.* observes, That the heathens themselves marked them with infamy, and excluded them from all honors and dignity. To the same purpose see *Aug. de Civ. Dei. lib. 2. cap. 14.* *“Actores poeticarum fabularum remouent a societate civitatis—ab honoribus omnibus repellunt homines scenicos.”*

The opinion of moderns is well known, few Christian writers of any eminence having failed to pronounce sentence against the stage.

It is perhaps also proper here to obviate a pretence, in which the advocates of the stage greatly glory, that there is no express prohibition of it to be found in scripture. I think a countryman of our own* has given good reasons to believe, that the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. v. ver. 4. by “filthiness, foolish talking and “jesting,” intended to prohibit the plays that were then in use. He also thinks it probable, that the word *Komois* used in more places than one, and translated “revelling,” points at the same thing. Whether his conjectures are just or not, it is very certain that these, and many other passages, forbid the abuses of the stage; and if these abuses be inseparable from it, as there is reason to believe, there needed no other prohibition of them to every Christian. Nay, if they never had been separated from it till that time, it was sufficient: and it would be idle to expect that the scripture should determine this problematical point, Whether they would ever be so in any after age. To ask that there should be produced a prohibition of the stage, as a stage, universally, is to prescribe to the Holy Ghost, and to require that the scripture should not only forbid sin, but every form in which the restless and changeable dispositions of men shall think fit to be guilty of it, and every name by which they shall think proper to call it. I do not find in scripture any express prohibition of masquerades, routs and drums; and yet I have not the least doubt, that the assemblies called by these names, are contrary to the will of God, and as bad, if not worse, than the common and ordinary entertainments of the stage.

In order to make this inquiry as exact and accurate as possible, and that the strength or weakness of the arguments on either side, may be clearly perceived, it will be proper to state distinctly, what we understand by the stage, or stage-plays, when it is affirmed, that in their most improved and best regulated state, they are unlawful to Christians. This is the more necessary, that there is a great indistinctness and ambiguity in the language used by those

* The late Mr. Anderson.

who, in writing or conversation, undertake to defend it. They analyze and divide it into parts, and take sometimes one part, sometimes another, as will best suit their purpose. They ask, What there can be unlawful in the stage abstractedly considered? Comedy is exposing the folly of vice, and pointing out the ridiculous part of every character. And is not this commendable? Is not ridicule a noble means of discountenancing vice? And is not the use of it warranted by the satire and irony that is to be found in the holy scriptures? Tragedy, they say, is promoting the same end in a way more grave and solemn. It is a moral lecture, or a moral picture, in which virtue appears to great advantage. What is history itself, but representing the characters of men as they actually were, and plays represent them as they may be. In their perfection, plays are as like history and nature, as the poet's art and actor's skill can make them. Is it then the circumstance of their being written in dialogue, that renders them criminal? Who will pretend that? Is it that they are publicly repeated or acted over? Will any one pretend, that it is a crime to personate a character in any case, even where no deceit is intended? Then farewell parables, figures of speech, and the whole oratorical art. Is it a sin to look upon the representation? Then it must be a sin to look upon the world, which is the original, of which plays are the copy.

This is the way which those who appear in defence of the stage ordinarily take, and it is little better than if one should say, What is a stage-play? It is nothing else abstractedly considered but a company of men and women talking together; Where is the harm in that? What hinders them from talking piously and profitably, as well as wickedly or hurtfully? But, rejecting this method of reasoning as unjust and inconclusive, let it be observed, that those who plead for the lawfulness of the stage in any country, however well regulated, plead for what implies, not by accident, but essentially and of necessity the following things. (1.) Such a number of plays as will furnish an habitual course of representations, with such changes as the love of variety in human nature necessarily

requires. (2.) These plays of such a kind, as to procure an audience of voluntary spectators, who are able and willing to pay for being so entertained. (3.) A company of hired players, who have this as their only business and occupation, that they may give themselves wholly to it, and be expert in the performance. (4.) The representation must be so frequent as that the profits may defray the expense of the apparatus, and maintain those who follow this business. They must also be maintained in that measure of luxury, or elegance, if you please, which their way of life, and the thoughts to which they are accustomed must make them desire and require. It is a thing impracticable to maintain a player at the same expense as you may maintain a peasant.

Now all these things do, and must enter into the idea of a well regulated stage; and, if any defend it without supposing this, he hath no adversary that I know of. Without these there may be poets, or there may be plays, but there cannot be a play-house. It is in vain then to go about to show, that there have been an instance or two, or may be, of treatises wrote in the form of plays, that are unexceptionable. It were easy to shew very great faults in some of those most universally applauded, but this is unnecessary. I believe it is very possible to write a treatise in the form of a dialogue, in which the general rules of the drama are observed, which shall be as holy and serious, as any sermon that ever was preached or printed. Neither is there any apparent impossibility in getting different persons to assume the different characters, and rehearse it in society. But it may be safely affirmed, that if all plays were of that kind, and human nature to continue in its present state, the doors of the play-house would shut of their own accord, because nobody would demand access;* unless there were an act of parliament to force attendance, and even in that case, as much pains would

* This furnishes an easy answer to what is remarked by some in favor of plays, that several eminent Christians have endeavored to supplant bad plays by writing good ones; as Gregory Nazienzen, a father of the church, and a person of great piety, and our countryman Buchanan. But did ever these plays

probably be taken to evade the law obliging to attend, as are now taken to evade those that command us to abstain. The fair and plain state of this question then is, Whether it is possible or practicable in the present state of human nature, to have the above system of things under so good a regulation, as to make the erecting and countenancing the stage agreeable to the will of God, and consistent with the purity of the Christian profession.

And here let us consider a little what is the primary, and immediate intention of the stage, Whether it be for amusement and recreation, or for instruction to make men wise and good. Perhaps, indeed, the greatest part will choose to compound these two purposes together, and say it is for both: for amusement immediately, and for improvement ultimately, that it instructs by pleasing, and reforms by stealth. The patrons of a well regulated stage have it no doubt in their power to profess any of these ends in it they please, if it is equally capable of them all; and therefore in one part or other of this discourse, it must be considered in every one of these lights. But as it is of moment, because of some of the arguments to be afterwards produced, let the reader be pleased to consider, how far recreation and amusement enter into the nature of the stage, and are, not only immediately and primarily, but chiefly and ultimately, intended by it.

If the general nature of it, or the end proposed from it when well regulated, can be any way determined from its first institution, and the subsequent practice, it seems plainly to point at amusement. The earliest productions of that kind that are now extant, are evidently incapable of any other use, and hardly even of that to a person of any taste or judgment.* They usually accompanied the

come into repute? Were they formerly, or are they now acted upon the stage? the fate of their works proves that these good men judged wrong in attempting to reform the stage, and that the great majority of Christians acted more wisely who were for laying it wholly aside.

* This is confessed by a defender of the stage, who says, "Such of the comedies before his (that is Menander's) time, as have been preserved to us, are generally very poor pieces,

feasts of the ancients in the houses of the rich and opulent*, and were particularly used in times of public rejoicing. They have indeed generally been considered, in all ages, as intended for entertainment. A modern author of high rank and reputation†, who would not willingly hurt the cause, considers them in this light, and this alone, and represents their improvement, not as lying in their having a greater moral tendency, but in the perfection of the poet's art, and the refinement of the taste of the audience. It is only of late that men have begun to dignify them with a higher title. Formerly they were ever considered as an indulgence of pleasure, and an article of luxury, but now they are exalted into schools of virtue, and represented as bulwarks against vice. It is probable, most readers will be apt to smile when they hear them so called, and to say to their defenders, This is but overdoing, preserve them to us as innocent amusements, and we shall not much contend for their usefulness. It is indeed but an evidence of the distress of the cause for their advocates only take up this plea when they are unable to answer the arguments against them upon any other footing. It may also appear that they are designed for amusement, if we consider who have been the persons in all ages who have attended them, viz. the rich, the young, and the gay, those who live in pleasure, and the very business of whose lives is amusement.

But not to insist on these circumstances, I think it is plain from the nature of the thing, that the immediate intention of plays is to please, whatever effects may be pretended to flow afterwards, or by accident, from this

“not so much ludicrous as ridiculous, even a mountebank's
“merry andrew would be hissed, now a days, for such pueri-
“lities as we see abounding in *Aristophanes*.” Rem. on An-
derson's Positions concerning the unlawfulness of stage-plays,
page 8th.

* Plut. de Glor. Athen. & Sympos. lib. 7. quest. 8. “As
“for the new comedy, it is so necessary an ingredient of all
“public entertainments, that so to speak, one may as well make
“a feast without wine, as without Menander.”

† Shaftsbury.

pleasure. They consist in an exact imitation of nature, and the conformity of the personated to real characters. This is the great aim, and the great perfection, both of the poet and of the actors. Now this imitation, of itself, gives great pleasure to the spectator, whether the actions represented are good or bad. And, in itself considered, it gives only pleasure; for the beauty of the imitation, as such, hath no moral influence, nor any connexion with morality, but what it may derive in a distant way from the nature of the actions which the poet or actors choose to represent, or the spectators are willing to see. Every person who thinks impartially, may be from this convinced, that to please, or attempt to do so, is essential to the stage, and its first, or rather its main design; how far it pollutes or purifies is accidental, and must depend upon the skill and honesty of its regulators and managers.

Having thus prepared the way, the following arguments are humbly offered to the consideration of every serious person, to shew, that a public theatre is inconsistent with the purity of the Christian profession: which if they do not to all appear to be each of them singly conclusive, will I hope, when taken together, sufficiently evince the truth of the proposition.

In the first place. If it be considered as an amusement, it is improper, and not such as any Christian may lawfully use. Here we must begin by laying it down as a fundamental principle, that all men are bound supremely to love, and habitually to serve God; that is to say, to take his law as the rule, and his glory as the end, not of one, but of all their actions. No man, at any time or place is, nor can be, absolved from this obligation. Every real Christian lives under an habitual sense of it. I know this expression, aiming, at the glory of God, is called a cant phrase, and is despised and derided by world-men. It were easy however, to vindicate it from reason; but it will suffice, to all those for whose use this discourse is intended, to say, it is a truth taught and repeated in the sacred oracles, that all things were made for, that all things shall finally tend to, and therefore, that all intelli-

gent creatures should supremely and uniformly aim at the glory of God.

Now, we glorify God by cultivating holy dispositions, and doing pious and useful actions. Recreation is an intermission of duty, and is only necessary because of our weakness; it must be some action indifferent in its nature, which becomes lawful and useful from its tendency to refresh the mind, and invigorate it for duties of more importance. The use of recreation is precisely the same as the use of sleep; though they differ in this, that here is but one way in which sleep becomes sinful, viz. by excess, whereas there are ten thousand ways in which recreations become sinful. It is needless to produce passages of Scripture to verify the above assertion concerning our obligation to glorify God. It is the language of the whole, and is particularly applied to indifferent actions by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. x. 13. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

If there were on the minds of men in general, a just sense of this their obligation, stage-plays, nay, and a thousand other amusements now in use, would never have been heard of. The truth is, the need of amusement is much less than people commonly apprehend, and, where it is not necessary, it must be sinful. Those who stand in need of recreation may be divided into two sorts, such as are employed in bodily labor, and such as have their spirits often exhausted by study and application of mind. As to the first of these, a mere cessation from labor is sufficient for refreshment, and indeed of itself gives great pleasure, unless when the appetites are inflamed and irritated by frequent sensual gratifications; and then they are importunately craved, and become necessary to fill the intervals of work. Of this sort very few are able to afford so expensive a recreation as the stage. And even as to the other, viz. those whose spirits are exhausted by application of mind, only a very small number of them will chuse the diversion of the stage, for this very good reason, that social converse and bodily exercise, will answer the purpose much better.

Indeed, if we consider the just and legitimate end of recreations, and compare it with the persons who most frequently engage in them, we shall find, that ninety-nine of every hundred are such as do not need recreation at all. Perhaps their time lies heavy upon their hands, and they feel an uneasiness and impatience under their present state ; but this is not from work, but from idleness, and from the emptiness and unsatisfying nature of the enjoyments, which they chase with so much eagerness, one after another, vainly seeking from them that good which they do not contain, and that satisfaction which they cannot impart.

From this I think it undeniably appears, that if no body were to attend the stage, but such as really needed recreation or amusement, upon Christian principles, and of these such only as were able to pay for it, and of these only such as did themselves chuse it, there is not a place this day in the world so large as to afford a daily audience. It will be immediately objected, This argument, make as much of it as you please, is not complete, for it hinders not but that some, however few, may attend in a proper manner, and with warrantable views. But let it be remembered, that I attack not a play singly as a play, nor one person for being a witness to a thing of that nature, but the stage as a system containing all the branches I have enumerated above. This cannot subsist without a full audience, and frequent attendance ; and therefore is, by its constitution, a constant and powerful invitation to sin, and cannot be maintained but by the commission of it. Perhaps some will still object, that this argument is too finely spun, that it seems to demand perfection, and to find fault with every practice, in which there is a probability that sin will be committed. That, if this holds, we should no more contribute to the establishment of churches than play-houses, because we have a moral certainty, that no congregation ever will meet together on earth, but much sin will be committed, both by minister and people. But there is a great difference between a commanded duty which is attended with sin by defect, and what is nowhere commanded, which necessarily invites to sin by its

nature, and is in substance sinful to the great majority of those who attend it.

But farther, the stage is an improper, that is to say, an unlawful recreation to all without exception, because it consumes too much time. This is a circumstance which, however little impression it may make upon those who find their time often a burden, will appear of the greatest moment to every serious Christian. In proportion as any man improves in holiness of heart, he increases in usefulness of life, and acquires a deeper and stronger sense of the worth and value of time. To spend an hour unprofitably, appears to such a person a greater crime, than to many the commission of gross sin. And, indeed it ought to appear very heinous in the eyes of those who believe the representation given by our Lord Jesus Christ, of his own procedure at the day of judgment, “Cast ye the un-
“PROFITABLE servant into utter darkness, where there
“shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” Matt. xxv. 30. Mark this, ye lovers of pleasure, ye sons of gaiety and mirth, who imagine you are sent unto the world for no higher end than your own entertainment; and who, if you are free from, or able any how to palliate your grosser sins, never once reflect on the heavy account against you of wasted time.

Though there were no other objection against the stage as a recreation, but this one, it is surely faulty. If recreations are only lawful because necessary, they must cease to be lawful when they are no longer necessary. The length and duration of regular comedy and tragedy is already fixed and settled by rules of long standing; and, I suppose, whatever other circumstance may be confessed to need reformation, all men of taste will agree, that these shall continue as they are. Now I leave to all who know how much time the preparation for such a public appearance, and the necessary attendance, must take up, to judge, whether it is not too much to be given to mere recreation.

This holds particularly in the case of recreation of mind, between which and bodily exercise there is a very great difference. For bodily exercise in some cases, for ex-

ample, when the health requires it may be continued for a long time, only for this reason, that it may have effects lasting in proportion to the time spent in it. But giving the mind to pleasure by way of recreation must be short, or it is certainly hurtful ; it gives men a habit of idleness and trifling, and makes them averse from returning to any thing that requires serious application. So true is this, and so applicable to the present case, that I could almost rest the whole argument upon it, that no man, who has made the trial, can deliberately and with a good conscience affirm, that attending plays has added strength to his mind, and warmth to his affections, in the duties of devotion ; that it has made him more able and willing to exert his intellectual powers in the graver and more important offices of the Christian life ; nay, or even made him more diligent and active in the business of civil life. On the contrary, it is commonly of such length as to produce a satiety and weariness of itself, and to require rest and refreshment to recruit the exhausted spirits, a thing quite absurd and self-contradictory in what is called a recreation.

But the stage is not merely an unprofitable consumption of time, it is further improper as a recreation, because it agitates the passions too violently, and interests too deeply, so as, in some cases, to bring people into a real, while they behold an imaginary distress. Keeping in view the end of recreation, will enable us to judge rightly of this. It is to refresh and invigorate the mind.—Therefore when, instead of rest, which is properly called relaxation of mind, recreations are used, their excellence consists in their being, not only a pleasant, but an easy exercise of the intellectual powers. Whatever is difficult, and either requires or causes a strong application of mind, is contrary to their intention. Now it is plain, that dramatic representations fix the attention so very deeply, and interest the affections so very strongly, that, in a little time, they fatigue the mind themselves, and however eagerly are they desired and followed, there are many serious and useful occupations, in which men will continue lon-

ger, without exhausting the spirits, than in attending the theatre.

Indeed, in this respect they are wholly contrary to what should be the view of every Christian. He ought to set bounds to, and endeavor to moderate his passions as much as possible, instead of voluntarily and unnecessarily exciting them. The human passions, since the fall, are all of them but ~~two~~ strong; and are not sinful on account of their weakness, but their excess and misapplication. This is so generally true, that it hardly admits of an exception; unless it might be counted an exception, that some vicious passions, when they gain an ascendancy, extinguish others which oppose their gratification. For, though religion is consistent throughout, there are many vices, which are mutually repugnant to, and destructive of, each other. But this exception has little or no effect upon the present argument.

Now the great care of every Christian, is to keep his passions and affections within due bounds, and to direct them to their proper objects. With respect to the first of these, the chief influence of theatrical representations upon the spectator, is to strengthen the passions by indulgence; for there they are all exhibited in a lively manner, and such as is most fit to communicate the impression. As to directing them to their proper objects, it will be afterwards shown, that the stage has rather the contrary effect; in the mean time, it is sufficient to observe, that it may be done much more effectually, and much more safely another way.

This tendency of plays to interest the affections, shows their impropriety as a recreation on another account. It shows that they must be exceeding liable to abuse by excess, even supposing them in a certain degree to be innocent. It is certain there is no life more unworthy of a man, hardly any more criminal in a Christian, than a life of perpetual amusement, a life where no valuable purpose is pursued, but the intellectual faculties wholly employed in purchasing and indulging sensual gratifications. It is also certain, that all of us are by nature too much inclined thus to live to ourselves, and not to God. There,

fore, where recreations are necessary, a watchful Christian will particularly beware of those that are insinuating, and, by being too grateful and delicious, ready to lead to excess. This discriminating care and caution, is just as much the duty of a Christian, as any that can be named. Though it is immediately conversant only about the temptations and incitements to sin, and not the actual commission of it, it becomes a duty directly binding, both from the command of God, and the necessity of the thing itself. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," Mat. xxvi. 41. says our Saviour to all his disciples; and elsewhere, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch," Mark xiii. 37. And the apostle Paul to the same purpose, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil," Eph. v. 15.

If we consider the light in which the Scripture sets our present situation, and the account there given of the weakness of human resolution, the same thing will evidently appear to be our duty. It is impossible that we can resist the slightest temptation, but by the assistance of divine grace. Now how can this be expected, if we put our constancy to unnecessary trials, not only contrary to reason, and a prudent regard to our own safety, but in the face of an express command of God to be watchful. "Lord, lead us not into temptation," is a petition which we are taught to offer up, by him who knew what was in man. But how much do those act in opposition to this, and even in contempt of it, who make temptations to themselves. And are not stage-plays temptations of the strongest kind, in which the mind is softened with pleasure, and the affections powerfully excited? How little reason is there to hope that men in the use of them will keep within the bounds of moderation? If any expect, in such circumstances, to be preserved by divine power, they are guilty of the sin, which is in Scripture called "tempting God."

It is this very circumstance, a liableness to abuse by excess, that renders many other amusements also ordinarily unlawful to Christians, though, perhaps, in their ge-

neral nature, they cannot be shown to be criminal. Thus it is not easy to refute the reasonings, by which ingenious men endeavor to show that games of hazard are not in themselves sinful; but by their enticing, insinuating nature, and the excess which almost inseparably accompanies them, there can be no difficulty in pronouncing them highly dangerous, lawful to very few persons, and in very few cases. And, if they were as public in their nature as plays, if they required the concurrence of as many operators, and as great a number of persons to join in them, I could have little scruple in affirming, that, in every possible case, they would be sinful.

The preceding considerations are greatly confirmed by the following, That when plays are chosen as a recreation, for which they are so exceedingly improper, it is always in opposition to other methods of recreation, which are perfectly fit for the purpose, and not liable to any of these objections. Where recreations are necessary, if there were only one sort to be had, some inconveniences could not be so strong an argument against the use of them. But where there are different kinds, to prefer those which are less, to those which are more fit, must needs be sinful. Such a tenderness and circumspection is indeed, in this age, so rare and unusual, that I am afraid, it will be almost impossible to fix a sense of its importance upon the mind of the reader: or, if it be done, in any measure for a time, the example of a corrupt world, who are altogether void of it, will immediately efface the impression. But, however few may "have ears to hear it," the thing is certain, that as the progress of his sanctification is the supreme desire and care of every Christian, so he is continually liable to be seduced by temptation, and infected by example; and therefore, from a distrust of his own resolution, will not voluntarily and unnecessarily prefer a dangerous to a safe amusement. To prefer a very difficult and doubtful means of attaining any worldly end, to one sure and easy; to prefer a clumsy improper instrument, to one perfectly fit for any piece of work, would be reckoned no

small evidence of folly in the affairs of civil life. If one in sickness should chuse a medicine of a very questionable nature of very dangerous and uncertain operation, when he had equal access to one intirely safe, of approved reputation and superior efficacy, it would be esteemed next to madness. Is there not then a real conformity between the cases? Is not a like care to be taken of our souls as of our bodies? Nay, is not the obligation so much the stronger, by how much the one is of greater value than the other? The different conduct of men, and their different fate in this respect, is well described by the wise man, "Happy is the man that feareth always, but "he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief," Prov. xxviii. 14.

It ought not to be omitted in shewing the impropriety of the stage as a recreation and amusement for Christians, that it is costly and expensive, and that this cost is altogether unnecessary, since the end might be obtained, not only as well, but much better, at a far cheaper rate; perhaps, in most cases, at no expence at all. I know this argument will be treated with great contempt by those who live in affluence, and know no other use of riches but to feed their appetites, and make all the rest of mankind subservient to the gratification of their violent and ungovernable desires. But though none in this world have any title to hinder them from disposing of their wealth as they please, they must be called to consider, that they have a master in heaven. To him they must render an account at the last day, and, in this account, the use that they make of their riches is not to be excepted. The great have, no doubt, the distinguished honor, if they please to embrace it, of contributing to the happiness of multitudes under them, and dispensing, under God, a great variety of the comforts of this life. But it would abate the envy and impatience of the lower part of the world, and moderate their appetite after riches, if they would consider, that the more that is committed to them, the more they have to account for. The greatest and richest man on earth hath not any licence in the word of God, for an unnecessary waste of his substance, or con-

suming it in unprofitable and hurtful pleasures; and, under the one or both of these characters, that must fall, that is laid out upon the stage.

Let not any reader, who cannot find a satisfying answer to these objections against the stage as an unchristian amusement, from the word of God, take the practice of the world as a refuge or sanctuary, and say, This is carrying matters to an extreme; If these maxims are rigidly adhered to, you will exclude from the number of Christians, not only the far greater part of mankind, but many otherwise of excellent and amiable characters. Though this is the weakest of all arguments, it is, perhaps, that which hath of all others the strongest effect, and most powerfully contributes to set people's minds at ease in a doubtful or dangerous practice. How hard is it to make men sensible of the evil of such sins as custom authorises, and fashion justifies? There is no making them ashamed of them, because they are common and reputable, and there is no making them afraid of what they see done, without suspicion by numbers on every hand. But is there any reason to believe, that the example of others will prove a just and valid excuse for any practice at the judgment seat of Christ? Will the greatness or the number of offenders screen them from his power? Or can that man expect a gracious acceptance with him, who has suffered his commands to be qualified by prevailing opinion, and would not follow him farther than the bulk of mankind would bear him company.

I shall close the reflections upon this part of the subject by observing, that there are two general characters of the disciples of Christ, which will appear, if we consult the scriptures, to be essential to them, and which seem altogether inconsistent with theatrical amusements. The first is self-denial and mortification. Though we should not insist upon the particular objections against the stage, there is something of pomp and gaiety in it, on the best possible supposition, that is inconsistent with the character of a Christian. The gospel is the religion of sinners, who are saved from wrath by the rich mercy and free grace of God. The life of such then, must be a life of

penitence, humility and mortification. The followers of a crucified Saviour must bear the cross, and tread in the same path of suffering and self-denial, in which he hath gone before them. In their baptismal covenant they renounce the world, by which is not meant such gross crimes as are a violation of natural light, as well as a transgression of the law of God, but that excessive attachment to present indulgence, which is more properly expressed by the pomp and vanity of the world*. It is true there are many precepts in Scripture, which require us to maintain an habitual gratitude and thankful frame of spirit, nay, to rejoice in the Lord always. But there is a great difference between this joy, and that of worldly men; as they do not rise from the same source, so they cannot possibly express themselves in the same way.

* It is not improper here to consider the ancient form of baptism, and what was supposed by the fathers to be implied in it, Apost. Const. lib. 7. cap. 41. *apotassomai to satana*, &c. "I renounce satan and his works, and his pomps, and his service, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that belong to him, or are subject to him." Ambros. de Initiatis. *Ingressus es regenerationis sacrum*, &c.—"Thou hast entered into the holy place of regeneration; repeat what you were there asked, and recollect what you answered. You renounced the devil, and his works, and his world, and his luxury and pleasures." Hieron. Com. in Matt. xv. 26. *Renuntio tibi diabole*, &c. "I renounce thee, satan, and thy pomp, and thy vices, and thy world, which lieth in wickedness." And that we may know what they had particularly in view by the pomps of the world which they renounced, they are sometimes expressly said to be the public shows. Thus Salvian de Provident. lib. 6. page 197. *Quæ est enim in baptismo*, &c. "For what is the first profession of a Christian in baptism? What, but that they profess to renounce the devil, and his pomps, his shows, and his works. Therefore shows and pomps, by our own confession, are the works of the devil. How, O Christian, wilt thou follow the public shows after baptism, which thou confessest to be the works of the devil?"

There are some who pretend, that Christians were only kept from the shows, because they were mixed with idolatrous rites; but it is to be noted, that in the time of Salvian, idolatry was abolished, and the shows were no longer exhibited in honor of idol gods. Cyril of Jerusalem also, after idolatry was destroyed, continues the charge against the shows.

Another branch of the Christian temper, between which and theatrical amusements, there appears a very great opposition, is spirituality and heavenliness of mind. All real Christians are, and account themselves pilgrims and strangers on the earth, set their affections on things above, and have their conversation in heaven. Whatever tends to weaken these dispositions, they will carefully avoid, as contrary to their duty and their interest. Is not this the case with theatrical amusements? Are they not very delicious to a sensual and carnal mind? Do they not excite, gratify, and strengthen these affections, which it is most the business of a Christian to restrain? Are not the indulgence of worldly pleasure, and heavenliness of mind, mutually destructive of each other? This is so plain, that anciently those who gave themselves up to a life of eminent holiness and piety, used to retire wholly from the commerce of the world and the society of men. Though this was wrong in itself, and soon found to be very liable to superstitious abuse, it plainly shows how much they err upon the opposite side, who being called to wean the affections from the world, do yet voluntarily and unnecessarily indulge themselves in the most delicious and intoxicating pleasures.

What is offered above, I hope, will suffice to show that the stage, considered simply as an entertainment, cannot be lawfully used by a Christian. But we must now proceed in the second place, To consider the modern pretence, that it is useful and instructive; or, to speak in the language of one of its defenders, "A warm incentive to virtue, and powerful preservative against vice."* The same author gives us this account of tragedy: "True tragedy is a serious lecture upon our duty, shorter than an epic poem, and longer than a fable, otherwise differing from both only in the method, which is dialogue instead of narration; its province is to bring us in love with the more exalted virtues, and to create a detestation of the blacker and (humanly speaking) more enormous

* Remarks on Anderson's Positions concerning the unlawfulness of stage-plays.

“ crimes.” On comedy he says, “ an insinuating mirth
 “ laughs us out of our frailties by making us ashamed of
 “ them. Thus, when they are well intended, tragedy
 “ and comedy work to one purpose, the one manages us
 “ as children, the other convinces us as men.”

In order to treat this part of the subject with precision, I must beg the reader to recal to mind the account formerly given of what is implied in the stage, even under the best possible regulation; because, unless this be allowed me, I confess the argument to be defective. It is not denied, that there may be, and are to be found, in some dramatic performances, noble and excellent sentiments. These indeed are much fewer than is commonly supposed, as might be shewn by an examination of some of the most celebrated plays. There is a great difference between the shining thoughts that are applauded in the world by men of taste, and the solid and profitable truths of religion. However, it is allowed, that there are some things to be found in plays, against which no just objection can be made; and it is easy to form an idea of them still more pure than any that do yet exist; but the question is, Whether it is possible now to find, or reasonable to hope to find, such a number of pieces, in their prevailing tendency, agreeable to the holiness and purity of the Christian character, as are necessary to support a public theatre? Till this is accomplished, all that is done to support the theatre in the mean time, is done to support the interest of vice and wickedness; whatever it may be in itself, and singly considered. And if such an entire reformation be impossible, a partial reformation, or mixing a few good things with it, is not only ineffectual, but hurtful. It makes a bad cause a little more plausible, and therefore the temptation so much the more formidable.

There is a discourse of a foreigner of some note, in which he exerts all his eloquence in commendation of plays, when used in the public schools, for the improvement of youth in action and elocution, under the direction of their masters. As this gentleman was a clergyman, his authority is often used on this subject. But it ought to be observed, that as he was a young man when

he employed his eloquence in this cause, so, what he says, strongly supports the propriety of the distinction I have laid down. He expressly confines the argument to such plays as were represented by youths in the schools, and rejects with great abhorrence the public stage, and such as were acted by mercenary players. Of the last sort he hath the following strong words. “ At hic vereor A. ne qui sint
“ inter vos qui ex me quærant : Quid agis adolescens ?
“ Tune comædos, Histriones, mimos, ex eloquentiæ stu-
“ diosis facere paras ? Egone ? Histriones ? Quos ? An
“ viles illos qui in scenam prodeunt mercede conducti ?
“ Qui quæstus causa quamlibet personam induant ? Qui
“ passim per urbes vagantes artem suam venalem habent ?
“ Qui, merito, Romano jure, infamia notantur ?——Ab-
“ sit, a me absit, ut in hac impietatis schola teneros adoles-
“ centium animos eloquentia imbui velim. Quanticun-
“ que eam facio, tanti tamen non est. Satiùs esset baltu-
“ tire, imò satiùs mutum esse, quam non sine summo ani-
“ mi periculo eloquentiam discere*” Which passage may be translated thus ; “ But here I am afraid some of
“ you will be ready to challenge me, and to say, what is
“ this you aim at, young man ? Do you intend to make
“ all who study eloquence comedians, players, buffoons ?
“ Do I indeed ? What sort of players ? Those contempti-
“ ble wretches, who are hired to come upon the stage,
“ and who for gain will personate any character whatever ?
“ Who go about through different cities making merchan-
“ dize of their art ? Who are justly marked with infamy
“ in the Roman law ?——Far, far be it from me to pro-
“ pose, that the tender minds of youth should be taught
“ eloquence in this school of impiety. However much
“ I value it, I value it not at this rate. Better it were
“ they should stammer in speech, nay, better that they
“ were dumb and incapable of speech, than that they
“ should learn the art of eloquence, by putting their souls
“ in the most imminent danger.” Now, whether this au-
thor’s scheme was right or not, I have no occasion at pre-
sent to debate with him as an adversary, for he rejects with

* Werenfels’s *Oratio de Comædiis*.

abhorrence the imputation of favoring the cause against which I plead.

When a public theatre is defended as a means of instruction, I cannot help thinking it is of importance to observe, that it is a method altogether uncommanded and unauthorized in the word of God. This will probably appear a very weak argument to many, but it will not appear so to those who have a firm belief of, and a just esteem for that book of life. Such will not expect, that any method will prove effectually to make men "wise unto salvation," without the blessing of God, and they will hardly be induced to look for this blessing upon the stage. And let it be remembered, that it is now pleaded for in a higher light, and on a more important account, than merely as an amusement, viz. as proper to support the interest of religion; it should therefore have a positive warrant before it be employed in this cause, lest it should meet with the same reception that all other human devices will meet with, "Who hath required these things at your hands?"

And that none may use a delusory sort of reasoning, and shift from one pretence to another, saying, it becomes a lawful amusement by its tendency to instruct, and an effectual instruction by its power to please at the same time; it must be observed, that a sinful amusement is not to be indulged on any pretence whatsoever; for we must not "do evil, that good may come." Nay, call it only a dangerous amusement, even in that case, no pretence of possible or probable instruction (though such a thing were not contrary to the supposition) is sufficient to warrant it. Nothing less than its being necessary, could authorise the practice, and that I hope none will be so hardy as to affirm.

It can never be affirmed to be necessary, without a blasphemous impeachment of the divine wisdom. If the holy scriptures, and the methods there authorised and appointed, are full and sufficient for our spiritual improvement, all others must be wholly unnecessary. And if they are the most powerful and the most effectual means, no others must be suffered to come into rivalry and competition with them; on the contrary, they must be condemned as

wrong, or laid aside as comparatively weak. The truth is, the stage can never be defended on a more untenable footing, than when it is represented as having a moral or virtuous, that is to say, a pious or religious tendency. What Christian can hear such a plea with patience? Is the "law of the Lord perfect, converting the soul? Is it "able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work?" What then are its defects which must be supplied by the theatre? Have the saints of God, for so many ages, been carried safely through all the dark and difficult steps of their earthly pilgrimage, with his law as a "light to their feet, and a lamp to their path," and yet is it now necessary, that they should have additional illumination from a well regulated stage? Have there been for so long a time pastors employed, bearing a divine commission? ordinances administered according divine institution? Have these been hitherto effectual for "perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, "and for edifying the body of Christ?" And shall we not count them among the scoffers that were to come in the last days, who pretend to open a new commission for the players to assist? If any shall say, there needs no divine institution, all men are called to instruct one another, "the lips of the righteous should feed many," and this way of the drama is but a mode of the instruction we all owe to one another. I answer. it is as a mode I attack it. This very mode has been shown to be dangerous, nay sinful, as an amusement; who then can show its necessity, in the same mode, for instruction or improvement?

If the stage be a proper method of promoting the interests of religion, then is Satan's kingdom divided against itself, which he is more cunning than to suffer it to be. For whatever debate there be, whether good men MAY attend the theatre, there can be no question at all, that no openly vicious man, is an enemy to it, and that the far greater part of them do passionately love it. I say no OPENLY vicious man; for doubtless there may be some hypocrites wearing the habit of the Christian pilgrim, who are the very worst of men, and

yet may shew abundance of zeal against the stage. But nothing is more certain than, that taking the world according to its appearance, it is the worse part of it that shews most passion for this entertainment, and the best that avoids and fears it, than which there can hardly be a worse sign of it, as a means of doing good. Whoever believes the following words of our blessed Redeemer, will never be persuaded that poets and actors for the stage have received any commission to speak in his name. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, John x. 27.—A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers, John x. 5.*

This leads us to observe, that the stage is not only an improper method of instruction, but that all, or the far greatest number of pieces there represented, must have, upon the whole, a pernicious tendency. This is evident, because they must be to the taste and relish of the bulk of those who attend it. The difficulty of getting good authors for the theatre, I shall not insist upon, but whatever the authors are able or willing to do, it is certain, that their productions in fact can rise no higher in point of purity, than the audience shall be willing to

* It is to be observed here, to prevent mistakes, that the argument is founded on the general and prevailing inclination of the greatest part of each character, and not upon particular instances, in many of which it is confessed, it will not hold. For, as it is difficult to know the real character of some persons, in whom there are some marks and signs of true religion, and at the same time, some symptoms of unsoundness, so it is still more difficult to determine the quality of single actions. Therefore, it is little or no argument that any practice is false or good, because one good man, or one supposed to be good, has been known to do it; or on the contrary, ill, because one bad man has been known to do it. But as, when we retire further from the limit that divides them, the characters are more clearly and sensibly distinguished, so, whatever practice is passionately desired by wicked men in general, and shunned by the good, certainly is of bad tendency. If it were otherwise, as said above, "Satan's kingdom would be divided against itself," and the God "who keepeth covenant and truth for ever," would fail in his promise, of "giving" his people "counsel," and "teaching them the way in which they ought to walk."

receive. Their attendance is not constrained, but voluntary ; nay they pay dearly for their entertainment : and therefore they must, and will have it to their taste. This is a part of the subject that merits the particular attention of all who are inclined to judge impartially, and it proves, in the strongest manner, the absurdity of forming chimerical suppositions of a stage so regulated, as, instead of being hurtful, to promote the interest of piety and virtue.

Here let some truths be called to mind which are frequently mentioned in the holy Scriptures, but seldom recollected, and their consequences very little attended to. There is a distinction often stated, both in the old and new Testament, between the children of God and the men of the world. These are mixed together in the present state, and cannot, in many cases, be certainly distinguished by their outward appearance ; yet is there at bottom, not only a real distinction of character, but a perfect opposition between them, as to the commanding principle of all their actions. And as there is an opposition of character between them, so there must be an opposition of interests and views. Our blessed Redeemer, when he came into the world, was “despised and rejected of men ;” and he every where tells his disciples, that they must expect no better treatment. Matt. v. 11, 12. “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” And on the other hand, Luke vi. 26. “Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Again, John xv. 19. “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” His apostles speak always in the same language : thus the apostle Paul Rom. xii. 2. “And be not conformed to this world. Nay, he lays it down as an universal position, 2 Tim. iii. 1. “Yea, and all

“ that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Now I ask, Whether those who have a strong and rooted aversion to true holiness, which is not the character of the sincere Christian, will voluntarily croud to the theatre, to hear and see such performances as breathe nothing but what is agreeable to the pure and uncorrupted word of God? Will those who revile, injure, and persecute the saints themselves, delight in the stage, if honour is there put upon true religion, and pleased with that character in the representation which they hate in the original? This would be to expect impossibilities. And therefore, while the great majority of those who attend the stage are unholy, it is certain, that the plays which they behold with pleasure, cannot, upon the whole, but have a criminal tendency.

If any alledge, that the poet's art may be a means to make religion amiable to them, I answer, that he cannot make it amiable, but by adulteration, by mixing it with something agreeable to their own taste; and then it is not religion that they admire, but the erroneous, debased, and false resemblance of it. Or even supposing, that, in a single instance or two, nothing in substance should be set before them but true religion, and this dressed to the very highest advantage by the poet's genius and actor's skill, there would be little gained: because these human arts only would be the object of their admiration, and they would always prefer, and speedily procure, a display of the same arts, upon a subject more agreeable to their corrupt minds. This indeed, we are not left to gather by way of inference and deduction from other truths, but are expressly taught it in the word of God. For “ the natural man
“ receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they
“ are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them,
“ because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. Experience is a strong proof of this. For if any man will take the pains of making up a system of the morality of the stage, I do not mean the horrid profanity, and scandalous obscenity, that is to be found in the worst, but of that which is called virtue in the best of the pieces wrote for the theatre, he will find it exceeding different from

Christian morals ; and, that an adherence to it would be, in most instances, a willful departure from the rules of a holy life.

However plainly this is founded upon the word of God, and sound reason, there are some very unwilling to think, that ever their duty as Christians should constrain them to be at odds with the delicacies of life, or the polite and fashionable pleasures of the age. And, as the mind of man is very ingenious in the defence of that pollution which it loves, they sometimes bring in criticism to their aid. They alledge, that by the " world " is understood, generally through the New Testament, those who were heathens by profession ; and that the same opposition to true religion, in judgment and heart, is not to be ascribed to those who are members of the visible church. It is answered, the word did indeed signify as they say, for this plain reason, that in the early days of Christianity, when it was under persecution, few or none would make profession of it, unless they did really believe it. But is not the meaning still the same ? Can we suppose that the hatred of the then world, was at the name of religion only, and not at the substance ? Was the devil " the prince of " this world," then ? and has he not now equal dominion over, and is he not equally served by those who are profane in their lives, though they were once baptised ? Was he the spirit that " then worked," and is he not the spirit that " now works," in the children of disobedience ? The truth therefore remains still the same, those who are in a natural and unregenerate state, who hate true religion in their hearts, must have something very different before they can be pleased with seeing it on the stage.*

* There is an excellent passage to this purpose in an essay against plays, to be found in one of the volumes published about a hundred years ago, by the gentlemen of the Port-Royal in France, a society of Jansenists, of great parts and eminent piety. This essay in particular, is by some said to have been written by the prince of Conti. Section 15th of that essay, he says, " It is so true that plays are almost always a representation of vicious passions, that the most part of Christian virtues are incapable of appearing upon the stage. Silence, patience, moderation, wisdom, poverty, repentance,

That this argument may have its proper force, we ought to consider, how great a proportion of persons under the dominion of vice and wickedness there must always be among those who attend the theatre. The far greatest number of the world in general are ungodly. This is a fact which could hardly be denied, even though the following passage had not stood in the oracles of truth. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. vii. 13, 14. And as none can attend the stage, but those in higher life, and more affluent circumstances than the bulk of mankind, there is still a greater proportion of them who are enemies to pure and undefiled religion. Thus, says our Saviour to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. xix. 23, 24. To the same purpose the apostle Paul says, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." 1 Cor. i. 26. This does not at all suppose, that those in high life are originally more corrupt in their nature than others, but it arises from their being exposed to much greater and stronger temptations. Now, if from the small num-

"are no virtues, the representation of which can divert the
 "spectators; and above all, we never hear humility spoken of,
 "and the bearing of injuries. It would be strange to see a
 "modest and silent religious person represented. There must
 "be something great and renowned according to men, or at
 "least something lively and animated, which is not met withal
 "in Christian gravity and wisdom; and therefore those who
 "have been desirous to introduce holy men and women upon
 "the stage, have been forced to make them appear proud,
 "and to make them utter discourses more proper for the an-
 "cient Roman heroes, than for saints and martyrs. Their
 "devotion upon the stage ought also to be always a little ex-
 "traordinary."

ber of real Christians in the upper ranks of life, we again subtract such as count the stage unlawful or dangerous, or have no inclination to it, there will very few remain of those who are "the salt of the earth," to season the unhallowed assembly. What sort of productions then must they be, which shall have the approbation of such judges? How much more proper to pollute than to reform, to poison than to cure? If such in fact: the great bulk of plays have always hitherto been, from what has been said, it ought not to be wondered at, because it cannot be otherwise.

It is very possible, that some may be all this while holding the argument very cheap, and saying with lord Shaftesbury, "The true genius is of a nobler nature than servilely to submit to the corrupt or vitiated taste of any age or place;—he works not for gain, but despises it;—he knows, and will not swerve from the truth of art; he will produce what is noble and excellent in its kind;—he will refine the public ear, and teach them to admire in the right place." These, though I do not cite any particular passage, are all of them sentiments, and most of them expressions, of that author so much admired among modern philosophers.—But the objection is easily solved. The observation is allowed to be just, and to hold with respect to the poetic, oratorical, or any human art, because we know of no higher standard in any of these, than what human nature in its present state, will most admire, when it is exhibited to view. Accordingly, the great poet and the great orator, though, through the prevalence of a bad taste, they may find it difficult at first to procure attention, yet they will procure it at last: and when they are heard, they carry the prize from all inferior pretenders: and indeed, their doing so is the very touchstone and trial of their art itself. In this case there lies no appeal from the judgment of the public or the multitude (as David Hume has said for once according to truth) to the judgment of a wiser few.

But there cannot be any thing more absurd than to suppose, that the same thing will hold in morals and religion. The dramatic poets in Athens, where the stage

was first established, improved upon one another, and refined their own taste, and that of their audience, as to the elegance of their compositions. Nay, they soon brought tragedy, as a great critic* observes, to as great perfection as the nature of the thing seems to admit of. But whoever will from this infer, that they improved in their morals in the same proportion, or by that means, will fall into a very gross mistake. This indeed seems to be the great error of modern infidels, to suppose that there is no more in morals than a certain taste and sense of beauty and elegance. Natural talents in the human mind are quite distinct from moral dispositions, and the excellence of the one is no evidence at all of the prevalence of the other. On the contrary, the first are many times found in the highest perfection, where there is a total absence of the last. And therefore, that true genius is the object of universal approbation, hinders not but that true goodness is the object of general aversion. The Scripture assures us, that all men are by nature under the power of sin, "that every imagination of the thoughts of man is
" only evil from his youth, and that continually," Gen. vi. 5. "That the carnal mind is enmity against God,
" and," till it be renewed by divine grace, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7.

Now it is utterly impossible and self-contradictory, that men should approve and delight in that which is contrary to the habitual prevailing temper of their hearts; and to bring about a change in them is not in the power of any human art, but with the concurrence of the Spirit and grace of God. In this he has given no authority to the players to act under him, nay, he has expressly told us, that he will not ordinarily, in any way whatever, make use of the perfection of human art, but of the plainest and weakest outward means. Thus the apostle Paul tells us his Master sent him, "to preach the gospel, not
" with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be
" made of none effect." 1 Cor. i. 17. And, "after that

“ in the wisdom of God, The world by wisdom knew not
“ God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to
“ save them that believe.” 1 Cor. i. 21. He also professes
that his practice had always been conformed to this rule,
“ And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with
“ excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you
“ the testimony of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 1. “ And my speech
“ and my preaching was not with enticing words of
“ man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and
“ of power. That your faith should not stand in the wis-
“ dom of men, but in the power of God*.” 1 Cor.
ii. 4, 5.

It may be necessary here to obviate an objection, that in the holy Scriptures themselves we find several passages which seem to signify that true religion, though it is not the choice of all men, is yet the object of universal approbation. Thus we are told, that “ the righteous shall
“ be in everlasting remembrance, but the memory of the
“ wicked shall rot.” Nay, we are exhorted by the apostle Paul to the practice of our duty in such terms as these,
“ Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are

* Perhaps some will ask here, Is then human art, and are natural talents, which are the gifts of God, wholly excluded from his service? I answer, they are not. And yet the instances of their being eminently useful are exceeding rare. Such is the imperfection of the human mind, that it can hardly at the same time, give great attention and application to two distinct subjects; and therefore, when men give that intense application to human art, which is necessary to bring it to its perfection, they are apt to overlook the power and grace of God, without which all art is vain and ineffectual. Agreeably to this, when men of eminent talents have been of service in religion, it has been commonly by the exercise of self-denial, by making a very sparing and moderate use of them, and shewing themselves so deeply penetrated with a sense of the important truths of the everlasting gospel, as to despise the beauties and embellishments of human skill, too great an attention to which is evidently inconsistent with the other. Well, say refined observers, this is the very perfection of art to use it with great reserve, and to keep it out of view as much as possible. And it is indeed the perfection of art to have the appearance of this, but it is peculiar to a renewed heart to have it in reality.

“ lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there
 “ be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these
 “ things.” But these must surely be explained in such
 a manner, as to be consistent with the clear and strong
 passages mentioned above ; which it is not difficult to do.
 The matter of many good actions, particularly social vir-
 tues, the duties of the second table of the law, wicked
 men do often approve, nay, they may not only see some
 beauty, but feel some pleasure in them, from natural,
 though un sanctified affections leading to them. But
 truly good actions, instances of holy obedience to God,
 in their manner, and in the principles from which they
 ought to flow, they neither can approve nor perform.

Nothing can be done agreeable to the will of God,
 but what hath the following properties. It must be done
 from a sense, not only of the unalterable obligation, but
 the perfect excellence of the law of God, Rom. vii. 12.
 renouncing all pretence of merit in the actor, Gal. ii. 20.
 Phil. iii. 8. ; depending for assistance entirely on divine
 strength, John xv. 5. ; and with a single eye to the di-
 vine glory, 1 Cor. x. 31. 1 Pet. iv. 11. It is not the
 matter of an action that renders it truly holy, but the
 prevalence of these principles in the heart of the per-
 former. And they are so far from being generally ap-
 proved, that they are hated and despised, and the very
 profession of most of them at least, ridiculed by every
 worldly man. The truth is, it is not easy to discover
 these principles otherwise than by narration. They lie
 deep in the heart, they do not seek to discover themselves,
 and the shewing them on the stage would be a sort of
 contradiction to their nature. I believe it would exceed
 the art of most poets or actors, to exhibit by outward
 signs, true self-denial, without joining to it such offen-
 sation, as would destroy its effect. Or if it could be
 done, it would be so far from being delightful to those
 who “ through the pride of their heart will not seek after
 “ God,” that it would fill them with disgust or disdain.
 So that all friends of the stage ought to join with David
 Hume, who hath excluded self-denial, humility, and mor-
 tification, from the number of the virtues, and ranked
 them among the vices.

From this it appears, that worldly men will bear a form of godliness, but the spirit and power of it they cannot endure. When therefore, the Scriptures represent religion, or any part of it, as amiable in the eyes of mankind in general, it is only giving one view of its excellence in itself or in its matter: but this can never be intended to make the judgment of bad men its standard or measure. And when the approbation of men is proposed as an argument to duty, it cannot be considered in any other light, than as an assistant subordinate motive to preserve us from its violation; for the Scriptures will never warrant us to aim at the praise of men, as the reward of our compliance.

If there be any more than what is said above in the testimony which wicked men give in favor of religion, it is but the voice of natural conscience, that is, the voice of God in them, and not their own; and as it is extorted from them against their will, they do all in their power to destroy the force of the evidence. This we may be sensible of, if we will recollect, that it is always general, and that many speak well of something which they call religion in general, when yet there is hardly any of the servants of God, in whose character and conduct they will not endeavor either to find or make a flaw. The truth is, though some few heroes in profanity vilify religion in itself directly, and in all its parts, the plurality of scoffers only tell you, this and the other thing is not religion, but superstition, preciseness, fancy or whim, and so on. But at the same time, if you take away all that by some or other is reflected on under these appellations, you will leave little behind. Which plainly teaches us this truth, that no man will cordially approve of such a scheme of religion as he does not believe and embrace, or inwardly and without dissimulation applaud a character that is better than in his own: at least, than his own either is, or he falsely presumes it to be*.

* For ascertaining the sense, and confirming the truth of this passage, it is proper to observe, That by the word [better] is not so much to be understood higher in degree, as different in kind. Though even in the first sense it seems to hold pretty ge-

For this reason, the apostle John gives it as a mark or evidence of regeneration, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren;" that is to say, a sincere and prevalent love to a saint as such, can dwell in no heart but that which is sanctified.

It will be proper here to take notice, because it has some relation to this subject of what the advocates of the stage often make their boast, that before a polished audience things grossly criminal are not suffered to be acted; and that it is one of the rules of the drama, that, if such things be supposed, they must be kept behind the scenes. We are often put in mind of the pure taste of an Athenian audience, who, upon one of the actors expressing a profane thought, all rose up and left the theatre. A famous French tragedian, Corneille, also takes notice of it as an evidence of the improvement of the stage in his time, that one of his best written pieces had not succeeded, "Because it struck the spectators with the horrid idea of a prostitute

generally in comparisons between man and man. Men commonly extend their charity to those who have less, and not to those who have more goodness than themselves. They are very few, who, when they see others more strict and regular in their conduct than they are willing to be, do not ascribe it either to wickedness or hypocrisy. Perhaps indeed, the reason of this may be, that a gradual difference as to the actions done, is considered as constituting a specific difference in the moral character; and men condemn others not for being better than themselves, upon their own notion of goodness, but for placing religion in the extremes, which they apprehend ought to be avoided. This confirms the remark made above, that every man's own character is the standard of his approbation, and shows at the same time its inconsistency with that humility which is essential to every christian. Wherever there is a real approbation, and sincere confession of superior worth, there is also an unfeigned imitation of it. The christian not only knows himself to be infinitely distant from God, whom yet he supremely loves, but thinks himself less than the least of all saints; but he could neither love the one nor the other, if he had not a real, however distant likeness; if he had not the seeds of every good disposition implanted in him, the growth of which is his supreme desire, and the improvement of which is the constant object of his care and diligence.

“tion, to which a holy woman had been condemned.” As to the case of the Athenians, it were easy to shew from the nature and circumstances of the fact, that this relentment at the profanity of the poet, though it was expressed in the theatre, was by no means learned there. But it is needless to enter into any nice disquisition upon this subject, for all that follows from any such instances, is, that there are some things so very gross and shocking, that, as but a few of the most abandoned will commit them, so the rest of the world can have no delight in beholding them. There is, no doubt, a great variety of characters differing one from another in the degree of their degeneracy, and yet all of them essentially distinct from true piety.

To set this matter in a just light, we must remember, that, as has been confessed above, the matter of many good actions, or a defective imperfect form of virtue is approved by the generality of the world; and, that they are very much swayed in their actions by a view to public praise. Therefore, they are mutually checks to one another, and vice is not seen on a theatre in a gross, but commonly in a more dangerous, because an engaging and insinuating form. The presence of so many witnesses does restrain and disguise sin, but cannot change its nature, or render it innocent. The purity of the theatre can never be carried farther by the taste of the audience, than what is required in conversation with the polite and fashionable world. There vice is in some measure restrained; men may be wicked, but they must not be rude. How much this amounts to is but too well known; it is no more than that we must not disgust those with whom we converse, and varies with their character. This is so far from being agreeable to the rules of the gospel, that a serious Christian is often obliged, from a sense of duty, to be guilty of a breach of good manners, by administering unacceptable reproof.

Thus it appears that, in the stage, the audience gives law to the poet, which is much the same thing as the scholar chusing his own lesson; and whether this be a safe or profitable method of instruction, is easy to judge. Every

one who knows human nature, especially who believes the representation given of it in scripture, must conclude, that the young will be seduced into the commission, and the older confirmed and hardened in the practice of sin; because characters, fundamentally wrong, will be there painted out in an amiable light, and divested of what is most shameful and shocking. By this means conscience, instead of being alarmed, and giving faithful testimony, is deceived and made a party in the cause. In short, vice in the theatre must wear the garb, assume the name, and claim the reward of virtue.

How strong a confirmation of this have we from experience? Have not plays in fact commonly turned upon the characters most grateful, and the events most interesting to corrupt nature? Pride, under the name of greatness of mind, ambition and revenge, under those of valor and heroism, have been their constant subjects. But chiefly love: this, which is the strongest passion, and the most dangerous in the human frame, and from which the greatest number of crimes, and crimes the most atrocious, have sprung, was always encouraged upon the stage. There, women are swelled with vanity, by seeing their sex deified and adored; there men learn the language, as well as feel by sympathy, the transports of that passion; and there the hearts of both are open and unguarded to receive the impression, because it is covered with a mask of honor. Hath this then been only the case at particular times of occasional corruption, or for want of a proper regulation of the stage? No, it is inseparable from its constitution. Such hath been the nature and tendency of plays in all former ages, and such, from the taste and disposition of those who attend them, it is certain they will forever continue to be.*

* Perhaps it will be alledged, that the whole force of this reasoning may be evaded, by supposing a stage directed by the magistrate, and supported at the public charge. In this case the performers would be under no temptation, for gain, to gratify the taste of the audience, and the managers would have quite a different intention. It is confessed, that this supposition seems considerably to weaken the arguments above used,

Another argument, which shows the stage to be an improper method of instruction, or rather that it is pernicious and hurtful, may be drawn from its own nature. In its most improved state, it is a picture of human life, and must represent characters as they really are. An author for the stage is not permitted to feign, but to paint and copy.

though perhaps more in theory than it would do in practice. But I would ask any who make such a supposition, why this inviolable attachment to the stage? Why must so many efforts be made to preserve it in some shape or other! What are its mighty benefits, that it must be forced as it were, out of its own natural course in order to make it lawful, rather than we will give it up as pernicious?—It is also to be observed that, however useful an ordinance of God, magistracy be for public order, there is very little security in the direction of magistrates, for sound and wholesome instruction in religion or morals. We can never depend upon them for this, unless they are themselves persons of true piety, and not always even when that is the case, because they may be guilty of many errors in judgment. Now it is not reasonable to hope, that magistrates in any country, will be always, or even generally, persons of true piety. Such, with the other qualifications necessary to magistrates, are not always to be found. Neither is there any necessity for it; because, though doubtless, those who fear God will be the most faithful magistrates, and the most dutiful subjects, yet the greatest part of the duties of both may be performed without this, in a manner in which the public will see and feel very little difference. Magistracy has only the outward carriage, and not the heart for its object; and it is the sensible effect which the public looks for, and not the principle from which any thing is done. Therefore, as on the one hand, if a subject obeys the laws, and outwardly fulfils the duties of his station, the magistrate hath nothing farther to demand, though it be only for “wrath,” and not “for conscience sake;” so on the other, if a magistrate be diligent in preserving order, and promoting the general good, though the motive of his actions be no better than vanity, ambition, or the fear of man well concealed, the public reaps the benefit, and has no ground of complaint, even whilst his character is detestable in the sight of God. But this magistrate can never be safely intrusted with the direction of what regards our moral and spiritual improvement, and he would be going out of his own sphere should he attempt it.—After all, it makes little difference whether the magistrate or any body else directs the stage, while the attendance is voluntary; for in that case, it must either be suited to the taste of the audience, or it will be wholly deserted.

Though he should introduce things or persons ever so excellent, if there were not discerned a resemblance between them and real life, they would be so far from being applauded, that they would not be suffered, but would be condemned, as a transgression of the fundamental rules of the art. Now, are not the great majority of characters in real life bad? Must not the greatest part of those represented on the stage be bad? And therefore must not the strong impression which they make upon the spectators be hurtful in the same proportion?

It is a known truth, established by the experience of all ages, that bad example has a powerful and unhappy influence upon human characters. Sin is of a contagious and spreading nature, and the human heart is but too susceptible of the infection. This may be ascribed to several causes, and to one in particular which is applicable to the present case, that the seeing of sin frequently committed, must gradually abate that horror which we ought to have of it upon our minds, and which serves to keep us from yielding to its solicitations. Frequently seeing the most terrible objects renders them familiar to our view, and makes us behold them with less emotion. And from seeing sin without reluctance, the transition is easy, to a compliance with its repeated importunity, especially as there are latent remaining dispositions to sinning in every heart that is but imperfectly sanctified. It will be difficult to assign any other reason, why wickedness is always carried to a far greater height in large and populous cities, than in the country. Do not multitudes, in places of great resort, come to perpetrate, calmly and sedately, without any remorse, such crimes as would surprise a less knowing sinner so much as to hear of? Can it then be safe, to be present at the exhibition of so many vicious characters as always must appear upon the stage? Must it not, like other examples, have a strong, though insensible influence, and indeed the more strong, because unperceived.

Perhaps some will say, This argument draws very deep, it is a reproaching of Providence, and finding fault with the order which God hath appointed, at least

permitted, to take place in the world, where the very same proportion of wicked characters is to be seen. But is there not a wide difference between the permission of any thing by a wise, holy, and just God, or its making part of the plan of providence, and our presuming to do the same thing, without authority, and when we can neither restrain it within proper bounds, nor direct it to its proper end? There are many things which are proper and competent to God, which it would be the most atrocious wickedness in man to imitate. Because it is both good and just in God to visit us with sickness, or to take us away by death when he sees it proper, would it therefore be lawful in us, to bring any of them upon ourselves at our own pleasure? I should rather be inclined to think, that these sportive representations on the stage, instead of being warranted by their counterpart in the world, are a daring profanation, and as it were, a mockery of divine Providence, and so to be considered in a light yet more dreadful, than any in which they have been hitherto viewed. Besides, it ought to be remembered that, though evil actions, as permitted, make a part of the will of God, yet hitherto, all who deserve the name of Christians have affirmed, that what is sinful in any action is to be ascribed to the will of the creature as its adequate cause; and therefore, exhibiting human actions and characters upon the stage, is not only representing the works of God, but repeating the sins of men.

The criminal and dangerous nature of such a conduct will farther appear from this, that it is by just and necessary consequence forbidden in the word of God. There we find, that though in his sovereign providence he permits the commission of sin, suffers his own people to continue mixed with sinners in this state, and makes their connexion with them in some measure unavoidable, as a part of their trial, yet he hath expressly prohibited them from having any more communication with such, than he himself hath made necessary. We are warned in Scripture, that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and therefore, that we must fly the society of

the ungodly. The Psalmist tells us, "Blessed is the man
 " that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor
 " standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat
 " of the scornful," *Psal. i. 1.* Agreeably to this the characters of good men in Scripture are always represented. Thus the Psalmist David records his own resolution, "I
 " will set no wicked thing before mine eyes, I hate the
 " work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.
 " A froward heart shall depart from me, I will not know
 " a wicked person," *Psal. ci. 3, 4.* The same says elsewhere, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
 " and of them that keep thy precepts," *Psal. cxix. 63.*—
 " Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the com-
 " mandments of my God." *ver. 115.*

But there is no need of citing passages of Scripture to this purpose; it is well known, that good men, though they will be very cautious of rashly determining characters that are doubtful, and will far less discover a proud and pharisaical contempt of any who may yet be vessels of mercy, will however, carefully avoid all unnecessary communication with sinners. They will neither follow their persons from inclination, nor view their conduct with pleasure. On the contrary, when they cannot wholly fly from their society, it becomes a heavy burthen, and in some cases intolerable, and it is as to require the interposition of the same kind Providence that "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of
 " the wicked." Is there any consistency between such a character, and attending the stage with delight? Will those who "behold transgressors, and are grieved," crowd with eagerness to the theatre, where the same persons and actions are brought under review? Will what affected them with sorrow in the commission, be voluntarily chosen, and made subservient to their pleasure in the repetition.

I cannot help here calling to mind the anxious concern which wise and pious parents usually shew for their children, on account of the snares to which they are unavoidably exposed in an evil world. How carefully do they point out, and how solemnly do they charge them

to shun the paths in which destroyers go. They use this caution with respect to the world, even as under the government of God ; and in so doing they follow the example of their Saviour, who, in the prospect of leaving his disciples, after many excellent advices, puts up for them this intercessory prayer ; “ And now I am no more “ in this world, but these are in the world, and I am come “ to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name “ those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one “ as we are.—I pray not that thou shouldst take them “ out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them “ from the evil,” John xvii. 11, 15. Can any expect that this prayer will be heard in their behalf, who are not content with seeing the world as it is ordered by a wise and holy God, but must see it over again, in a vile imitation, by a sinful man.

It will probably be said, that this strikes as much against history, at least the writing and reading of human, commonly called, profane history, as against the writing and seeing of dramatic representations. But the cases are by no means the same ; the knowledge of history is, in many respects, necessary for the great purposes of religion.—Were not this the case, there would be little difficulty in admitting the consequence. Perhaps, even as it is, it had been better for the world that several ancient facts and characters, which now stand upon record, had been buried in oblivion*. At any rate it may be safely af-

* Perhaps some will be surprized at what is here said on the subject of history, who have not usually viewed it in this light. And indeed this is the great difficulty in the whole of the present argument, to overcome strong prepossessions, and to shew men the sin and danger of a practice which they know to be common, and have been long accustomed to look upon as lawful and safe. For this reason, it is probable, that the best way of proving that the above assertion on the subject of history, is agreeable to Scripture and reason, will be by a case perfectly similar, but more frequently handled. Do not all Christian writers, without exception, who treat of the government of the tongue, lay down this as a rule, that we are not to report the sins of others, though we know the truth of the facts, unless where it is necessary to some good end ? Now why should there be any different rule in writing, than in conversation ? What is done either way, is the same in substance, viz. communicating information ;

firmed, that romances and fabulous narrations are a species of composition, from which the world hath received as little benefit, and as much hurt, as any that can be named, excepting plays themselves, to which they are so nearly allied. The first are only exceeded by the last, as to their capacity of doing mischief, by the circumstances of action, and the presence at once of so many persons, among whom by mutual sympathy, the spiritual poison spreads faster and penetrates deeper.

Left it should be pretended that such a turn is given to things in the representation, as that, though the greatest part of the actions represented are ill in themselves, yet vice is reproached or ridiculed, virtue set upon a throne, rewarded and honored: let it be called to mind that, as has been shewn above, the author is not left at liberty to do in this as he pleases. He must gratify the public taste, and the rules he is obliged to observe, have rather the contrary effect. For he must divest his bad characters of what is most horrid and shocking, and present them less deformed than they really are. Besides, though he may conceal a part, he must not alter nature so far as he goes, but take it as he finds it. Accordingly some of our modern critics tell us, that there ought to be no particular moral in a dramatic performance, because that is a departure from nature, and so not in taste.

It ought not to be forgotten, that attending dramatic representations is not only seeing a great plurality of bad characters without necessity, and seeing them with patience, but it is seeing them with pleasure. Whether or not en-

and writing, which may be called visible speech, is much more lasting in its nature and extensive in its effects. If any ask, How, or why the knowledge of history is necessary to the purposes of religion? I answer, it is necessary for proving the truths of natural and confirming those of revealed religion; for repelling the attacks of adversaries, and giving us such a view of the plan of providence, as may excite us to the exercise of the duties of adoration, thankfulness, trust, and submission to the supreme Disposer of all events. Real facts only are proper for this purpose, and not feigned stories, in the choice and dressing of which, experience teaches us, the great end is, that man be pleased, and not that God may be glorified.

entertainment be yielded to be the only or ultimate effect of plays, surely it cannot be denied to be one effect sought and expected from them, and from every part of them. An actor is as much applauded, and gives as much pleasure to the spectators, when he represents a bad character to the life, as a good. Is there no danger then, that a heart softened by delight, should be more liable to infection from evil than at other times? Is there no danger that an association should be formed in the mind, between the sense of pleasure and the commission of sin? Will any person affirm, that in such circumstances he feels that holy indignation against sin, which every Christian ought to conceive upon seeing it committed? Or, that he is able to preserve that awe and fear, which he ought to have of the just judgment of God, when he sees the crimes that merit it boldly re-acted, and finely mimicked in a personated character.

So far is this from being the case, that every person attending the representation of a play, enters in some measure himself, as well as the actors, into the spirit of each character, and the more so the better the action is performed. His attention is strongly fixed, his affections are seized and carried away, and a total forgetfulness of every thing takes place, except what is immediately before him. Can the various passions be so strongly excited as they are sometimes known to be, and no effect remain? Will not the passion of love, for example, after it has been strongly felt by the spectator in sympathy with the actor, be a little more ready to recur, especially as nature prompts, and various soliciting objects are daily presented to his eye? The author terminates his plot as he sees best, and draws what conclusions he thinks proper from his characters, but he has no reason to think that he can controul the passions which he raises in the spectators in the same manner, and not suffer them to exceed the bounds of his description. Will not the passion of revenge, that right hand of false greatness of mind, after it has been strongly excited in the theatre, be apt to rise again upon every real or supposed provocation? Some learned observers of nature tell us, that every passion we

feel causes a new modification of the blood and spirits; if there is any truth in this, then every passion excited in the theatre takes possession for a time of the very animal frame, makes a seat to itself, and prepares for a speedy return.

Having thus endeavored to show, that the stage, whether amusement or instruction be aimed at in it, cannot be attended by any Christian without sin; there is a third general argument against it, which merits consideration. It is, that no person can contribute to the encouragement of the stage, without being partaker of the sins of others. This is proper to be attended to, as it is against a public theatre that the arguments in this essay are chiefly levelled; so that, if it be criminal at all, every person attending it, is not only faulty by his own proper conduct, but is farther chargeable with the guilt of seducing others. Besides, without this the argument, to some, would not be altogether complete, for after all that has been advanced, there may be a few, who in a good measure yield it to be true, and yet have another subterfuge remaining. They acknowledge, perhaps, that it is a most hazardous amusement, to which others ought ordinarily to be preferred: That the bulk of plays will, much more probably, pollute than improve the far greatest part of those who attend them. Yet still they are apt to figure to themselves particular cases as exceptions from the general rule, and to suppose, there are *some* plays which may be attended, or at least, that there are *some* persons, who have so much clearness of judgment, and so much constancy in virtue, as to separate the corn from the chaff. At a particular time, they suppose, a person of this kind may, without receiving any hurt, be improved by the fine sentiments contained in plays: and also learn something to be applied to other purposes, of that force and justness of action, that grace and beauty of behaviour, which is no where seen in so great perfection as on the stage.

Upon this subject in general, it may be affirmed, that those who have this confidence in the strength of their own virtue, are far from being the persons who may be most safely trusted in a place of danger. On the con-

rary, those will probably be most truly steadfast, when exposed to temptation, who are most diffident of themselves, and do not wantonly run into it. Yet, since some may take encouragement from such apprehensions, it is proper to observe that, though there were truth in their pretence, yet would it not therefore be lawful for them to attend the theatre. They could not do so without contributing to the sins of others, a thing expressly prohibited in the holy Scriptures, and indeed diametrically opposite to the two principal branches of true religion, concern for the glory of God, and compassion to the souls of men.

There are two ways in which the occasional attending of plays, by those who are of good character, even supposing it not hurtful to themselves, contributes to the sins of others. (1.) By supporting the players in that unchristian occupation. (2.) Encouraging, by their example, those to attend all plays indiscriminately, who are in most danger of infection.

First, It contributes to support the players in an unchristian occupation. After what has been said above, and which I now take for granted, on the impropriety of plays as an amusement, and the impossibility of furnishing a stage with nothing but sound and wholesome productions, little doubt can remain, that the occupation of players is inconsistent with the character of a Christian. Whatever occasional presence may be to some spectators, continual performing can never be lawful to the actors. On the very best supposition, it is a life of perpetual amusement, which is equally contrary to reason and religion. It is a mean prostitution of the rational powers, to have no higher end in view, than contributing to the pleasure and entertainment of the idle part of mankind, and instead of taking amusement with the moderation of a Christian, to make it the very business and employment of life. How strange a character does it make for one to live, in a manner, perpetually in a mask, to be much oftener in a personated than in a real character? And yet this is the case with all players, if to the time spent in the representation, you add that which is necessary to prepare for their

public appearances. What foul polluted minds must these be, which are such a receptacle of foreign vanities, besides their own natural corruption, and where one system or plan of folly is obliterated only to make way for another.

But the life of players is not only idle and vain, and therefore inconsistent with the character of a Christian, but it is still more directly and grossly criminal. We have seen above, that not only from the taste of the audience, the prevailing tendency of all successful plays must be bad, but that in the very nature of the thing, the greatest part of the characters represented must be vicious. What then is the life of a player? It is wholly spent in endeavoring to express the language, and exhibit a perfect picture of the passions of vicious men. For this purpose they must strive to enter into the spirit, and feel the sentiments proper to such characters. Unless they do so, the performance will be quite faint and weak, if not wholly faulty and unnatural. And can they do this so frequently without retaining much of the impression, and at last becoming in truth what they are so often in appearance? Do not the characters of all men take a tincture from their employment and way of life? How much more must theirs be infected, who are conversant, not in outward occupations, but in characters themselves, the actions, passions, and affections of men? If their performances touch the audience so sensibly, and produce in them so lasting an effect, how much more must the same effects take place in themselves, whose whole time is spent in this manner?

This is so certain, and at the same time so acknowledged a truth, that even those who are fondest of theatrical amusements, do yet notwithstanding esteem the employment of players a mean and sordid profession. Their character has been infamous in all ages, just a living copy of that vanity, obscenity, and impiety which is to be found in the pieces which they represent. As the world has been polluted by the stage, so they have always been more eminently so, as it is natural to suppose, being the very cisterns in which this pollution is collected, and

from which it is distributed to others. It makes no difference in the argument, that we must here suppose the stage to be regulated and improved, for as it hath been shewn, that it can never be so regulated as to be safe for the spectators, it must be always worse for the actors, between whom and the audience the same proportion will still remain. Can it then be lawful in any way to contribute, in the least degree, to support men in this unhallowed employment? Is not the theatre truly and essentially, what it has been often called rhetorically, the school of impiety, where it is their very business to learn wickedness? and will a Christian, upon any pretended advantage to himself, join in this confederacy against God, and assist in endowing and upholding the dreadful seminary?

Secondly, men of good character going occasionally to the theatre, contribute to the sins of others, by emboldening those to attend all plays indiscriminately, who are in most danger of infection. If there be any at all, especially if there be a great number, to whom the stage is noxious and sinful, every one without exception is bound to abstain. The apostle Paul expressly commands the Corinthians to abstain from lawful things, when their using them would make their brother to offend, that is to say would lead him into sin. “But take heed, lest by any means, this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak, be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died. But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,” 1. Cor. viii. 9—13.

There are many who seem to have entirely forgot that this precept is to be found in the word of God, and discover not the least sense of their obligation to comply with it. If by any plausible pretences they imagine they can vindicate their conduct with regard to themselves, or pal-

liate it with excès, they are quite unmindful of the injury which they do to others. I speak not here of offending, in the sense in which that word is commonly, though unjustly taken, as displeasing others. Such as are displeased with the conduct of those who attend the theatre, because they esteem it to be sinful, are not thereby offended in the Scripture sense of the word, except so far as some few of them are provoked to unchristian resentment, or induced to draw rash and general conclusions, from the indiscretion of particular persons, to the prejudice of whole orders of men. But vast multitudes are truly offended, or made to offend, as they are led into a practice, which, whatever it be to those who set the example, is undoubtedly pernicious to them. Is it possible to deny, that under the best regulation of the theatre that can reasonably be hoped for, to great numbers it must be hurtful, especially as it is enticing to all? And, if that be but allowed, persons of character and reputation cannot attend without contributing to the mischief that is done.

Perhaps it will be objected to this application of the passage of scripture cited above, that the particular danger there pointed out by the apostle, is inducing men to venture upon a practice with a doubting conscience. I think it highly probable, that this very precise case happens with many, who go to the theatre following the example of others. They are not entirely satisfied of its lawfulness, they still have some inward reluctance of mind, but adventure to gratify a carnal inclination, being emboldened by the example of those who are esteemed men of understanding and worth. But even where their implicit trust is so strong as fully to satisfy them, and set their minds at ease, the apostle's argument holds with equal force, if thereby they are unavoidably led into sin.

This will probably be looked upon as a very hard law, and it will be asked, Is a man then never to do any thing that he has reason to believe will be misinterpreted, or abused by others to their own hurt? The hardness of the law will wholly vanish, if we remember, that it is confined to things indifferent in their nature. In duties binding of their own nature, we are under no obligation to pay

any regard to the opinions of others, or the consequences of our conduct upon them. But in things originally indifferent, which become duties, or not, precisely on account of their consequences, there we are to beware of making our brother to offend. The scripture rule is this, We must not commit the least sin under pretence of the most important end, though it were to save multitudes from sins incomparably more heinous. But in matters of indifference, we are not to value the most beloved enjoyment so highly, as to endanger the salvation of one soul by insinuating it into sin. And can a real believer have the smallest objection, the least rising thought, against this equitable law? Shall we value any present gratification equally, nay, shall we once put it in the balance with the spiritual interest of an immortal soul? Now, who will be so shameless as to assert, that attending a public stage is to him a necessary duty? Or what defender of the stage will be so sanguine as to affirm, that it is, or that he hopes to see it regulated so as to be safe or profitable to every mind? and yet till this is the case, it evidently stands condemned by the apostolic rule.

Since writing the above, I have met with a pamphlet just published, entitled, *The morality of Stage-plays seriously considered*. This author convinces me, that I have without sufficient ground supposed, that nobody would affirm attending plays to be a necessary duty; for he has either done it, or gone so very near it, that probably the next author upon the same side will do it in plain terms, and assert, that all above the station of tradesmen who do not go to the play-house, are living in the habitual neglect of their duty, and sinning grievously against God. If this looks ridiculous it is none of my fault, for I speak it seriously: and it is a much more natural consequence from his reasoning, than any he has drawn from it himself.

He considers the passage of the apostle Paul, and says (which is true) that it holds only in the case of indifferent actions, but that we are to "do good in the face of prejudice." The way in which he shews it to be doing good, is pretty singular, but I pass it by for a little, and observe, that probably he is not much accustomed to commenting

on such passages of scripture ; for even granting his unreasonable supposition, doing good indefinitely is not opposed to indifferent actions in this, or any similar case. An action that is good in itself, is indifferent when it may be exchanged for another ; when one as good, or better, may be put in its place. Nothing is opposed to indifferent actions here, but what is indispensibly necessary, and absolutely binding, both in itself, and in its circumstances. And indeed, though he is afraid at first to say so, he seems to carry the matter that length at last, making his conclusion a little broader than the premises, and saying in the close of the paragraph upon that subject, “ What they do
 “ to this purpose, either in opposing the bad, or promoting
 “ the good, is MATTER OF DUTY, and their conduct in it
 “ is not to be regulated by the opinion of any person who
 “ is pleased to take offence.”*

But how shall we refute this new and wonderful doctrine, of its being necessary that good men should attend the theatre ? I cannot think of a better way of doing it, than tearing off some of the drapery of words, with which it is adorned and disguised, and setting his own assertions together in the form of a syllogism. “ The manager of
 “ every theatre must suit his entertainments to the com-
 “ ny, and if he is not supported by the grave and sober,
 “ he must suit himself to the licentious and profane.”——
 “ We know that in every nation there must be amuse-
 “ ments and public entertainments, and the stage has al-
 “ ways made one in every civilized and polished nation.
 “ We cannot hope to abolish it.”——Ergo, According to this author, it is the duty of good men to attend the stage. But I leave the reader to judge, Whether, from the first of his propositions, which is a certain truth, it is not more just to infer, that till the majority of those who attend the stage are good, its entertainment cannot be fit for the Christian ear ; and because that will never be, no Christian ought to go there.

And what a shameful begging of the question is his second proposition, “ That we cannot hope to abolish it.”

It is hard to tell what we may hope for in this age, but we insist that it ought to be abolished. Nay, we do hope to abolish it just as much as other vices. We cannot hope to see the time when there shall be no gaming, cheating, or lying; but we must still preach against all such vices, and will never exhort good men to go to gaming-tables, to persuade them to play fair, and lessen the wickedness of the practice. In short, it is a full refutation of the extravagant assertion of good men being obliged, as matter of duty, to go to the theatre, that no such thing is commanded in the word of God, and therefore it is not, and cannot be necessary to any.* And since it is evidently pernicious to great numbers, it can be lawful to none.

It would give Christians a much more just, as well as more extensive view of their duty, than they commonly have, if they would consider their relation to, and necessary influence on one another. All their visible actions have an effect upon others as well as themselves. Every thing we see or hear makes some impression on us, though for the most part unperceived, and we contribute every moment, to form each other's character. What a melancholy view then does it give us of the state of religion among us at present, that when piety towards God has been excluded from many moral systems, and the whole of virtue confined to the duties of social life, the better half of these also should be cut off, and all regard to the souls of others forgotten or derided? Nothing indeed is left but a few expressions of compliment, a few insignificant offices of present conveniency; for that which some modern refiners have dignified with the name of virtue, is nothing else but polished luxury, a flattering of each other in their vices, a provocation of each other to sensual indulgence, and that "friendship of the world," which "is enmity with God."

* It is proper here to remark, how natural it was to suppose, that the argument would be carried this length, when the stage came to be pleaded for as useful in promoting the interests of virtue. And therefore I have above taken notice, that these prophets run unscot, the propriety of which remark will now clearly appear.

I would now ask the reader, after perusing the preceding arguments against the stage, Whether he is convinced that it is inconsistent with the character of a Christian, or not? If he shall answer in the negative, if he has still some remaining argument in its defence, or some method, which has not occurred to me, to take off the force of the reasoning, I would next ask, Whether it does not at least render it a doubtful point? Whether, joined with the concurrent testimony of the best and wisest men in all ages against it, as it appeared among them, and the impurity and corruption that still attends it, there is not at least some ground of hesitation? And, if so much be but allowed, it becomes on this very account unlawful to every Christian, who takes the word of God for the rule of his conduct. There clear evidence and full persuasion is required before an action can be lawful, and where doubt arises, we are commanded to abstain. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth: and he that doubteth is damned, if he eat; because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” Rom. xiv. 22, 23.

Hitherto we have reasoned against what is called a “well-regulated stage.” That is to say, instead of attacking the corruptions which now adhere to it, we have endeavored to show, that from the purpose intended by it, from the present state, and general taste of mankind, and the nature of the thing itself, a public theatre is not capable of such a regulation, as to make it consistent with the purity of the Christian profession to attend or support it. If any complain, that part of the above reasoning is too abstracted, and not quite level to the apprehension of every reader, let it be remembered, that it is directed against an idea so abstracted, that it never yet did, and from what we have seen, there is reason to believe it never can exist. It is indeed altogether imaginary, and is dressed up by every author who defends it, in the manner and form that best pleases himself; so that it is infinitely less difficult to refute or shew the unlawfulness of a well-regulated stage, than to know what it is.

If the authors on this subject would enter into particulars, and give us a list of the useful and instructive plays with which our stage is to be served; lay down a plan of strict discipline, for introducing and preserving purity among the actors; and shew us by whom the managers are to be chosen, and their fidelity tried, with some general rules for their conduct, it might soon be determined by plain and simple arguments, Whether such an entertainment could be safely permitted to a Christian, or not. But, when they give us no farther account of it, than by calling it a stage properly regulated, they involve themselves at once in obscurity, as to the very subject of their discourse. It is no wonder then, that they can make a parade with a few glittering phrases, as picture of nature, moral lecture, amiable character, compassion for virtue in distress, decency of the drama, and several others. We are put to a stand what to say to such things, for if we speak of the impure sentiments of authors, or the wanton gesticulations of actors, all these are immediately given up, and yet the fort remains as entire as ever. Therefore, the method taken in this treatise, with all the disadvantages that attend it, was looked upon to be the best and the clearest that could be chosen; to shew, that those from whom a reformation of the stage must come, are neither able nor willing to make it; that the very materials of which this fine system is to consist are naught, and therefore, so must the product be always found upon trial.

It may indeed be matter of wonder, that among the many schemes and projects daily offered to the consideration of the public, there has never been any attempt to point out a plausible way, how the stage may be brought into, and kept in such a state of regulation as to be consistent with the Christian character. There have been attempts to shew how money may be in a manner created, and the national debt paid, or the annual supplies raised, without burdening the subject. Some, who have nothing of their own, have endeavored to persuade the rest of mankind, that it is the easiest thing imaginable to grow rich in a few years, with little labor, by the improvement of moor,

mos, or bees. But none, so far as I have heard or seen, have been so bold as to lay down a distinct plan for the improvement of the stage. When this is added to the considerations already mentioned, it will confirm every impartial person in the belief, that such improvement is not to be expected.

I hope therefore, there may now be some prospect of success, in warning every one who wishes to be esteemed a disciple of Christ against the stage, as it hitherto has been, and now is. Experience is of all others the surest test of the tendency of any practice. It is still more to be depended on than the most plausible and apparently conclusive reasoning, upon what hath never yet been tried. Let us then consider, what hath been the spirit and tendency of almost the whole plays which have been represented, from time to time, upon the stage. Have not love and intrigue been their perpetual theme, and that not in a common and orderly way, but with resistance and impediments, such as rivalry and jealousy, the opposition of parents, and other things of a similar nature, that the passions may be strongly excited, and that the force of love, and its triumph over every obstacle, may be set before the audience as a lesson? Is not the polite well-bred man the hero of such plays, a character formed upon the maxims of the world, and chiefly such of them as are most contrary to the gospel? Are not unchristian resentment and false honor the characteristics of every such person?

What is the character of a clergyman when it is taken from the stage? If the person introduced is supposed to possess any degree of ability, hypocrisy is the leading part of the character. But for the most part, awkwardness, ignorance, dulness and pedantry are represented as inseparable from men of that function. This is not done to correct these faults when appearing in some of that profession, by comparing them with others free from such reproachful defects, but it is the character of the clergyman in general, who is commonly introduced single, and compared with the men acquainted with the world, very little to his advantage. The truth is, it seems to be a maxim with dramatic authors, to strip men of every pre-

session of their several excellencies, that the rake may be adorned with the spoils : even learning is commonly ascribed to him ; how consistently with truth or nature, and consequently with taste itself, I leave the reader to determine.

And where can the plays be found, at least comedies, that are free from impurity, either directly or by allusion and double-meaning ? It is amazing to think, that women who pretend to decency and reputation, whose brightest ornament ought to be modesty, should continue to abet, by their presence, so much unchastity, as is to be found in the theatre. How few plays are acted which a modest woman can see, consistently with decency in every part ? And even when the plays are more reserved themselves, they are sure to be seasoned with something of this kind in the prologue or epilogue, the music between the acts, or in some scandalous farce with which the diversion is concluded. The power of custom and fashion is very great, in making people blind to the most manifest qualities and tendencies of things. There are ladies who frequently attend the stage, who if they were but once entertained with the same images in a private family, with which they are often presented there, would rise with indignation, and reckon their reputation ruined if ever they should return. I pretend to no knowledge of these things, but from printed accounts, and the public bills of what plays are to be acted, sometimes by the particular desire of ladies of quality, and yet may safely affirm, that no woman of reputation (as it is called in the world) much less of piety, who has been ten times in a play-house, durst repeat in company all that she has heard there. With what consistency they gravely return to the same schools of lewdness, they themselves best know.

It ought to be considered, particularly with regard to the younger of both sexes, that, in the theatre, their minds must insensibly acquire an inclination to romance and extravagance, and be unfitted for the sober and serious affairs of common life. Common or little things give no entertainment upon the stage, except when they

are ridiculed. There must always be something grand, surprising and striking. In comedies, when all obstacles are removed, and the marriage is agreed on, the play is done. This gives the mind such a turn, that it is apt to despise ordinary business as mean, or deride it as ridiculous. Ask a merchant whether he chuses that his apprentices should go to learn exactness and frugality from the stage. Or, whether he expects the most punctual payments from those whose generosity is strengthened there, by weeping over virtue in distress. Suppose a matron coming home from the theatre filled with the ideas that are there impressed upon the imagination, how low and contemptible do all the affairs of her family appear, and how much must she be disposed, (besides the time already consumed) to forget or misguide them?

The actors themselves are a signal proof of this. How seldom does it happen, if ever, that any of them live sober and regular lives, pay their debts with honesty, or manage their affairs with discretion? They are originally men of the same composition with others, but their employment wholly incapacitates them for prudence and regularity, gives them a dissipation of mind and unsteadiness of spirit, so that they cannot attend to the affairs of life. Nay, if I am rightly informed, that variety of characters which they put on in the theatre, deprives them of common sense, and leaves them in a manner no character at all of their own. It is confidently said, by those who have thought it worth while to make the trial, that nothing can be more insipid than the conversation of a player on any other subject than that of his profession. I cannot indeed answer for this remark, having it only by report, and never having exchanged a word with one of that employment in my life. However, if it holds, a degree of the same effect must necessarily be wrought upon those who attend the stage.

But folly or bad management is not all that is to be laid to the charge of players: they are almost universally vicious, and of such abandoned characters, as might justly make those who defend the stage, ashamed to speak of learning virtue under such masters. Can men learn pie-

ty from the profane, mortification from the sensual, or modesty from harlots? And will any deny that hired stage-players have always, and that deservedly, borne these characters? Nay, though it could be supposed, that the spectators received no hurt themselves, how is it possible that the performances of such persons can be attended, or their trade encouraged, without sin?

This shows also, that attending a good play, even supposing there were a few unexceptionable, cannot be vindicated upon Christian principles. It is pleaded for the new tragedy* lately introduced into our theatre, that it is an attempt to reform the stage, and make it more innocent or more useful. What this piece is in itself, nobody can say with certainty till it be published, though the account given of it by report is not exceeding favorable. But let it be ever so excellent in itself, the bringing of one good play upon the stage is altogether insufficient, nay, is a method quite improper for reforming it. An author of a truly good piece would rather bury it in oblivion, than lend his own credit and that of his work, for the support of those that are bad. A Christian can never attend the stage, consistently with his character, till the scheme in general be made innocent or useful. He must not sin himself, nor contribute to the sins of others, in a certain degree, because, unless he do so, they will sin without him in a higher degree. In short, such an attempt can be considered in no other light, than as encouraging a pernicious practice, and supporting a criminal association. The better the play is, or the better the characters of those who attend it are, the greater the mischief, because the stronger the temptation to others who observe it.

There is one inducement to attendance on the stage, which hath more influence than all the arguments with which its advocates endeavor to color over the practice; that it is become a part of fashionable education. Without it, young persons of rank think they cannot have that knowledge of the world which is necessary to their accomplishment; that they will be kept in rusticity of carriage,

* *Douglafs.*

or narrowness of mind, than which nothing is more contemptible in the eyes of the rest of mankind ; that they will acquire the character of stiff and precise, and be incapable of joining in polite conversation, being ignorant of the topics upon which it chiefly turns. No better than these, it is to be feared, are the reasons that many parents suffer their children to attend this and other fashionable diversions. How then shall we remove this difficulty ? Why truly, by saying with the apostle John, to such as will receive it, “ All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, “ is not of the father, but is of the world.” 1 John. ii. 16. It is certainly the greatest madness to seek the knowledge of the world by partaking with bad men in their sins. Whatever knowledge cannot otherwise be acquired, is shameful, and not honorable. How cruel then are those parents, who, instead of endeavoring to inspire their children with a holy and manly resolution, of daring to appear singular in an adherence to their duty, suffer them to be plunged in sin, that they may not be defective in politeness. Why should the world, or any thing else, be known, but in order to our spiritual improvement ?*

* This is not meant to condemn all human accomplishments, which have not an immediate reference to our religious improvement, but to affirm, that they ought to be kept in a just subordination and subserviency, to the great and chief end of man. There are, no doubt, a great number of arts, both useful and ornamental, which have other immediate effects, than to make men holy ; and because they are, by the greatest part of the world, abused to the worst of purposes, they are considered as having no connexion with religion at all. But this is a mistake ; for a good man will be directed in the choice and application of all such arts, by the general and leading purpose of his life. And as he who eats for no other or higher end than pleasing his palate, is justly condemned as a mean and groveling sensualist, so, whoever has no farther view in his education and accomplishment, than to shine and make a figure in the fashionable world, does not in that respect act the part of a Christian. In short, these arts are among the number of indifferent things, which should be supremely and ultimately directed to the glory of God. When they are not capable of this, either immediately or remotely, much more when they are contrary to it, they must be condemned.

Therefore, all that is truly valuable, must, by the very supposition, be innocently learned, and to bear with a noble disdain the scolds of more experienced sinners is the greatest glory.

Like to the above is another argument in favor of the stage, that men must have amusements, and that the stage is much better than many others, which would probably be put in its place. It is said, that of all the time spent by the fashionable part of the world, at present, in diversions, that which they allot to the stage is most innocently, or least hurtfully employed. Is there any more in this, than a declaration of the shameful luxury and degeneracy of the present age, an alarming token of approaching judgment? Do not such persons know, that all serious Christians condemn every one of these criminal pleasures, and will never allow it as any advantage to exchange one of them for another. But it is less surprising to hear such palliative arguments used in conversation: an author above referred to has been bold enough, in print, to reason in the same way. He says, "That no abuse was ever admitted on any stage, but might pass for perfect decency, when compared to what may have been often heard of, at a gossiping, a merry making, or a meeting of young fellows*." Again, after telling us that we cannot hope to abolish the stage, he says, "And if we could, we should only make way for the return of drunkenness, gaming and rude cabals, which the more decent conversation and manners of civilized times have in a great manner abolished." I lay hold of this gentleman's reasoning, who pleads for civilizing the world, and not sanctifying it, as a confession of the weakness of his cause, and a confirmation of all the arguments produced in this treatise against the stage. For, if he meant to show, that stage-plays were agreeable to the purity of the gospel, that drunkenness is worse (if indeed it be so) could be no evidence of it at all. He must therefore, if he speaks to any purpose, plead for the toleration of sinful diversions, because they are comparatively less

* *Morality of Stage Plays seriously considered.* p. 19.

sinful than others ; and if that is the case, I detest his principles, and so will every Christian.

Having mentioned this author, perhaps it may be expected, that I would take some notice of the other arguments brought by him in defence of the stage. It is not easy either to enumerate or comprehend them, they are thrown together in such confusion, and expressed in such vague and general terms. He says (page 3.) “ The people of this island are not inferior to those of any other age or country whatever. This will be a presumption, that if plays are a poison, it is at least but slow in its operation.” And, p. 17. “ We may venture to ask, Whether knowledge, whether industry and commerce have declined in this city (Edinburgh) since the play-house was first opened here ? It will be owned, that they have rather increased.” I would venture to ask, What sort of an argument this is, and what follows from it, though both his assertions were allowed to be true, which yet may easily be in many respects controverted ? If the stage, as he would insinuate, be the cause of our improvement, then is his argument self-contradictory, for we ought to be greatly inferior in purity to the people of other countries, who have enjoyed the reforming stage much longer, which is contrary to his supposition. The truth is, the stage is not the cause, but the consequence of wealth ; and it is neither the cause nor consequence of goodness or knowledge, except so far as it certainly implies more knowledge than uncultivated savages possess, and is only to be found in what this author calls civilized nations. How easy were it for me to name several vices unknown to barbarians, which prevail in places of taste and polished manners. Should I at the same time insinuate, that these vices have contributed to improve us in knowledge and taste, it would be just such an argument as is here used in favor of the stage, and the plain meaning of both is, the abuse of knowledge is the cause of it.

It were worth while to consider a little our improvements in knowledge in this age, which are often the boast of not the most knowing writers. Perhaps it may

be allowed, that there is now in the world a good deal of knowledge of different kinds, but it is plain we owe it to the labors of our predecessors, and not our own. And therefore, it is to be feared, we may improve it no better than many young men do, who come to the easy possession of wealth of their fathers' getting. They neither know the worth nor the use of it, but squander it idly away, in the most unprofitable or hurtful pursuits. It is doubtless, an easy thing at present, to acquire a superficial knowledge, from magazines, reviews, dictionaries, and other helps to the slothful student. He is now able, at a very small expence, to join the beau and the scholar, and triumphs in the taste of this enlightened age, of which he hath the comfort to reflect, that he himself makes a part. But for our mortification, let us recollect, that as several writers have observed, human things never continue long at a stand. There is commonly a revolution of knowledge and learning, as of riches and power. For as states grow up from poverty to industry, wealth and power; so, from these they proceed to luxury and vice; and by them are brought back to poverty and subjection. In the same manner, with respect to learning, men rise from ignorance to application; from application to knowledge; this ripens into taste and judgment; then, from a desire of distinguishing themselves, they superadd affected ornaments, become more fanciful than solid; their taste corrupts with their manners, and they fall back into the gulph of ignorance. The several steps of these gradations commonly correspond; and if we desire to know in what period of each, we of this nation are at present, it is probable, we are in the age of luxury, as to the first, and in the eve at least of a false and frothy taste as to learning; and may therefore fear, that as a late very elegant writer expresses it, We shall relapse fast into barbarism.

Another argument produced by this author, is, that the apostle Paul, in preaching at Athens, quotes a sentence from one of the Greek poets, and, in writing to the Corinthians, has inserted into the sacred text a line from a Greek play, which now subsists.—“ This (he says) is suf-

“ ficient to connect the defence of plays with the honor of “ scripture itself.” The fact is not denied, though he has given but a poor specimen of the knowledge of this age, by mistaking in the first of these remarks, the expression quoted by the apostle : for this sentence, “ in him we live, “ and move, and have our being,” which, he says, is a very sublime expression, and beautifully applied by the apostle, was not cited from the poet, but the following, “ For we are also his offspring.” But supposing he had (as he easily might) have hit upon the true citation, what follows from it? Did ever any body affirm, that no poet could write, or no player could speak any thing that was true? And what is to hinder an inspired writer from judging them out of their own mouths? What concern has this with the stage? If it implies any defence of the stage in general, it must imply a stronger defence of the particular play and poem, from which the citations are taken. Now, I dare say, neither this author, nor any other will assert, that these are in all respects agreeable to the Christian character. These citations do no other way connect the defence of the stage with the honor of scripture, than a minister’s citing, in writing or discourse, a passage from Horace or Juvenal, would connect the defence of all the obscenity that is to be found in the rest of their works, with the honor of preaching.

The only thing further in this essay not obviated in the preceding discourse, is what he says on the subject of the poor. “ That the expence laid out on the stage “ does not hinder the charitable supply of the poor, and “ that they suffer no loss by it, for it comes at last into “ the hands of the poor, and is paid as the price of their “ labor.—Every player must be maintained, clothed “ and lodged.” It does not suit with my present purpose to enter into controversial altercation, or to treat this author with that severity he deserves ; and therefore I shall only say, that his reasoning upon this subject is the very same from which Doctor Mandeville draws this absurd and hated consequence, “ Private vices are public benefits.”

The truth is, a serious person can scarce have a stronger evidence of the immorality of the stage, than the perusal of these little pieces of satire, which have been published in so great a variety, against the presbytery of Edinburgh, within these few weeks, because of their public admonition against it. They offer no other defence, but deriding the preaching of the gospel, blasphemously comparing the pulpit with the stage, and recrimination upon some who are supposed to live inconsistently with their character. It is not worth while to spend three words in determining whether drunkenness, deceit and hypocrisy are worse than the stage or not; but if that is the strongest argument that can be offered in its support, woe to all those who attend it. The new reformed tragedy has indeed been very unlucky in its advocates. There is an old saying, that a man is known by his company. If this be true also of a play, which one would think it should, as it must be chiefly to the taste of congenial minds, by those who have appeared in defence of Douglass, it is a work of very little merit.

It may be expected, that, having brought this performance on the field, I should add some further reflections, upon the aggravated sin of Ministers writing plays, or attending the stage. But though it is a very plain point, and indeed because it is so it would draw out this treatise to an immoderate length. If any man makes a question of this, he must be wholly ignorant of the nature and importance of the ministerial character and office. These therefore it would be necessary to open distinctly, and to consider the solemn charge given to ministers in Scripture, to watch over the souls of their people, as those “who must give an account unto God;” to give themselves wholly to their duty, since some of those committed to them are from day to day, entering on an unchangeable state, whose blood, when they die unconverted, shall be required at the hand of the unfaithful pastor. None can entertain the least doubt upon this subject, who believe the testimony of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles, and, if they believe not their writings, neither will they believe my words.

Instead therefore of endeavoring to prove, I will make bold to affirm, that writing plays is an employment wholly foreign to the office, and attending theatrical representations an entertainment unbecoming the character of a minister of Christ: And must not both, or either of them, be a sacrilegious abstraction of that time and pains, which ought to have been laid out for the benefit of his people? Is it not also flying in the face of a clear and late act of parliament, agreeably to which the lords of council and session not long ago found the stage contrary to law in this country? And though the law is eluded, and the penalty evaded, by advertising a concert, after which will be performed, gratis, a tragedy, &c. Yet surely, the world in judging of characters, or a church court in judging of the conduct of its members, will pay no regard to the poor and shameful evasion. Can we then think of this audacious attempt at the present juncture, without applying to ourselves the words of Isaiah, “And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die, saith the Lord of hosts,” Isa. xxii. 12, 13, 14.

A

L E T T E R

RESPECTING

P L A Y A C T O R S .

SIR,

THERE appeared in the national Gazette of the — of March last, a passage said to be taken from a French publication, which no doubt the editor of the Gazette thought worthy of the public eye. It was to the following purpose:—It must appear very surprising that even down to the expiration of the French Monarchy, there was a character of disgrace affixed to the profession of a player, especially when compared to the kindred professions of preacher or pleader. Although the talents necessary to these occupations are as much inferior to those of a good comedian, as the talents of a drug-pounding apothecary to those of a regular bred physician, and that it is hoped that the recovery of the character due to theatrical merit, will contribute not a little to the improvement of future manners.

I have long expected to see some remarks published on this singular sentiment, but, either nobody has thought it worthy of their attention, or the strictures have not fallen in my way; therefore as this subject is not one of those that lose their importance or propriety by a short lapse of time; and as, on the contrary, the present controversy in Philadelphia, on the application to the legislature against the stage, seems to render it peculiarly seasonable, I beg the favor of you to publish the following observations:

The author of the paragraph published by Mr. Freneau, though a warm advocate for the theatre, vouches for me as to the fact that there has been a character of disgrace for many ages, impressed upon the theatrical profession. Though he had not affirmed it, the fact is undoubtedly certain, that the theatrical profession has had a disgrace affixed to it from the earliest times, and in all the countries where theatres have been in use.

Public actors on the stage were counted infamous by the Roman law, they were excommunicated by the church from the time of the introduction of christianity into the Roman empire, even to the time mentioned by the author of the above paragraph, the expiration of the French monarchy.

If this had been only occasional, local and temporary, It might have been considered as owing to some of those accidental, but transient causes, which sometimes produce remarkable effects for a little time, and then wholly cease. But so uniform and so general an effect must have some adequate and permanent cause or causes to produce it—which is to be the subject of the present inquiry.

I have only to add as to the fact, that even the present living, warmest and most zealous advocates for the stage have not been able to efface this impression from their own minds. There does not exist in Philadelphia, or any where else, any person of rank or character, who would be pleased with an alliance with the stage, either by their son's marriage with an actress, or by their daughters being married to actors.

Before entering into the principal part of the subject, it will be necessary that the reader should give particular attention to the following remark. The infamy which has attended the profession of players belongs wholly to the profession itself, and not to the persons, or rather circumstances by which they may be distinguished. Players when they are seen on the stage, are dressed in the finest habits, assume the manners, and speak the language of kings and queens, princes and princesses, heroes and heroines, which is a very different situation from those who belong to what are sometimes called the lower classes of

life. Those who follow the mechanic arts are sometimes considered as in a state of disgrace, but it is wholly owing not to their profession, but to the poverty and want of education of a great majority of them. The profession is lawful, laudable, useful and necessary. Let me suppose a blacksmith, a weaver, a shoemaker, a carpenter, or any other of the mechanic professions, and suppose that, by activity and industry he becomes wealthy, and instead of a work-shop, sets up a factory ; if he becomes rich early enough in life, to give his children a good education and a handsome fortune, tell me who is the person, who would refuse his alliance or be ashamed of his connexion? Is it not quite otherwise as to players, with whom though eminent in their profession, as Moliere and Mademoiselle Clairon in France, Garrick, Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Belamy in England, I believe there is hardly any example of any person of decent station, or of middling fortune who would be ambitious of a family connexion. Therefore, I repeat it, and desire it may be kept in view in the whole of this reasoning, that the disgrace impressed upon the character of players belongs to the profession, and not to the person. Nay, though according to the old saying *exceptio firmat regulam*, there should be an instance or two picked up in distant ages, in which superlative merit, overcame the general prepossession, such as Roscius in Rome, Moliere in France, and Shakespeare in England, this would not hinder the certainty or importance of the remark in general, of the opprobrium that follows the profession. I now proceed to the reasons on which the fact is founded. First, all powers and talents whatever, though excellent in themselves, when they are applied to the single purpose of answering the idle, vain, or vicious part of society, become contemptible.

There is not upon record among the sayings of bold men, one more remarkable than that of Sobrius, the tribune, to Nero the Roman emperor, when asked by the emperor, why he who was one of his personal guards, had conspired against him? He answered, I loved you as much as any man, as long as you deserved to be loved, but I began to hate you when after the murder of your

wife and mother, you become a charioteer, a *comedian* and a buffoon. I am sensible that in this reasoning I consider theatrical pieces properly speaking as intended for amusement. I am not however ignorant that some have dignified them with the character of schools or lessons of morality.

But as they have been generally called, and are still called by the writers in the Philadelphia News-papers, *amusements*, so I am confident every body must perceive that this was their original purpose, and will be their capital and their principal effect. It seems to me of consequence in this argument to observe, that what is true of theatrical exhibitions is true of every other effect of human genius or art, when applied to the purposes of amusement and folly, they become contemptible. Of all external accomplishments, there is none that has been for many ages held in greater esteem than good horsemanship. It has been said that the human form never appears with greater dignity than when a handsome man appears on horseback, with proper and elegant management of that noble creature. Yet when men employ themselves in singular and whimsical feats, standing instead of riding upon a horse at full gallop, or upon two horses at once, or other feats of the like nature, in order to amuse the vain, and gather money from the foolish, it immediately appears contemptible. And for my own part, I would no more hold communication with a master of the circus than a manager of the theatre. And I should be sorry to be thought to have any intimacy with either the one or the other.

The general observation which I have made, applies to all human arts, of every kind and class. Music has always been esteemed one of the finest arts, and was originally used in the worship of God, and the praise of heroes. Yet when music is applied to the purposes of amusement only, it becomes wholly contemptible. And I believe the public performers, from the men-singers and women-singers of Solomon, to the singers in the present theatres, are considered as in a disgraceful calling. I am happy to have even lord Chesterfield on politeness, for my

assistant in this cause : for though he acknowledges music to be one of the fine arts, yet he thinks to be too great a connoisseur, and to be always fiddling and playing, is not consistent with the character of a gentleman.

In the second place, as players have been generally persons of loose morals, so their employment directly leads to the corruption of the heart. It is an allowed principle, among critics, that no human passion or character, can be well represented, unless it be felt : this they call entering into the spirit of the part. Now, I suppose the following philosophical remark is equally certain, that every human passion, especially when strongly felt, gives a certain modification to the blood and spirits, and makes the whole frame more susceptible of its return. Therefore, whoever has justly and strongly acted human passions, that are vicious, will be more prone to these same passions ; and indeed, with respect to the whole character, they will soon be in reality, what they have so often seemed to be.

This applies to the whole extent of theatrical representation. Whoever has acted the part of a proud or revengeful person, I should not like to fall in his way, when offended : and if any man has often acted the part of a rogue or deceiver, I should not be willing to trust him with my money. It may either be added, as another remark, or considered as a further illustration of the one last made, that players, by so frequently appearing in an assumed character, lose all character of their own. Nothing, says an eminent and learned writer, “ is more awkward “ and insipid, than a player, out of the line of his own “ profession.” And indeed what must that memory and brain be, where the constant business of its possessor is to obliterate one scene or system of folly, only to make way for another ?

In the third place, I cannot help thinking, it is of some moment to observe, that players, in consequence of their profession, appearing continually in an assumed character, or being employed in preparing to assume it, must lose all sense of sincerity and truth. Truth is so sacred a thing, that even the least violation of it, is not without its degree

of guilt and danger. It was far from being so absurd as it often has been said to be, what the old Spartan answered to an Athenian, who spoke to him of the fine lessons found in their tragedies: ‘ I think I could learn virtue much better from our own rules of truth and justice, than by hearing your lies.’

I will here observe, that some very able and judicious persons have given it as a serious and important advice to young persons, to guard against mimicking and taking off others, as it is called, in language, voice, and gesture; because it tends to destroy the simplicity and dignity of personal manners and behaviour. I myself, in early life, knew a young man of good talents, who absolutely unfitted himself for public speaking, by this practice. He was educated for the ministry, and was in every respect well qualified for the office; but having without suspicion, frequently amused himself and others, by imitating the tones and gestures of the most eminent preachers of the city where he lived, when he began to preach himself, he could not avoid falling into one or other of those tones and manners which he had so often mimicked. This, as soon as it was perceived, threw the audience into a burst of laughter, and he was soon obliged to quit the profession altogether, for no other reason, than he had thus spoiled himself by the talent of imitation.—I may say further, in support of this remark, that I have known no instance of one eminent for mimicking, who did not in time make himself contemptible.

But the human passion that makes the most conspicuous figure in the theatre, is love. A play without intrigue and gallantry, would be no play at all. This passion is, of all others, that which has produced the greatest degree of guilt and misery, in the history of mankind. Now is it, or can it be denied, that actors in the theatre are trained up in the knowledge and exercise of this passion, in all its forms. It seems to have been a sentiment of this kind, that led a certain author to say, that to send young people to the theatre to form their manners, is to expect, “ that they will learn virtue from profligates, and modesty from harlots.”

These remarks seem to me fully sufficient to account for the disgrace that has so generally followed the profession of an actor. I shall only add a few words upon an opinion to be found in Werensfels and some other eminent authors. They condemn public theatres, and despise hired players : but they recommend acting pieces by young persons, in schools or in private families, as a mean of obtaining grace and propriety in pronunciation. On this I shall just observe, that though this practice is much less dangerous than a public theatre, yet it does not seem to me to be of much necessity for obtaining the end proposed. And I dare say, that if this practice were often repeated, the same that may be acquired at such exhibitions, would upon the whole, be of very little to the honor or benefit of those who acquired it.

I will conclude this essay by an observation on the comparison, made by the French writer, mentioned in the beginning, between the talents necessary to a good preacher or pleader, and those necessary to a good play-actor. I wish he had mentioned the talents and qualifications, that we might have been able to examine his reasoning. As for my own part, I can recollect but two which are essentially requisite to a player, memory and mimicry ; and I have known both these talents possessed in great perfection, by men who were not in understanding many degrees above fools ; and on the contrary, some of the first men whom history records, that were no way remarkable in point of memory, and totally destitute of the other quality.

ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS :

OR, THE

ARCANA OF CHURCH POLICY.

B E I N G A N

H U M B L E A T T E M P T

TO OPEN THE

MYSTERY OF MODERATION.

WHEREIN IS SHEWN,

plain and easy Way of attaining to the **CHARACTER**
of a **MODERATE MAN**, as at present in repute in the
CHURCH of SCOTLAND.

TO THE
DEPARTED GHOST,
OR
SURVIVING SPIRIT,
OF THE LATE

Reverend Mr. ———, Minister in ———.

WORTHY SIR,

DURING a great part of the time I spent in composing the following treatise, I was fully resolved to have sent it abroad by itself, and not to have dedicated it to any person in the world; and indeed in a confined sense of the word world, you see I have still kept my resolution. The reason of this my intended purpose was, that I find the right honorable the earl of Shaftsbury, in an advertisement, or ticket, prefixed to his works, hath expressed a contempt and disdain of all dedications, prefaces, or other discourses, by way of forerunners to a book. This he seems to think a mean and cowardly way in an author, of creeping into the world, and begging the reception which he dares not claim.

Being satisfied, therefore, of the justness of this observation, and being also somewhat confident (as his lordship seems to have been) of the intrinsic worth of my performance, I intended to have come forth in this masterly manner.

But, upon more mature deliberation, I discovered, that the only objections against dedications were the self-diffidence just now mentioned, and the suspicion of flattery for selfish ends, which is so contrary to disinterested benevolence; so that if I could frame

a dedication which should be quite beyond the imputation of any of these two purposes, I should then wholly escape his lordship's censure.

This aim, I think, I have fallen nothing short of, when I have dedicated this book to you, most illustrious SHADE! as my most malignant enemies cannot but grant, that I could have no expectation of your encouraging me, either by buying my book, recommending it to others, or giving it away to the poor; nay, or even so much as for my translation to a better benefice in assembly or commission.

It startled me a little, that this conduct might perhaps, by evil disposed persons, be represented as an approach to popery, and resembling their worshipping of saints: but I hope this can scarcely be imputed to me, in the present case, since you never were esteemed a saint while you lived, nor ever thirsted after that title.

Another more material objection occurred to me, That a dedication to a dead man, is either almost or altogether unprecedented. But I am not much concerned, though this method of proceeding should be thought bold and new, because this is the character which the incomparable Mr. — gives of his own essays upon the principles of morality and natural religion. Besides, I am not altogether destitute of authority: for the memorable dean Swift has used the freedom to dedicate his Talc of a Tub to Prince Posterity. I have also seen a satirical poem, called Jure Divino, dedicated, with great solemnity, to Prince (or rather, I believe, to King) Reason. If, therefore, one of these authors might dedicate a book to a faculty of the human mind, and the other to an abstract idea, I hope it is no great presumption in me to dedicate mine to you, though "in statue mortuorum;" especially as there is not a living man who hath so good a claim to the compliment of a treatise upon my subject.

But a more gravelling difficulty than any of these, kept me some time in suspense, viz. how to get the

book presented to you. as I did not find in myself any inclination to depart this life in order to transport it. After much trouble. I was at length relieved, by reflecting, that Mr. Pope has assured us, that the ghosts of departed ladies always haunt the places in which they delighted while they were alive; and therefore, from analogy, it is to be supposed, that the same thing holds with regard to departed ministers. If this is the case, I look upon it as certain, that your chief residence is in the assembly-house at Edinburg, where you have, in your lifetime, both given and received so much pleasure. For though I will not limit you, in your unembodied state, from making circuits through the country, and visiting synods, or presbyteries, particularly in the M——se and G——y, where there are so many men after your own heart; yet, I dare say, you will not be absent from the assembly, nor any of the quarterly meetings of the commission, which both so often saved the church from impending dangers.

It is therefore my purpose to go to Edinburg in May next, when the assembly meets, of which I am a member, and there to lay before you my performance, hoping it will prove most delicious and savoury to all your senses, to the names of which, and the manner of their present operation, I am wholly a stranger.

It is probable you have not been accustomed, these two or three years past, to hear your own praises celebrated; and therefore I shall no farther launch out into them than to say, that there is not one branch of the character recommended in the following pages, in which you were not eminent; and that there never was one stone by you left unturned, for promoting the good cause.—That you may still sit upon the throne, and, by your powerful, though invisible influence, make the interest of moderation prevail, is the ardent wish, and the pious prayer of,

Sir,

Your most obedient
and admiring Servant.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

GRATITUDE obligeth me to acknowledge the kind reception which the world hath given to the following generous effort, for the honor of our church. This shows, either that panegyric is by no means so unacceptable to mankind in general, as some ill-natured authors insinuate; or that this of mine hath been executed with very uncommon skill. If this last should be the true solution, it would give me a double satisfaction. However, as the love of detraction, in some persons, is incurable, and as many have such ulcerated minds, that there is no possibility of applying to them, even in the softest and most friendly manner, without offending them; to prevent the spreading of any such baleful influence, I think it proper to add a few things upon the structure of this performance; part of which should have accompanied the first edition, if it had not pleased the publisher to print it without any communication with the author.

From the beginning I foresaw it would occur as an objection, that I have not properly denominated that party in the church which I have chosen to celebrate by the words *moderation* and *moderate men*. It is alledged that, for these two or three years past, they have made little use of these words, and having chosen rather to represent themselves as supporters of the constitution, as acting upon constitutional principles, as lovers of order, and enemies to confusion, &c. while at the very same time, the opposite party have taken up the title of *moderation* and pretend to be acting upon *moderate principles*. It is also hinted, that the just severities which the times render necessary, require a different phraseology.

In answer to this I observe, that my treatise has really been a work of time (as, I hope, appears from its maturity) the most part of it having been composed above two years ago, and before this change of language was introduced. It was originally intended only to exhibit a general view of the different parties in religion and learning among us; though it hath now admitted a very particular account of the latest and most recent differences in the church, chiefly because *the present* seems likely to be an *æra* of some consequence, and to be big with some very great events, as well as persons. Besides, I consider, that this name of *moderate men*—was much longer the designation of my friends, than those lately invented; and as they do not even at present allow the claim of their enemies to that character, it is probable they intend to take it up again, as soon as the designs now upon the anvil shall be completely executed. As to the name of *moderation* being inconsistent with a proper vigor, in support of their own measures, and wholesome severities against their enemies, it is an objection altogether frivolous, as appears from the following examples: A certain minister being asked the character of a friend of his, who had come up to the assembly, and particularly whether or not he was a *moderate man*? answered, *O yes, fierce for moderation!*

I think it proper to inform the reader, that one great reason of the uncommon choice of a patron to this work was, an opinion I had long entertained, and in support of which I could alledge very strong arguments, from the sayings of some great men and philosophers, as well as the practice of a famous ancient nation, with regard to their kings; that the true and proper time of ascertaining and fixing a man's character is when he has done his whole work; and that posterity hath as good a right to the possession and use of his fame after death, as his contemporaries to his abilities during his life. At the same time, though the author had a particular hero in view, yet he chose to publish it without mentioning his name, or place of abode, or indeed any circumstance foreign to the character which might distinguish the per-

son. The design of acting in this manner was, that in case the world should universally agree to ascribe it to the same person he had in his eye, it might be such a justification of the truth of the character, as very few modern dedications can boast of.

This invention I challenge as wholly my own; and do hereby allow and recommend the use of it to all future authors, hoping it will change the fashion among writers of character and self-esteem, from using no dedications at all, to forming them upon a plan entirely new. Let them each keep his patron in his eye, draw his character as exactly and graphically as possible, and publish it without a name, or with this inscription *Detur dignissimo*: then if the world do universally ascribe it to the person intended, let his name be prefixed to the second edition; and it will be more true, and sterling, and acceptable praise, than any hitherto found in that class of panegyrics. But if, on the contrary, the world shall ascribe it to a different person, let the author acquiesce in that determination, rejoice in so good an expedient for preventing a blunder, and make his court to his new patron, who will hardly refuse to admit him after so refined and delicate a compliment. I dare not recommend any thing like this method, with respect to the books already printed, because it would occasion so violent a controversy about the propriety of many dedications, as could not be ended but by the sword; they being most of them addressed to great men, who having agreed upon this method of revenging gross affronts, and terminating, in the last resort, all important disputes. Should any ask, why I have not followed my own rule, by now prefixing the name of my patron? They are to understand, that, for reasons known to myself, I intend to defer it till the nineteenth or twentieth edition.

If any shall think fit to blame me, for writing in so bold and assuming a way, through the whole of my book, I answer, I have chosen it on purpose, as being the latest and most modern way of writing; and the success it has already met with, is a demonstration of its propriety and beauty. The same thing also, to my great satisfaction, is

a proof of the justice of a late author's scheme of Moral Philosophy, who has expelled *mortification*, *self-denial*, *humility*, and *silence*, from among the number of the virtues, and transferred them, as he expresseth himself, to the opposite column; that is to say, the column of VICES. This scheme, I dare say, will stand its ground; and, as a critic, I observe, that it was probably the single circumstance just now mentioned, that brought upon the author an adversary who, though possessed of many truly good qualities, had the misfortune to be always eminent for modesty, and other bastard virtues of the same class.

There are some, I find, of opinion, that it was neither necessary nor useful for me, to give so many examples of the conduct of the moderate, in the illustration of the several maxims; and these eminent persons themselves seem to feel some pain, from the exposing of their virtues to the public view. But is it not an established truth, that example teaches better than precept? Is there any thing more usual in moral writings, than to illustrate them by extracts from the lives of the philosophers, and other heroes, of ancient times? and since the advantage of example is commonly said to be, that it is a living law, or that it puts life into the precept, surely the best of all examples must be those of persons really and literally alive: neither should such persons themselves be offended with this conduct; since, as has been hinted above, *mortification* and *self-denial*, are no more to be reckoned among the *virtues*, but the *vices*.

However, I have the comfort to reflect, that from the opposite opinions of those who have passed their judgment on this performance, I am in the middle, and consequently in the right: for there have been transmitted to me many noble instances of *moderation*, in expectation, no doubt, that they should be added to my collection. I thankfully acknowledge my obligations to these kind contributors, but cannot make any use of their contributions at present; for it would, at least, double the bulk of the treatise, and thereby render it *less commodious for pocket-carriage*. Further, I do assure them, it was not through want of materials that a greater number of examples was not produced, but from having duly weigh-

ed the proper proportion for a work of this extent ; and to what hath been affixed with so much deliberation, I am resolved stedfastly to adhere.

It were indeed to be wished, that every man was left to himself, and allowed, in peace and quietness to finish his own work his own way : for I have seldom observed these things called *hints and suggestions*, to have any other effect than to perplex and mislead. An author's situation, when persecuted with them, seems to me to resemble that of a gentleman building a house, or planning out a garden, who, if he hearkens to the advice, or attempts to gratify the taste, of every visitor, will, in all probability, produce, upon the whole, a collection of inconsistencies, a system of deformity.

I am very sorry to be obliged thus to speak in obscurity, by returning a public answer to private observations ; but cannot omit taking notice, that it has been much wondered at, that a certain very eminent person has been lost in the crowd of heroes, without any particular or distinguishing compliment paid to himself. Now, this did not by any means flow from a want of respect and esteem, but from a distrust of my own abilities, and a despair of being able to do justice to so illustrious a character. Neither indeed was there any great necessity (excepting mere compliment) of spreading his fame, which hath already gone both far and wide. Besides, that his many and remarkable exploits, however strong and *pregnant* proofs they may be of benevolence and social affection, have some circumstances attending them, which render them more proper subjects of discourse than writing. The glare would be rather too great for even the strong eye-sight of this generation to endure, when brought very near them. The sun is the most glorious of all objects in the firmament ; and yet, though it were in the power of a painter to draw him in all his lustre, there would hardly be found a proper place for him in the largest palace in Great-Britain.

The only other objection I shall take notice of, is, that in one respect, I may be said to have drawn the picture larger than the life, in as much as I seem to suppose, that all moderate men do, in fact, possess every one of the vir-

tues which I have made to enter into the perfection of the character. This objection, though the one most insisted upon, is evidently both false and foolish. No reader, of true discernment can imagine any such thing. If it were so, there would be no occasion for my book at all : on the contrary, the various maxims inserted in it, and the various examples produced in illustration of them, do shew that there are different degrees of perfection, even amongst the moderate themselves. They are a body, every member of which has neither the same abilities, nor the same office. They are also a body most firmly united, for mutual defence and support : so much, I confess, I intended to intimate ; and that, on this account, they are intitled to a sort of community of goods, and mutual participation of each other's excellencies. A head may very well boast of the beauty, elegance and activity of the hands, or the comely proportion and strength of the limbs belonging to it : and yet, though they are one body, it would be ridiculous to suppose, that the head or hands are always in the dirt, when they have the feet to carry them through it.

This metaphor of a body, however common, is one of the justest and most significative imaginable, out of which a very long allegory might be formed ; but I shall prosecute it no farther at this time, except to acknowledge, that it convinces me of one real omission in my plan, viz. that what hath been just now hinted, I ought to have inserted as a *thirteenth maxim*, and illustrated it at large.* It would have been easy to shew, that the moderate are remarkable for the most perfect union and harmony, and for a firm and stedfast adherence to each other, in the prosecution of their designs. Neither is there any instance in which there is a stronger contrast or opposition between them, and the orthodox ; as manifestly appeared from the conduct of both parties in the General Assembly 1753. A friend of ours called the enemy, upon that occasion, a *parcel of conscientious fools* : had he then read the following maxims, which prove, that they have as little *conscience* as *wisdom*, it is probable he would have bestowed on them their *true* and proper character.

* This was done in the third edition.

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ECCLESIASTICAL

CHARACTERISTICS.

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INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HE reader will doubtless agree with me, that moderation is an excellent thing, and particularly the noblest character of a church-man. It is also well known, that as all churches have usually in them a moderate, and a zealous, high-flying, wild party; so our church hath at present a certain party, who glory in, and fight for moderation; and who (it is to be hoped justly) appropriate to themselves wholly the character of moderate men: neither is it a small presage of a glorious and blessed state of the church, in its approaching periods, that so many of our young men are smitten with the love of moderation, and generally burn with desire to appear in that noble and divine character.

This hath inspired me with the ambition and expectation of being helpful in training up as many as are desirous of it, in this most useful of all sciences. For however perfectly it is known, and however steadily practised by many who are adepts; and notwithstanding there are some young men, of pregnant parts, who make a sudden and surprising proficiency, without much assistance; yet I have often observed, that there are several persons, who err, in many instances, from the right path, boggle at fun-

dry particular steps of their leaders, and take a long time before they are thoroughly confirmed in their principles and practice. The same persons also, by an unstable conduct, or by an imprudent or unseasonable discovery of their designs, have brought a reproach upon their party, and been an obstruction to whatever work they had then in hand.

These bad effects, I humbly conceive, flow chiefly, if not only, from the want of a complete system of moderation, containing all the principles of it, and giving a distinct view of their mutual influence one upon another, as well as proving their reasonableness, and showing, by examples, how they ought to be put in practice.

There is no work of this kind, to my knowledge, yet extant, which renders my present undertaking of it the more laudible, and will, I hope, render it the more acceptable.

I must inform the reader, that after I was fully convinced of the necessity of some such piece as what follows, but before I entered upon it myself, I earnestly intreated several of the most eminent men of the moderate stamp among us, those burning and shining lights of our church, who are, and are esteemed to be, our leaders, that some of them would set about it. However, they all devolved it upon me; and made this satisfying excuse for themselves, that they were so busied in acting moderation, that they could not have time to write upon it. This soon led me to think, what would become of many noble designs, and what advantage our discontented zealots might take, if any of the expert steersmen of this ecclesiastical vessel of ours should retire from the helm; but so long time as would be necessary to bring a work of such a nature, to the perfection in strength, symmetry, and elegance, that the reader will perceive even this of mine is arrived at.

I shall now proceed to the principal part of the work, after I have informed the reader of the plan of it; which is briefly this, to enumerate distinctly and in their proper order and connexion, all the several maxims upon which moderate men conduct themselves: and foras-

much as the justice of many of them, being refined pieces of policy, is not very evident at first sight, I shall subjoin to each an illustration and confirmation of it, from reason or experience, or both. N. B. I shall make but very little use of Scripture, because that is contrary to some of the maxims themselves; as will be seen in the sequel.

### M A X I M I.

All ecclesiastical persons, of whatever rank, whether principals of colleges, professors of divinity, ministers, or even probationers, that are suspected of heresy, are to be esteemed men of great genius, vast learning, and uncommon worth; and are, by all means, to be supported and protected.

ALL moderate men have a kind of fellow-feeling with heresy, and as soon as they hear of any one suspected, or in danger of being prosecuted for it, zealously and unanimously rise up in his defence. This fact is unquestionable. I never knew a moderate man in my life, that did not love and honor a heretic, or that had not an implacable hatred at the persons and characters of heresy-hunters; a name with which we have thought proper to stigmatize these sons of Belial, who begin and carry on prosecutions against men for heresy in church-courts.

It is related of the apostle John, and an ugly story it is, that upon going into a public bath, and observing the heretic Cerinthus there before him, he retired with the utmost precipitation, lest the edifice should fall, and crush him, when in company with such an enemy of the truth. If the story be true, the apostle's conduct was ridiculous and wild; but Dr. Middleton has shown that the story is not true; and indeed, the known benevolence and charity of John's writings make it highly probable. However, not to enter into that controversy, whether it be true or not, the conduct of all moderate men is directly opposite.

As to the justice of this maxim, many solid reasons may be given for it.—Compassion itself, which is one of the finest and most benevolent feelings of the human heart, moves them to the relief of their distressed brother.—Another very plain reason may be given for it: moderate men are, by their very name and constitution, the reverse, in all respects, of bigotted zealots. Now, it is well known, that many of this last sort, both clergy and common people, when they hear of a man suspected of heresy, conceive an aversion at him, even before they know any thing of the case; nor after he is acquitted (as they are all of them commonly in our church-courts) can they ever come to entertain a favorable opinion of him. The reverse of this then is, to be as early and as vigorous in his defence, as they are in his prosecution, and as implicit in our belief of his orthodoxy, as they are in their belief of his error.

I remember, when I was discoursing once to this purpose, a certain raw unexperienced person said, he had always thought, that not moderation, but lukewarmness and indifference to truth, was the reverse of excessive zeal; and that moderation was situated in the middle betwixt the two. To whom I answered, Young man you do not reflect, that no fierce man can be resisted but by one as fierce, nor overcome but by one fiercer than himself; if, therefore, no body would oppose the zealots, but such calm midsmen as you mention, in every such instance the balance of power must lean to their side, and the poor heretic must fall a sacrifice, to the no small detriment of the cause of moderation; which by the bye, is commonly supported by the heretics in their stations, and therefore they deserve a grateful return.

This brings to my mind another reason for the maxim, viz. That heretics being so nearly related to the moderate men, have a right to claim their protection out of friendship and personal regard. This serves a very noble end; for it vindicates the Christian religion from the objection of some infidels, who affirm that it does not recommend private friendship; now moderate men having all a very great regard to private friendship, and



personal connexions, do, by their practice, which is the most solid way, confute this slander.

I may add to these another argument, for the great character of heretics, as asserted in the maxim, which I picked up from the preaching of a seceding minister. He told his hearers, that when the devil looks out for an instrument to propagate error, he never makes choice of a weak silly man, but one able and learned; as well knowing, I suppose, that though God can support his cause by any instrument whatever, yet he needs always the best and most sufficient he can get. Now, though I hope no man will reckon me of this fanatic's principles, so far as to think the devil the source of error; yet the citation serves my purpose, as it shews that he himself was convinced of the ability and learning of heretics; and all the world knows, that the testimony of an enemy is the strongest of all evidences upon a man's side.

I shall conclude this maxim with observing, that such tendernefs for heretics, however due from some, is yet, in many of the moderate character, an instance of the most heroic and generous friendship. It is quite disinterested, as they themselves run not the smallest hazard of ever being in the like circumstances. Heretics are commonly an honest sort of people, but with all their book learning, of no great stock of prudence or policy. They publish and assert whatever they believe upon all points, without considering the reception it is like to meet with, from those of opposite principles. They affront the public to its face, which Lord Shaftsbury tells us ought not to be done. On the other hand, men-thorough-paced in moderation, discover their principles only at such times, and to such persons, as are able to bear them. By this means they preserve themselves from heresy; and indeed they cannot possibly fall into it, unless by mistake; in which case, as soon as they are challenged, (if it is like to be attended with any temporal inconveniency) they deny it, explain it away, or repent, and ask pardon.

In all this they follow the noble example of Mr.— who, in the assembly debates, upon Professor Simson's affair, happening to say something that was challenged

by one present as heresy, immediately replied, "Moderator, if that be heresy, I renounce it."

## M A X I M II.

When any man is charged with loose practices, or tendencies to immorality, he is to be screened and protected as much as possible; especially if the faults laid to his charge be, as they are incomparably well termed in a sermon, preached by a hopeful youth that made some noise lately, "good humored vices."

THE reason upon which this maxim is founded, may be taken from the reasons of the former, "mutatis mutandis;" there being scarcely any of them that does not hold equally in both cases. A libertine is a kind of practical heretic, and is to be treated as such. Dr. Tillotson observes, in one of his sermons, that the worst, of all heresies is a bad life; now, if instead of worst, which is an uncomely expression, you would read greatest, in that passage, then a libertine is the greatest of all heretics, and to be honored in proportion. Even the apostle Paul (who is very seldom of any use to us in our reasonings) seems to suppose, that they are men of most knowledge, who are most free and bold in their practice; and that they are only weak brethren, who are filled with scruples. The weak man is restrained and confirmed by his narrow conscience; but the strong man believeth that he may EAT, and, by parity of reason, DRINK all things.

In order to understand the nature of "good-humored vices," the reader may please to take notice, that it is an observation of Lord Shaftsbury, that "the best time for thinking upon religious subjects, is when a man is merry, and in good humor:" and so far is this observation drawn from nature, that it is the time commonly chosen for that purpose, by many who never heard of his lordship, or his writings. Whatever, therefore, serves to promote merriment, and heighten good humor, must so far serve for the discovery of religious truth. But as there are many ways of making a person merry, which narrow-minded

people will call vice ; from thence, in compliance with common language, arises the new compound "good-humored vices." It is not, however, so to be understood, as if either the inventor of it, or those who love and patronize him, mean any thing by it but what is, "in their apprehension," both innocent and laudable.

Let it also be observed, that as gravity is almost a necessary consequence of solitude, "good-humored vices" are certainly "social pleasures," and such as flow from, and show benevolence ; and this is an affection for which our whole fraternity have the highest regard, inasmuch that no surer mark can be taken of a man's being ONE OF US, than the frequent returns of this expression in his discourses or writings.

It will serve further for the support of this maxim, that according to modern discoveries, there is a great analogy between the "moral virtues," or, if you will, the "science of morals," and the "fine arts : " and it is on account of this analogy, that most of the present reigning expressions upon the subject of morals, are borrowed from the arts, as "beauty, order, proportion, harmony, decency," &c. It is also established long since, and well known as a principle in the fine arts, that a certain freedom and boldness of manner is what chiefly constitutes grace and beauty. Why then should not approbation be founded upon the same grounds in both cases ? Why should not a bold practice be as beautiful in real, as a bold hand is in imitated life ? especially as all great geniuses have actually laid claim to this as their peculiar privilege, not to be confined to common forms ; and that in opposition to the bulk of mankind, who through want of taste, are not able to relish the finest performances in any of the kinds.

I must not, however, omit taking notice, to prevent mistakes, of one exception that must be made from this maxim ; that is that when the person to whose charge any faults are laid, is reputed orthodox in his principles, in the common acceptation of that word, or comes in by orthodox influence, in that case they are all to be taken for granted as true, and the evil of them set forth in the

liveliest colours. In consequence of this, he is to be prosecuted and torn to pieces on account of these crimes. But if it so happen, that he cannot be convicted upon a trial, then it is best to make use of things as they really are; that is, to express suspicions, to give ingenious and dubious hints, and, if possible, ruin him without any trial at all. There was a noble example of this given a few years ago, in the case of a settlement in the bounds of a presbytery, very many of whom are eminent in moderation. In that case, there were several faults laid to the charge of the candidate; and yet, though he himself very much insisted upon an inquiry into their truth, and a judgment upon their relevancy, the presbytery wisely refused to do either the one or the other, but left them to have their own natural weight in fame, rumour, and conversation.

The necessity of this exception is very evident: for, in the supposed case, all the reasons for protection to the young man fail; to satisfy himself of which, let the reader view these reasons, as they are annexed to the first maxim, and save my book from the deformity of repetition.

### M A X I M III.

It is a necessary part of the character of a moderate man, never to speak of the Confession of Faith but with a sneer; to give fly hints, that he does not thoroughly believe it; and to make the word orthodoxy a term of contempt and reproach.

The Confession of Faith, which we are now all laid under a disagreeable necessity to subscribe, was framed in times of hot religious zeal; and therefore it can hardly be supposed to contain any thing agreeable to our sentiments in these cool and refreshing days of moderation. So true is this, that I do not remember to have heard any moderate man speak well of it, or recommend it, in a sermon, or private discourse, in my time. And, indeed, nothing can be more ridiculous, than to make a fixed standard for opinions, which change just as the fashions of

clothes and dress. No complete system can be settled for all ages, except the maxims I am now compiling and illustrating, and their great perfection lies in their being ambulatory, so that they may be applied differently, with the change of times.

- Upon this head some may be ready to object, That if the Confession of Faith be built upon the sacred Scriptures, then, change what will, it cannot, as the foundation upon which it rests, remains always firm and the same. In answer to this, I beg leave to make a very new, and therefore striking comparison: When a lady looks at a mirror, she sees herself in a certain attitude and dress, but in her native beauty and colour; should her eye, on a sudden, be tinged with the jaundice, she sees herself all yellow and spotted; yet the mirror remains the same faithful mirror still, and the alteration arises not from it, but from the object that looks at it. I beg leave to make another comparison: When an old philosopher looked at the evening-star, he beheld nothing but a little twinkling orb, round and regular like the rest; but when a modern views it with a telescope, he talks of phases, and horns, and mountains, and what not; now this arises not from any alteration in the star, but from his superior assistance in looking at it. The application of both these similitudes I leave to the reader.

But besides these general reasons, there is one very strong particular reason why moderate men cannot love the Confession of Faith; moderation evidently implies a large share of charity, and consequently a good and favorable opinion of those that differ from our church; but a rigid adherence to the Confession of Faith, and high esteem of it, nearly borders upon, or gives great suspicion of harsh opinions of those that differ from us: and does not experience rise up and ratify this observation? Who are the narrow-minded, bigotted, uncharitable persons among us? Who are the severe censurers of those that differ in judgment? Who are the damners of the adorable Heathens, Socrates, Plato, Marcus Antonius, &c.? In fine, who are the persecutors of the inimitable heretics among ourselves? Who but the admirers of this an-

stagnated composition, who pin their faith to other men's sleeves, and will not endure one jot less or different belief from what their fathers had before them ! It is therefore plain, that the moderate man, who desires to inclose all intelligent beings in one benevolent embrace, must have an utter abhorrence at that vile hedge of distinction, the Confession of Faith.

I shall briefly mention a trifling objection to this part of our character.—That by our subscription we sacrifice sincerity, the queen of virtues, to private gain and advantage. To which I answer, in the first place, 'That the objection proves too much, and therefore must be false, and can prove nothing : for, allowing the justice of the objection, it would follow, that a vast number, perhaps a majority, of the clergy of the church of England are villains ; their printed sermons being, many of them, diametrically opposite to the articles which they subscribe. Now, as this supposition can never be admitted by any charitable man, the objection from whence it flows, as a necessary consequence, must fall to the ground.

But further, what is there more insincere in our subscriptions, than in those expressions of compliment and civility, which all acknowledge lawful, although they rarely express the meaning of the heart ! The design is sufficiently understood in both cases ; and our subscriptions have this advantage above forms of compliment, in point of honesty, that we are at a great deal of pains usually to persuade the world that we do not believe what we sign ; whereas the complaisant gentleman is very seldom at any pains about the matter.

What is said might suffice in so clear a case ; but I am here able to give a proof of the improvement of the age, by communicating to the reader a new way of subscribing the Confession of Faith, in a perfect consistency with sincerity, if that be thought of any consequence : it is taken from the method of attesting some of our gentlemen elders to the general assembly. Many insist, that they ought to be attested, and do attest them, as qualified in all respects, if the attestors are wholly ignorant about the matter ; because, in that case, there is no evidence to the con-

rary, and the presumption ought to lie on the favorable side. Now, as every new discovery should be applied to all the purposes for which it may be useful, let this method be adopted by the intrants into the ministry, and applied to their subscription of the Confession of Faith. Nothing is more easy than for them to keep themselves wholly ignorant of what it contains; and then they may, with a good conscience, subscribe it as true, because it ought to be so.

#### M A X I M IV.

A good preacher must not only have all the above and subsequent principles of moderation in him, as the source of every thing that is good; but must, over and above, have the following special marks and signs of a talent for preaching. 1. His subjects must be confined to social duties. 2. He must recommend them only from rational considerations, viz. the beauty and comely proportions of virtue, and its advantages in the present life, without any regard to a future state of more extended self-interest. 3. His authorities must be drawn from heathen writers, *none*, or as few as possible, from Scripture. 4. He must be very unacceptable to the common people.

THESE four marks of a good preacher, or rules for preaching well (for they serve equally for both purposes) I shall endeavor distinctly to illustrate and confirm, that this important branch of my subject may be fully understood.

As to the first of these rules, That a preacher's subjects must be confined to "social duties," it is quite necessary in a moderate man, because his moderation teaches him to avoid all the high flights of evangetic enthusiasm, and the mysteries of grace, which the common people are so fond of. It may be observed, nay, it is observed, that all of our stamp, avoid the word grace as much as possible, and have agreed to substitute the "moral virtues" in the room of the "graces of the spirit," which is the orthodox expression. And indeed it is not in this only, but in all



other cases, that we endeavor to improve the phraseology, and show, that besides sentiment, even in language itself, we are far superior to, and wiser than our fathers before us. I could show this by a great many examples, but that it would be too tedious; and therefore only add, to the one mentioned above, that where an ancient orthodox man, or even an old fashioned modern, that thinks religion can never be amended, either in matter or manner, would have said “a great degree of sanctification,” a man of moderation and politeness will say, “a high pitch of virtue.” Now, as this is the case, it is plain a moderate preacher must confine his subjects to social duties chiefly, and not insist on such passages of Scripture as will by the very repetition of them, contaminate his style, and may perhaps diffuse a rank smell of orthodoxy through the whole of his discourse.

After all, I cannot refuse, that it is still a more excellent way, for those who have talents equal to the undertaking, to seize an orthodox text, explain it quite away from its ordinary sense, and constrain it to speak the main parts of our own scheme. Thus a noble champion of ours chose once for his subject, Rom. viii. 2. “For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death:” which he explained in this manner; “the law of the Spirit of life,” that is, the moral sense—; “in Christ Jesus—,” which is the sum of the Christian religion, &c. The advantage of this way is, that it is tearing the weapons out of the hands of the orthodox, and turning them against themselves. And it may perhaps, in time, have the effect to make our hearers affix our sense to their beloved Scriptures; or at least, which is the next thing, prevent them from being able to find any other.—However, I must acknowledge, that this way of doing is not for every man’s management; and therefore I continue my advice to the generality, still to adhere to the rule as first delivered.

The second rule will be easily confirmed. That duties are to be recommended only from “rational considerations.” What can be imagined more foolish than to contradict this? If there be any thing in a sermon dis-

ferent from rational considerations, it must be irrational, that is to say, absurd. It is in this part of our scheme that we moderate men obtain a glorious triumph over our adversaries and despisers. Who but must smile, when they hear the contemptible, vulgar, ignorant, hot-headed country elders, or silly women, led captive by them at their will, saying, they do not love this rational way of going to heaven!

But to explain this method a little further, the rational way of preaching is sometimes set in opposition to the pathetic way of raising the passions. This last is what we greatly disapprove of; there is something immoderate in the very idea of raising the passions; and therefore it is contrary to our character: nor was it ever known that a truly moderate man raised or moved any affection in his hearers, unless perhaps the affection of anger against himself. We leave that to your vehement hawlers, or your whining lamenters, that are continually telling, "they will spend and be spent" for the salvation of their hearers, which Lord Shaftsbury elegantly derides, by calling it "the heroic passion of saving souls." And let any unprejudiced person judge, whether there is not something vastly great, something like an heroic fortitude in that man, that can talk of future judgment, heaven and hell, with as much coolness and indifference as if it were a common matter. To say the truth, indeed, we do not often meddle with these alarming themes. However, as I observed upon the first mark of a good preacher, that it is glorious to rob the orthodox of a text, and make it bend to our plan; so it is also an uncommon excellence to treat these subjects with calmness, and to prove that we ought to do so. Thus a great proficient in our way, lately preaching upon Acts xxiv. 25. where Paul made Felix to tremble by his discourse, proved from it, that ministers ought not to raise the passions of their hearers. An ignorant observer would have thought that the passion of terror was raised in Felix to a great degree, and that he was little better than a Cambuslang convict. But mark the lucky expression our hero got hold of: "As he reasoned

“ of righteousness,” &c. as he reasoned, that is, argued, and proved by rational considerations.

This example gives me a fine opportunity of making a kind of contrast, and shewing from fact, the difference between an orthodox and a moderate preacher. I myself heard one of the first kind, upon the text just now mentioned; and his first observation was, That the apostle Paul was a faithful “reprover;” speaking home to Felix, 1. Of “righteousness;” to convince him of any iniquity he had been guilty of in his government. 2. Of “temperance;” which he said should be translated “continence,” and was probably intended as a reproof to him and Drusilla, who were living in adultery. His next, and main observation was, That Felix was “convicted,” but “stified” his convictions, and delayed his repentance, saying, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” Then followed a great deal of stuff, which I do not incline to transcribe; but it was just what the vulgar call experimental preaching, I suppose to distinguish it from rational.

But how contrary to this did our moderate friend? He first observed, that St. Paul was a “moral,” or a “legal preacher;” discoursing of “righteousness” and “temperance,” without a word of “faith:” and then, that he was a “reasoning preacher,” that did not strive to raise people’s passions, but informed their judgment. I was indeed a little disappointed upon consulting the original, to find that the word used, which is *dialeghomenou*, signifies only “continuing his discourse,” and so might be either in the “reasoning” or “pathetic” way; but I was satisfied by reflecting, that the word evidently includes both; and so “reasoning” being the best, it is to be supposed the apostle preferred it.

Agreeably to this rule, Lord Shaftsbury, and after him a bright luminary in our own church, gives an advice to all moderate clergymen, not to affect that idle title of “ambassadors,” or “plenipotentiaries from heaven,” so fondly claimed by zealots; and I take the liberty to suppose, that the reason of the advice was the same in both, viz. “That under this character zealots put on an air of

“ authority, and deliver their message with a pathos, to which they would otherwise have been strangers.” His lordship indeed explodes the conceit sufficiently ; he asks, “ Gentlemen, where is your commission ? how has it been conveyed ? where are the letters patent ? where the credentials ? ” with many more questions, easier for his lordship to ask, than for SOME PERSONS to answer.

The third rule, viz. recommending “ virtue,” from the authority and examples of the Heathens, is not only highly proper, because they were very virtuous, but hath this manifest advantage attending it, that it is a proper way of reasoning to two quite opposite kinds of persons. One is, such as are real Christians, who will be ashamed by the superior excellence of mere Heathens, as they call them, and whom they so much despise. The other is, our present living heathens, who pay no regard to the Christian religion at all ; and therefore will only be moved by the authority of the persons they esteem. It is well known, there are multitudes in our island, who reckon Socrates and Plato to have been much greater men than any of the apostles, although, as the moderate preacher I mentioned lately told his hearers) the apostle Paul had an university-education, and was instructed in logic by professor Gamaliel. Therefore let religion be constantly and uniformly called “ virtue,” and let the Heathen philosophers be set up as the great patterns and promoters of it. Upon this head, I must particularly recommend *M. Antoninus* by name, because an eminent person of the moderate character says, his meditations is the BEST book that ever was written for forming the heart.

But perhaps the last part of this third rule will be thought to need most illustration and defence, viz. That none at all, “ or very little use is to be made of Scripture.” And really, to deal plainly, the great reason of this is, that very few of the Scripture motives and arguments are of the moderate stamp ; the most part of them are drawn from orthodox principles : for example, the apostle Paul cannot even say, “ Husbands, love your wives,” but his argument and example comes in these words, “ as Christ “ also loved the church.” The apostle John also speaks

in a very mysterious way, of union with Christ, and abiding in him, in order to bring forth fruit, which is his way of speaking for a virtuous life. Now, let any indifferent person judge, how this kind of expression, and others of a like nature, such as mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit, would agree with the other parts of our discourses: they would be like opposite kinds of fluids which will not compound; they would be quite heterogeneous, which is against all the rules of fine writing, and hinders it from being an uniform, beautiful, and comely whole. Horace, in his *Art of Poetry*, gives this as his very first observation,

“*Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam*  
 “*Jungere si velit*”—————

Which my learned reader cannot fail both to remember and understand, and which I desire him to apply to this subject we are now upon. If it be said, that sermons are not poems, and therefore not to be composed by the rules of poetry: I answer, it is a mistake; many of our sermons, especially those composed by the younger sort among us, are poems; at least they are full of poetical flights, which comes much to the same thing: not to mention that the rule agrees equally to prose and poetry. How often have I heard parts of Mr. Addison's *Cato*, Young's *Night-Thoughts*, and divers other poems, in sermons? and, to say the truth, they were none of the worst parts of them. However, I would offer my advice, as that of a person of some experience, to all young preachers, not to do Dr. Young the honor of borrowing any thing from him again, because he is a snarling, sullen, gloomy, melancholy mortal, cites a great deal of scripture; and particularly, because he has given a vile sneer at the practice I am just now recommending, in the following two lines of his *Universal Passion*.

When doctors Scripture for the classics quit,  
 Polite apostates from God's grace to wit.

I have only another advice to give upon this head, and that is, That when our young preachers think proper to

borrow from modern printed poems, they would be pleased to transpose them a little, so to speak, that they may not be too easily discerned by young gentlemen who read the magazines. However, I am in great hopes we shall shortly be quite above the necessity of borrowing from any body, in order to make our sermons poetry : there are some persons of genius among us, that can make very good poetry of their own ; of which I could produce some recent instances ; but I do not think it at present expedient.

The fourth and last rule for a preacher, is, that he must be “ very unacceptable to the people.” The Spectator, I remember, some where says, that most of the critics in Great-Britain seem to act as if the first rule of dramatic writing were “ not to please.” Now, what they make the first rule of writing plays, I make the last rule for composing sermons ; not as being the least, but the most important. It is indeed the grand criterion, the most indispensable rule of all. Though one should pretend to adhere to all the former rules, and be wanting in this alone, he would be no more than “ a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ;” pardon the expression, the importance of the matter requireth it. I shall put a case : suppose a man should have the approbation of the very best judges, viz. Those whose taste we ourselves allow to be good, if at the same time he happens to be acceptable to the common people, it is a sign that he must have some subtle refined fault, which has escaped the observation of the good judges aforesaid ; for there is no man even of our own fraternity, so perfect and uniform in judging right, as the common people are in judging wrong.

I hope there is little need of assigning reasons for this great characteristic of the art of preaching ; I suppose it will be allowed to be, if not altogether, at least next to self-evident : all the several reasons that have been given for the particular maxims of moderation, concur in establishing this ; for the people are all declared enemies of moderation, in its principles and practice ; and therefore if moderation be right, they must be wrong. There is a known story of a Heathen orator, who, when the com-

mon people gave a shout of applause, during his pronouncing an oration, immediately turned about to a friend, and asked him, what mistake he had committed. Now if an audience of vulgar Heathens was allowed to be so infallibly wrong in their judgment, the same thing must hold, “*a fortiori*,” in an audience of vulgar Christians.

From this it evidently follows, that a popular preacher essentially signifies a bad preacher; and it is always so understood by us, whenever we use the expression. If we but hear it reported of any one, that he is very popular among the lower sort, we are under no difficulty of giving his character, without having heard him preach ourselves. In this case, fame is a certain guide to truth, by being inverted; for we detest and despise him, precisely in the same proportion that the people admire him. On the other hand, the truly moderate man is not only above the applause of the multitude, but he glories in their hatred, and rejoices in himself, in proportion as he has been so happy as to provoke and disoblige them. Of this I could give several notable examples, were it not that it must certainly offend their modesty, not only to praise them in print, but even to publish their highest virtues.

But now, upon the whole, as a great critic observes, that there is sometimes more beauty shown in a composition, by receding from the rules of art, when an important point is to be gained, than by strictly adhering to them; so, all these rules notwithstanding, it shall be allowable for any moderate man, upon an extraordinary emergency, to break them for a good end: as for instance, he may speak even in Whitefield’s style, when his settlement has the misfortune to depend upon the people; which I have known done with good success. We are also well satisfied, that Mr. T——r of Norwich, and such like first-rate writers, should make pompous collections of Scripture-texts, as their truly laudable intention is, by altering Christianity, to reconcile it to moderation and common sense; and to find out a meaning to words, which the writers of them, as living in the infancy of the church, had not discernment enough to intend.



To conclude this maxim, it would be too formal for me, and too tedious to the reader, to enumerate all the objections that are, by some, raised against our way of preaching: I shall therefore mention but one, and show it is false; hoping that the reader will suppose there is no more foundation for any of the rest. It is alledged, there is no method in our discourses, but that they consist in random flights, and general declamations. Nothing more untrue. The polite reader, or hearer, knows that there may be an excellent and regular method, where there are no formal distinctions of firstly, secondly, and thirdly; but, to cut off all occasion of cavil, let the world hereby know, that one of our most famed preachers chose once for his text, John xi. 29. and of that verse the following words, "He stinketh." He observed, we had there (or thereabouts) a description of the threefold state of a bad man: first, he sickened; secondly he died; thirdly, he stank. This I take to have been an accuracy in point of method, to which it will not be easy to find a parallel.

### M A X I M V.

A minister must endeavor to acquire as great a degree of politeness, in his carriage and behavior, and to catch as much of the air and manner of a fine gentleman, as possibly he can.

THIS is usually a distinguishing mark between the moderate and the orthodox; and how much we have the advantage in it is extremely obvious. Good manners is undoubtedly the most excellent of all accomplishments, and in some measure supplies the place of them all when they are wanting. And surely nothing can be more necessary to, or more ornamental and becoming in a minister: it gains him easy access into the world, and frees him from that rigid severity which renders many of them so odious and detestable to the polite part of it. In former times, ministers were so monkish and recluse, for ordinary, and so formal when they did happen to appear, that all the jovial part of mankind, particularly rakes and

libertines, shunned and fled from them ; or, when unavoidably thrown into their company, were constrained, and had no kind of confidence to repose in them : whereas now, let a moderate, modern, well-bred minister go into promiscuous company, they stand in no manner of awe, and will even swear with all imaginable liberty. This gives the minister an opportunity of understanding their character, and of perhaps sometimes reasoning in an easy and genteel manner against swearing. This, though indeed it seldom reforms them, yet it is as seldom taken amiss ; which shows the counsel to have been administered with prudence.

How is it possible that a minister can understand wickedness, unless he either practises it himself (but much of that will not yet pass in the world) or allows the wicked to be bold in his presence ? To do otherwise, would be to do in practice what I have known narrow-minded bigotted students do as to speculation, viz. avoid reading their adversaries books because they were erroneous ; whereas it is evident no error can be refuted till it be understood.

The setting the different characters of ministers in immediate opposition, will put this matter past all doubt, as the sun of truth rising upon the stars of error, darkens and makes them to disappear. Some there are, who may be easily known to be ministers, by their very dress, their grave demure looks, and their confined precise conversation. How contemptible is this ! and how like to some of the meanest employments among us ; as sailors, who are known by their rolling walk, and tailors, by the shivering shrug of their shoulders ! But our truly accomplished clergy put off so entirely every thing that is peculiar to their profession, that were you to see them in the streets, meet with them at a visit, or spend an evening with them in a tavern, you would not once suspect them for men of that character. Agreeably to this, I remember an excellent thing said by a gentleman, in commendation of a minister, that “ he had nothing at all of the clergy-man about him.”

I shall have done with this maxim, when I have given my advice as to the method of attaining to it ; which is, That

students, probationers, and young clergymen, while their bodies and minds are yet flexible, should converse, and keep company, as much as may be, with officers of the army under five and twenty, of whom there are no small number in the nation, and with young gentlemen of fortune, particularly such as, by the early and happy death of their parents, have come to their estates before they arrived at the years of majority. Scarce one of these but is a noble pattern to form upon; for they have had the opportunity of following nature, which is the all comprehensive rule of the ancients, and of acquiring a free manner of thinking, speaking, and acting, without either the pedantry of learning, or the stiffness contracted by a strict adherence to the maxims of worldly prudence.

After all, I believe I might have spared myself the trouble of inserting this maxim, the present rising generation being of themselves sufficiently disposed to observe it. This I reckon they have, either constitutionally, or perhaps have learned it from the inimitable Lord Shaftsbury, who, in so lively a manner sets forth the evil of universities, and recommends conversation with the polite Peripatetics, as the only way of arriving at true knowledge.

### M A X I M VI.

It is not only unnecessary for a moderate man to have much learning, but he ought to be filled with a contempt of all kinds of learning but one; which is to understand Leibnitz's scheme well; the chief parts of which are so beautifully painted, and so harmoniously sung by Lord Shaftsbury, and which has been so well licked into form and method by the late immortal Mr. H——n.

THIS maxim is necessary, because without it the former could not be attained to. Much study is a great enemy to politeness in men, just as a great care of household affairs spoils the free careless air of a fine lady: and whether politeness is to be sacrificed to learning, let the impartial world judge. Besides the scheme which I have permitted the moderate man to study, doth actually supersede the

use of all other learning, because it contains a knowledge of the whole, and the good of the whole : more than which, I hope, will be allowed to be not only needless, but impossible.

This scheme excels in brevity ; for it may be understood in a very short time ; which, I suppose, prompted a certain clergyman to say, that any student might get as much divinity as he would ever have occasion for in six weeks. It is also quite agreeable to the improvements that have been made in arts and sciences of late years ; for every thing is now more compendiously taught, and more superficially understood, than formerly, and yet as well and better to all the purposes of life. In the very mechanic arts, laborious diligence gives way to elegance and ease ; as the lumpish, strong, old Gothic buildings, to more genteel, though slighter, modern ones. There have been schemes published for teaching children to read by way of diversion. Every year gives us a shorter method of learning some branch of knowledge. In short, in these last days the quintessence of every thing has been extracted, and is presented us, as it were, in little phials ; so that we may come to all learning by one act of intuition. Agreeably to all this, have we not seen in fact, many students of divinity brought up in hot-beds, who have become speakers in general assemblies, and strenuous supporters of a falling church, before their beards were grown, to the perfect astonishment of an observing world ?

I must also observe, that there is a providential fitness of that scheme, in another respect, for the present age and time. When the fees of colleges, and expence of boarding is raised ; when the rate of living is quite altered, and when a spiteful landed interest, and a heedless parliament, have refused to grant any augmentation to our stipends ; there is no other way remains for us, but to cheapen our education, by taking less time to it, and arriving at the point designed by a nearer cut. Then there will be no need at all for the critical study of the Scriptures, for reading large bodies of divinity, for an acquaintance with church-history, or the writings of those poor crea-

wres the Christian fathers : but all is absorbed into the good of the whole : of which I may say, seriously and soberly, what Dr. Tillotson says ironically of transubstantiation, that it is not only true, but it is all truth, and will not suffer any thing to be true but itself.

We find that moderate men have mostly, by constitution, too much spirit to submit to the drudgery of the kinds of learning above-mentioned, and despise all who do so. There is no controversy now about Arian, Arminian, Pelagian, or Socinian tenets, but only whether this good-of-the-whole scheme holds. This shews, by the by, the injustice and malignity of those poor beings the Seceders, who cry out of erroneous doctrines in the church, and assert, that Arminianism is publicly taught by many. It is known, that they mean by the moderate men, when they speak so ; and yet I will venture to affirm, that there are not a few young men of that character, who, if they were asked, could not tell what the five Arminian articles are, so little do they regard Arminianism. I myself, the reader will perceive, know the number of them ; but whether I know any more about them or not, I shall preserve as a secret in my own mind. It will perhaps be objected against this maxim, That the moderate party commonly set up on a pretence of being more learned than their adversaries ; and are, in fact, thought to be very learned in their sermons by the vulgar, who, for that reason hate them. Now, as to their pretending to be more learned than their adversaries, it is most just ; for they have, as has been shown, got hold of the sum-total of learning, although they did not calculate it themselves. And as to their being thought learned in their sermons by the vulgar, it is sufficient for that purpose that they be unintelligible. Scattering a few phrases in their sermons, as harmony, order, proportion, taste, sense of beauty, balance of the affections, &c. will easily persuade the people that they are learned : and this persuasion is, to all intents and purposes, the same thing as if it were true. It is one of those deceitful feelings which Mr. H—, in his *Essays*, has shewn to be so beautiful and useful. These phrases they may easily get in books not above the size of an octa-

vo; and if they incline to be very deep, they may get abundance of citations from the ancient Heathen authors in Cudworth's intellectual System, and mostly translated to their hand.

I shall now subjoin a short catalogue of the most necessary and useful books, the thorough understanding of which will make a truly learned moderate man: Leibnitz's Theodicee, and his letters, Shaftsbury's Characteristics, Collins's Inquiry into Human Liberty, all Mr. H——n's pieces, Christianity as old as the Creation, D——n's Best Scheme, and H——'s Moral Essays\*. The two last are Scots authors: and it is with pleasure I can assure my countrymen, they are by far the most perfect of them all, carrying the consequence of the scheme to the most ravishing height. As to poetry, it will be sufficient to read "the Pleasures of the Imagination," and "the Tragedy of Agis," if it be published; because in it dramatic poetry is carried to the summit of perfection: and it is believed, by the author's friends, that there never will be a tragedy published after it, unless by somebody

\* It hath been suggested to me, that another author of our own country ought to have been added to the above catalogue; but I judged it improper, for two reasons. One is, that I do not find that author in so high esteem among the moderate, as to deserve a place in so very nice and chosen a collection. But the other, and principal reason is, that the author here intended, professeth himself a sceptic; the meaning of which, if I understand it right, is, either that he does not believe there is any such thing as truth, or that he himself is but seeking after truth, and has not yet found it. Now this is by no means the case with the moderate, who are already in possession of the "ne plus ultra" of human knowledge. For though some of their doctrines are changeable, by reason of the essential difference of persons, things and times; yet, during the period of any doctrine, I have no where known stronger, or severer dogmatists; as appears from their neglect of farther inquiry; and sovereign contempt of all opposers.—In a certain university, about seven years ago (how it is now, I cannot so certainly tell) if a man had spoken honorably of Dr. Samuel Clarke, it cannot be conceived with what derision he was treated by every boy of sixteen, who was wiser than to pay any regard to such a numskul, an enemy to the doctrine of necessity, and wholly ignorant of the moral sense.

that is delirious. But whether the knowledge of this effect, and the compassion thence arising to future authors, may not, in a person of so much humility and self-denial, and of so consummate and disinterested benevolence, as that theatrical divine, wholly prevent the publication, I cannot tell; and therefore must leave it to be brought forth by the midwife Occasion, from the womb of Time\*.

But to give a still higher proof of my deep concern for the improvement and edification of ingenuous youth, I have taken the pains to extract very faithfully the sum and substance of the above library, and do here present it to the world, under a name which is not without a meaning, though not intelligible to all, viz.

### THE ATHENIAN CREED.

I believe in the beauty and comely proportions of Dame Nature, and in almighty Fate, her only parent and guardian: for it hath been most graciously obliged (blessed be its name) to make us all very good.

I believe that the universe is a huge machine, wound up from everlasting by necessity, and consisting of an infinite number of links and chains, each in a progressive motion towards the zenith of perfection, and meridian of glory; that I myself am a little glorious piece of clock-work, a wheel within a wheel, or rather a pendulum in this grand machine, swinging hither and thither by the different impulses of fate and destiny; that my soul (if I have any) is an imperceptible bundle of exceeding minute corpuscles, much smaller than the finest Holland sand; and that certain persons in a very eminent station, are nothing else but a huge collection of necessary agents, who can do nothing at all.

I believe that there is no ill in the universe, nor any such thing as virtue absolutely considered; that those things vulgarly called sins, are only errors in the judgment, and foils to set off the beauty of Nature, or patches to adorn her face; that the whole race of intelligent be-

\* Agis, a tragedy, was published in the year 1758.



ings, even the devils themselves (if there are any) shall finally be happy, so that Judas Iscariot is by this time a glorified saint, and it is good for him that he hath been born.

In fine, I believe in the divinity of L. S——, the saintship of Marcus Antoninus, the perspicuity and sublimity of A——e, and the perpetual duration of Mr. H——n's works, notwithstanding their present tendency to oblivion. Amen.

## M A X I M VII.

A moderate man must endeavor, as much as he handsomely can, to put off any appearances of devotion, and avoid all unnecessary exercises of religious worship, whether public or private.

I FULLY intended, upon this part of my subject, to have been at some pains in shewing the great indecency of a grave and apparently serious carriage, or of introducing any religious subject of conversation into promiscuous company: but when I consider how successfully all visible religion was attacked, both by wits and preachers, immediately after the restoration of King Charles II. how constantly any disposition of this sort hath been borne down by all men of taste ever since that time, which is now near a whole century; as also how seldom any religious discourse is to be met with at this day, either among clergy or laity, I shall only rejoice in myself, and congratulate my reader, upon the purity of the times, and proceed to the other part of the maxim.

Now, as to the public exercise of religious worship; although a certain measure of them is reasonable enough, and though the office by which we have our bread, obliges us to be often engaged in them; yet a truly moderate man, without renouncing his calling, has it in his power to pare off a great many superfluities with which the orthodox clergy are apt to overload religion, and render it unpalatable to the polite world.

Being members of church-judicatures, and, we hope

the majority in most of them, the moderate party can discourage and stifle all motions for extraordinary fasts or thanksgivings; which experience has taught us serve only to promote idleness, and discourage industry. Upon the day that Henry V. fought at Agincourt, a solemn fast was kept in England for his success; and some historians are pleased to say, that the prayers of the nation had some share in procuring the victory; but later histories have disproved this; and now it can be demonstrated upon paper, that a fast day in Scotland loses 50,000*l.* to the nation, while no body can make any calculation what it wins. For this reason, it was very refreshing to hear, as we did lately, that even in the most distant and nothernly corners of this country, there is a set of clergy of an heroic spirit, who are resolved to reform their people, and beat them out of that unpolite and barbarous inclination, which many of them still retain, of hearing sermons.

With a view to the same good end, we can curtail our business at home, both as to the number and length of our pulpit performances. In our own families, though it would not perhaps yet be convenient to imitate the beau monde so very quickly, in discarding the worship of God altogether; yet we may, by degrees, sometimes omit it, through hurry of business, at other times be dropping, now and then at least, some parts of it; and in gentlemen's families, take care to give discreet intimations that we do not incline to put them out of their ordinary way, or occasion the least interruption to the mirth of the company.

Sometimes indeed it may happen, by a concurrence of circumstances, that one of us may, at bed-time, be unequally yoked with an orthodox brother, who may propose a little unseasonable devotion between ourselves, before we lie down to sleep; but there are twenty ways of throwing cold water upon such a motion; or, if it should be insisted upon, I could recommend a moderate way of complying with it, from the example of one of our friends, who, on a like occasion, yielded so far, that he stood up at the back of a chair, and said, "O Lord, we thank thee for Mr. Bayle's Dictionary. Amen." This was so

far from spoiling good company, that it contributed wonderfully to promote social mirth, and sweetened the young men in a most agreeable manner for their rest.—— Whatever is forced is unnatural, and ought to be avoided; and therefore, what the Puritan said of square caps, we may apply to many modes of devotion, “That he “ would not wear them, because his head was round.”

The necessity of such a conduct cannot be denied, when it is considered what effect the length and frequency of public devotion has had in driving most of the fashionable gentry from our churches altogether; and that even such of them as still vouchsafe their company sometimes, are yet driven away from the sacrament of the Lord's supper, where the service is expected to be more tedious and tiresome. Now, the only way to regain them to the church, is to accommodate the worship, as much as may be, to their taste: the manner of doing which is so well known, that I will not spend time in explaining it.

I confess there has been sometimes an ugly objection thrown up against this part of my argument, viz. That this desertion of public worship by those in high life, seems, in fact, to be contemporary with, and to increase, in a pretty exact proportion, to the attempts that have been, and are made to suit it to their taste. It is alledged, that they are led to such a conduct, not by the dictates of their reason, but by the depravation of their hearts; and therefore make use of the behaviour of the clergy, as an excuse and justification of their conduct. In answer to this objection, I shall not pretend to say what use gentlemen may sometimes make of our conduct, for I have known them often very preposterous in their judgment, condemning others for what they freely indulge in themselves, and no less unthankful, rendering evil for good. But still I say, there remains no strength in the objection to a man of moderate principles; for it plainly comes much to the same thing at last, whether the mountain comes to the mouse, or the mouse to the mountain. If I should meet a friend half-way, that had got at a distance from me, though he should not move a foot, I am sure we should be nearer one another, than if I had kept my place as well as he.

But whatever be in this, I must acknowledge, that to be constantly whining and praying, looks so extremely orthodox-like, that I cannot help conceiving a prejudice at it, for this very reason ; and I doubt not but every moderate man, will have the very same fellow-feeling. In truth, a great abundance of devotion has such a tendency to inflame one with zeal, that any man who would maintain his moderation, had best keep out of the reach of such insinuating influence. Besides, it has been an old remark, and I begin to suspect there is some ground for it, that let one embrace what system of divinity he will, it is impossible to pray but according to the orthodox system. And whatever laudable pains had been taken, by some of our friends, to avoid this inconvenience ; yet, from what I have observed, in the most successful of them, I must own, I can at present see no other remedy but to deal as little that way as possible.

### M A X I M VIII.

In church-settlements, which are the principal causes that come before ministers for judgment, the only thing to be regarded is, who the patron and the great and noble heritors are for ; the inclinations of the common people are to be utterly despised.

THAT this maxim is invariably observed by all moderate men is certain, and may be attested by all that ever were present at a General Assembly of this national church. The case is not now as formerly, when presentations were held a grievance ; for a presentation is “all in all” to a moderate man : and when there is no presentation, the greatness and nobility of the heritors are upon one side. I was witness once to a cause (which indeed unhappily miscarried) but there was a noble stand made for it by the moderate party, because there was a lord upon the side of the minority, although he had no interest at all in the parish, but a small bit of ground which he had got from a neighbour, in order to run a dike

straight. This appearance greatly rejoiced me, as being a token to what perfection the spirit of moderation was arrived.

There are many reasons upon which this maxim is founded; as the implacable hatred we bear to the elders and common people, and their constant wrong judgment, which has been illustrated above. As this is so very evident, I cannot pass it without expressing my grief and astonishment, that so clear-sighted an author, and in all respects so agreeable to our sentiments, as Lord Shaftsbury, should have said, in his Essay on the freedom of Wit and Humor, that, "it belongs to men of slavish principles to affect a superiority over the vulgar, and to despise the multitude." This hath made me doubt the truth of an assertion of Mr. G. L. one of our own disciples, "that perfection is attainable in this life;" for, if ever any one attained to perfection, surely Lord Shaftsbury was the man. But, to lessen the difficulty a little, it is probable he had something in his view, quite different from settling of kirks, when he wrote in this manner; for had he lived to our times, and been an heritor in Scotland, I can hardly allow myself to think, that ever he would have appeared on the side of the Christian people; though, without all question, he would have been chosen an elder, and sent up, "duly attested," to the General Assembly.

But to return: The natural respect we owe to those in great and high stations, claims from us the testimony of it required in the maxim. There is an original and essential difference between gentry and common people, which ought to be particularly kept up here. For this, we have the authority of a certain worthy laird in the country, who always maintained upon his mind a sense of his dignity, not as a man, but as a gentleman. Of this disposition he gave the following laudable instance: being a member of the kirk-session in his parish, the excise-officer happened to come before them for fornication: and besides the ecclesiastical censure, it was thought proper to apply to the civil magistrate to get him fined according to law: but as the law appoints different fines

for men in different stations, when some proposed he should be fined at the rate of a gentleman, the worshipful member above-mentioned, though known to be very zealous against vice, strenuously opposed his having so much honor, and gave the following excellent reason for it: "Since God Almighty has been pleased to make a distinction between gentlemen and other men, why should not we keep up this distinction in all cases?" And so he was fined only as a commoner.

Another thing strongly pleads for gentlemen having the chief hand in settling kirks, that now-a-days very few of our principal gentry attend ordinances, or receive any benefit by a minister after he is settled, unless perhaps talking of the news at a private visit, or playing a game at back-gammon: and therefore it is but fair, that in lieu of the edification of the common people, they should have the honor or profit of conferring the benefice. I shall only further add, that having no view of attending upon him for ordinary, they must be the best judges of his preaching gifts, as being most disinterested: for which reason, non-residing heritors, instead of deserving to be cut out altogether, as the stupid and undiscerning orthodox would have it, are by much to be preferred to those that reside.

The reader will easily perceive, that I have here given much better reasons for this conduct than those commonly assigned, viz. the law, in the case of patrons; and the payment of the stipend, in the case of heritors. For, as to the first of these, it is quite from the purpose; for the law maintains its own ground as far as it goes, and is irresistible: the only question is, How we shall act as to what is left to us to determine? If the law hindered us to determine on any side we pleased, such causes never would be pleaded before us. As to the other, about the heritors paying the stipend, it is not just; for the whole nation pays it: the heritor gets his lands with that burden upon them at first; and when one buys land from another, he never pays for the stipend: so that really an heritor, is never a penny the poorer of the stipend, except that happening commonly to see the money first, he

may perhaps be sorry that any body should get it but himself. However, though these reasons be not sufficient at bottom, I deny not but it may be very proper to assign them to such as are ignorant enough to yield to them, or who have so squeamish stomachs as not to be able to digest the solid reasons upon which I have grounded my maxim. It is with the mind as with the body, it must be fed with such things as it is able to bear, and as will best agree with its frame and constitution.

### M A X I M IX.

While a settlement is carrying on, the candidate against whom there is a strong opposition from the people, must be looked upon, and every where declared to be, a person of great worth, and remarkable abilities; provided always, that if ever the same person, after he is settled, be at pains, and succeed in gaining the people's affection, he shall then fall as much below the ordinary standard in his character, as before he was raised above it.

BOTH parts of this maxim will appear very reasonable to all that see with our eyes. The people being against a man, is a certain sign of his being a good preacher, as has been formerly proved: it is also a pretty sure sign of his being of moderate principles, "which make the comers there-  
"unto perfect;" and these two things are sufficient to justify us in raising his character. It is indeed often absolutely necessary, when a process is in agitation, that it may help him out with a scanty concurrence, and have an influence upon the church courts, which are composed of a mixed multitude. Nor is it easy to conceive, how excellent and well invented a weapon this is, the giving a man an extraordinary and high character. It necessarily imprints a kind of veneration of him on the minds of his judges; and hath this peculiar advantage, that there is no parrying of it; for whatever some few of different principles may think, they dare not plainly contradict it.—Every man has it in his power to speak well of one another,



but nobody must take the liberty to speak ill of a man in a public court, unless he can also venture to give him a libel. Many a time have I heard young men highly extolled in church courts, when their settlement was in dependence, who, in strict truth, were but middling kind of men, and some of them very heavy, who afterwards proved no small incumbrance upon the moderate body.

As to the other part of the maxim, taking away their character for ability when they apostatize to orthodoxy, this will be easily accounted for, if it be remembered how they came by it. It was freely given them ; and therefore it may be taken away at pleasure : It was given to bring them in as an additional strength to the moderate interest ; and therefore, when they forsake that interest, it is but just to deprive them of it. If any shall object, that this is not agreeable to the strict rules of veracity, I desire it may be remembered, that the present fashionable scheme of moral philosophy is much improved in comparison of that which prevailed some time ago. Virtue does not now consist in “ acting agreeably to the nature of things,” as Dr. Clarke affirms ; nor in “ acting according to truth,” which an old school-master, one Woollaston, once wrote a book to prove ; but in “ the good of the whole ;” and therefore an illustrious and noble end sanctifies the means of attaining it. Our sentiments, in this respect, are described by an anonymous poet, who, I believe meant no good to us ; however, it points out the character pretty plainly thus :

“ To second him rose surly Peter,  
“ An angry bigot for good-nature :  
“ That truth should valued be by measure,  
    “ And weight, he thought ;  
“ That inch of truth, in courtesy,  
“ To span of interest should give way ?  
“ And pound of gain, for ounce of lie,  
    “ Is cheaply bought.”

If it be further objected, That still this only satisfies ourselves, whereas in the case in hand it is necessary to

satisfy the world. As to this, we can freely say, that the man was good, but now he is bad; and that is no contradiction: for though the Confession of Faith maintains the infallible perseverance of the saints in grace, yet we never affirmed the necessary perseverance of men in moderation, these two things being entirely distinct the one from the other. Some of our friends do fall away now and then: our strength, for ordinary, consists in young men; for there are several who, in old age, through the decay of their faculties, begin to incline a little to orthodoxy, and then we term them, not “old men,” but “old wives.” However, there are also some, who not only persevere, but gloriously improve in moderation to the latest old age, and to their dying day; of which number was the late Rev. Mr. J. R. in K. whose name I have thought proper to record in this immortal work, that it may be had in everlasting remembrance.

## M A X I M X.

**WHENEVER** we have got a settlement decided over the belly perhaps of the whole people in the parish, by a majority in the General Assembly, the victory should be improved, by appointing some of the orthodox opposers of the settlement to execute it, especially those of them that pretend to have a scruple of conscience at having an active hand in any such settlement.

**THEY** do not deserve a victory, who know not how to push it, or to improve the advantage they have gained. A sentence of the General Assembly, even as of any other court, signifies nothing, if it be not executed. To rest satisfied with the victory we have gained, by the bare decision, would indeed be yielding it back again, and losing in fact, what we gained in appearance. This is self-evident. But the next point is, Who shall be employed in executing it; those who appointed, or those who pretend a scruple of conscience at doing what appears to their disordered intellects to be what they call sinful?—Now, as to this, allow me only to ask a few plain questions.

Is not every society divided into the governing and the governed, the masters and the servants? What is the subject of any debate in the Assembly that ends in a vote, but to determine who is the one, and who is the other? when once a vote has made us masters, does not the same vote make the minority servants? And do I need to ask further, if there is any piece of drudgery to be performed, who it belongs to, the masters or the servants? Apply this then to the case in hand: Who would hazard his own life in fording a river, if he had a servant to try the depth of it before him? Who would chuse to go to a pulpit under a shower of stones from an enraged populace, if he had others under his authority, whom he could send upon the same ungracious errand?

Now, the usefulness of this conduct is very evident: for it is plain, they will either obey or disobey. If the first is the case, then we shall have the honor of bringing them, and they themselves the profit and advantage of being brought, into the hatred and abhorrence of the common people; in commendation of which state, enough has been said already. If they disobey, they must be deposed, and cast out as incorrigible, to make way for those that are better than themselves. This will be to the advantage of the church: for young men, "*cæteris paribus*," are much better than old.

As this method of purging the church of corrupt members is like to be a prevailing measure in our days, I shall endeavor to support it by a few, but these demonstrative arguments; in most of which, indeed, I shall have little more than the honor of recording the sentiments and reasoning of some eminent men that were members of the two last General Assemblies.

In the first place it is certain, that the command of a proper authority is sufficient to make any action not only innocent and lawful, but perfectly right, and strictly obligatory; inasmuch that if an executioner should be commanded to hang his father or son, for praying to God, or reading his Bible; nay, if one of Jesus Christ's disciples had happened to have been a Roman soldier, and should have been commanded to crucify his master, he should

have betrayed the most egregious ignorance of the Christian religion, had he made the least difficulty in executing such orders.

It is to no purpose here to object the immutability of moral laws, and the supreme authority of God : for if obedience to human authority be one of his laws, as it plainly is, then all his other laws must be submitted to such alterations and suspensions as our superiors think proper. The apostles do indeed sometimes speak of “ obey-  
“ ing God rather than man ;” but we can explain this as easily as we do another text, in the third chapter of the Romans, which seems to teach, that “ we should not do  
“ evil that good may come :” for as, in the one case, whatever promotes good cannot be evil ; so, in the other, if human authority be once duly interposed, it is obeying God to comply with whatever is enjoined thereby ; and therefore it is impossible that ever there can an interference happen. Besides, some allowance must, no doubt, be made for the difference of times, and disadvantages which all the ancient writers lay under, the late fine improvements in the science of morals not having then been ex-  
cogitated. But I can assure the reader, the principle which I have laid down, is now the doctrine of this church, wherein both divines and lawyers who are members of our Assemblies, are entirely agreed, and will not suffer any body to call it in question. And what an obvious beauty has moral virtue gained from the delicate and skilful hands that have lately been employed in dressing her ladyship ! She was once stiff and rigid, like ice or cold iron ; now she is yielding as water, and, like iron hot from the furnace, can easily be beaten into what shape you please. And here I must say, I think it some pity that so fine a genius as Grotius did not flourish somewhat later, or that the moral sense was not started a little earlier, and so that great man preserved from falling into so great a blunder as the maintaining, that “ even military  
“ authority may be resisted ; and that a case may be given,  
“ when a soldier ought to disobey orders :” for now it is a sealed point, that even ecclesiastical authority (which, if there were any difference, I allow ought rather to be

the milder of the two) is sufficient to bear down before it what were once called the "eternal," no less, and "immutable laws of morality;" and, by divine authority, "is paramount to divine authority itself."

I shall only observe two very plain and clear advantages in this principle, whereby it will appear, how happy it is that the church hath fallen so entirely in with it, and proceeds so uniformly upon it.

The first is, that in case of necessity, an action which no body would chuse perhaps to take the weight of upon them, may yet be done without the least hazard of any body's being called to account for it in the other world. If the doer of an action were to be the judge of its lawfulness, he might be damned perhaps for doing it, in case it were found to be wrong; but upon this principle of implicit obedience to his superiors, there is no repelling his defence: it was not his province to judge whether it was lawful or unlawful; and the Assembly or Commission who gave the order, being bodies politic, are, by that time, all dissolved, and appear only in the capacity of individuals.

The other advantage is this, that if the supreme court of any kind, were allowed to be the only proper judge of the lawfulness of its own appointments, it would be impossible, in the nature of things, that ever there could be a separation in the church, or a rebellion in the state. The justness of this consequence is so evident, that I shall not spend any time in illustrating it, but heartily wish the principle from which it flows, were universally embraced.

In the second place, the disobedient brethren have but one pretence for their conduct, which is groundless, viz. a "scruple of conscience:" as to which, hear Dr. Goodman, a noble English writer: "A tender conscience is nothing else but an ignorant and uninstructed mind; or a sickly, melancholy, and superstitious understanding." I could easily show, that there is no such thing as a real scruple of conscience: the lawyers in the General Assembly, who are men of as great penetration as any in the land, have most of them plainly declared, that they do not conceive it possible. A certain learned gentleman

of this court hath assured us, that taking away ministers stipends would enlighten their conscience. The renowned author of *Hudibras* is known to be of the same opinion: from which two authorities I will endeavor to amend Dr. Goodman's definition: for a "tender conscience is "not an ignorant mind," but a "full stomach." This accounts for appearances better, and particularly for the epithet of tender, commonly given to it, as all physicians are agreed, that a wound upon a full stomach is very dangerous. Having thus rooted up the very foundation of this pretence, it is needless to go through the several particulars insisted upon by the disobedient as straitening to them: and therefore I shall but in a word mention one of them. They pretend it is a profane farce to confer, in a solemn manner, the care of the souls of a certain people, when nothing is really conferred but a legal title to a benefice: as also, that the candidate cannot conscientiously answer several of the questions commonly put on those occasions. But is it not extremely strange, that any body can be so dull as not to regard these questions in their only true and proper light, as a necessary piece of formality, without which a charge of tithing for the stipends could not be raised? And as to the other part of the objection, whether it be not much more a mock ceremony, to ordain a man to a congregation, when a title to the benefice cannot be conferred, I shall leave the reader to determine, as if the case were his own.

The third principle upon which our conduct is founded, is of such undoubted verity, that the bare mentioning of it is sufficient to convince all the world how little it stands in need of any proof; accordingly no moderate man views it in any other light than as an axiom, or self-evident truth; namely, That if any excuse for disobedience were once admitted, or any indulgence granted to these tender-conscienced inferiors, there would be an end of all government in an instant; neither commands nor obedience could proceed one step further, but every individual instrument of power, in that fatal society, astonished at the monstrous phenomenon, would stare at one another; all the wheels of the political ma-

chine would stop at once: nay, would split into ten thousand pieces; every relation and connexion of their parts would be instantly dissolved, and the beautiful whole would rush into a wild chaos of anarchy and confusion. The reader will easily believe, I am too wise to offer a proof of an axiom or self-evident truth\*; however, I think it but fair to inform him, that such is the nature of paper and ink, that they have not the power of doing it all the justice even in narration, of which it is capable elsewhere. Whoever has heard the demonstrative tone, or beheld the infallible air, and gesture of certainty, with which it has been asserted by an Assembly-orator, would be ashamed that he ever stood in need to be put in mind of it: for my own part, I am so entirely influenced by it, that if the most faithful, diligent, and useful servant should, in the humblest manner represent to me, that he had a scruple about executing any of my orders, and beg to be excused, suppose from shaving me on Sunday morning, and I should unfortunately be so far off my guard, as for once to indulge him, I would immediately dissolve my whole family, and never more think of lodging with a living soul under the same unhappy roof.

Against this principle, however, some have presumed to object particular instances in Scripture-history, of such excuses being actually admitted, without any apparent dissolution of the constitution: such as Gideon's passing from his order to his son to kill the two princes of Midian, and slaying them himself; and that of Saul, who when his guards refused to fall upon the priests, committed that affair to another, without any farther noise. Now, not to mention the difficulty of arguing from facts

\* I desire that this general assertion may not be misunderstood, as if I intended a reflection upon some late discoveries in moral philosophy: for though an axiom, or self-evident truth, cannot be proved: yet a great genius, who can do any thing, may take a view of these same axioms, dignify and adorn them, by writing an essay round about each of them, and prove that they ought to be called feelings. This is greatly to the advantage of the commonwealth of learning, as experience may shew.



of an ancient date, cited only by one author, and that very curtly, I humbly conceive these instances produced, make directly against the objection ; for it appears to me very evident, that the kingdom was taken from Saul, and given to David, for this very reason, he being unfit to govern, by thus allowing his authority to be trampled upon. Nor will it be easy to assign any different reason, why none of the posterity of Gideon were ever permitted to rule Israel. There are some later instances of that sort, nearer home, thrown up by shallow politicians ; as that of the hangman at Ayr, who refused to execute the Whigs in King Charles the III'd's time ; and that which happened a few years ago among ourselves, when the civil government overlooked the disobedience of a set of refractory clergymen who refused to read the act of parliament against the murderers of Captain Porteous. In the first of these cases, the judges acted in a laudable manner ; for they deprived the man of his benefice : and for the crime of his disobedience, I am persuaded he died childless, for I have never heard of any of his posterity in that part of the country. In the other case, I confess the government was much to be blamed ; and have long been of opinion, that their detestable lenity, at that time, was the cause of the late rebellion, which followed so soon after it. It is to be hoped they will take warning for the time to come ; for I am persuaded, one other instance of the same kind would effectually set the Pretender upon the throne of Britain.

The last principle which I shall mention, and which, with the rest, I am sure is abundantly sufficient to support the maxim laid down for our conduct, is, That the best method of conviction, and of all others the most proper for a church-court, is that of authority, supported in its highest rigor by censures, which may be felt by men of the dullest capacities, as deposition, and suspension from benefice as well as office. If the goodness of an argument, or the excellency of a method, is to be measured by the frequency of recourse that is had to it, I think none can dispute precedence with this. It must be allowed to be, of all others, the most Christian method ; it

reigned over the whole church without a rival, for many ages; and though protestants, for a while pretended to find fault with it in the hands of their enemies; yet, which of them all, when they became able to make use of it, have not tried it in their turn? And whether we consider the majority, by whose hands this weapon is to be wielded, or the minority upon whom the weight of it must fall, it will plainly appear to be admirably suited to the present times. As to the beasts of burden, who fall to be driven by this method, they are known to be such dull and lifeless animals (as they are most of them past the vigor of youth) that no other argument can make any impression upon them. However a horse might be managed, who is a generous creature, no body could think of another method to make an ass move, but constantly to belabour its sides. There cannot be a clearer evidence of the dulness and stupidity of these obstinate beings we have to do with, than the expence of rhetoric that has been thrown away upon them, to persuade them of a thing as clear as the sun, viz. that if they had any conscience they would depose themselves, and yield their place to more pliable successors. They even pretend conscience here again; and tell us they are placed in a station which they dare not desert, unless they be thrust out of it. Now, let the reader judge how incapable of persuasion one must be, to find difficulty in so plain a case; and therefore how necessary it is, that a more effectual method should be tried.

On the other hand, the majority in Assemblies and Commissions seems, at present, to be peculiarly adapted to such a method of conviction as I have mentioned. One part of our strength lies in the laity who attend our judicatures; these, as they possess no benefice in the church, they are out of the reach of this sort of censure, and therefore are only capable of inflicting, but not of suffering it; and as they are not much accustomed to solving cases of conscience, what other method can occur to them, when things of this nature are thrown in their way, than the more gentleman-like method, for which Alexander the Great is so justly celebrated, viz. cutting

the troublesome knot, which they would find tedious and difficult to untie? The rest of our side consists in clergy of the youngest sort; who, as they are imitators of the manners of gentlemen, may be supposed to act with the same spirit in public judgment. Though they can give flourishes of rhetoric enough; nay, though of one of them in particular, I may literally say,

—————He cannot open  
His mouth, but out there flies a trope;

yet as for logic, it is well known this part of education is fallen into great contempt; and it is not to be expected, that such brisk and lively spirits, who have always hated every thing that looked scholastic-like, can bear to be tied down to the strict methods of argumentation. But though we were greater masters in this method of conviction, yet our blood may be easily supposed too warm for any thing that is so slow, and at best so uncertain in its success. No; we are now the majority, and our power as a late acquisition, is the more agreeable for being new; we must taste the sweets of authority, which can only be by compelling our inferiors to obey us. If our sentences are executed, it is the same thing to the new incumbent, the same thing to the church in general, and the same thing to us, whether the executors are willing or unwilling; for, as to that whole matter of conscience, about which so much noise is made, I have already related our sentiments; from whence it is evident, that such nonsense, as laying a violent temptation in men's way to act against the light of their own mind, is nothing but words without a meaning. And as to the expression of the apostle Paul, about church-power, which he uses over and over again, that it is "for edification, and not for destruction;" it is no secret, that there is a various reading; and if once we had, "for destruction and not for edification," established as the true reading, which, if we were dealers in criticism, might perhaps be easily done, we should not only get rid of this troublesome text, but make an acquisition of it on our side of the question, to the confusion of our greatest enemies.

## M A X I M XI.

The character which moderate men give their adversaries, of the orthodox party, must always be that of "knaves" or "fools;" and, as occasion serves, the same person (if it will pass) may be represented as a "knave" at one time, and as a "fool" at another.

THE justness of this proceeding may be easily made appear. The principles of moderation being so very evident to reason, it is a demonstration, that none but unreasonable men can resist their influence: and therefore we cannot suppose, that such as are against us can be so from conscience. Besides, setting aside the superior intrinsic excellence of the one set of principles above the other, there are much stronger carnal motives, to speak in their own style, to act in their way, than in ours; and therefore there is great ground to conclude, that they act from hypocrisy, but not so of us. They please the people; we please, at least endeavor to please, those of high rank. Now there are many remarkable advantages they gain by pleasing the people; whereas it is evident, "ex post facto," that we gain nothing by pleasing the gentry; for they never trampled upon us so much as of late; and have entirely defeated our application to parliament for augmentation of stipend. So far are we from being in any respect the better of the gentry, that we have really great reason to complain of them; for when we have endeavored to ingratiate ourselves with them, by softness and complaisance, and by going considerable lengths with them in their freedom, they oftentimes most ungenerously despise us but the more: nay, many of them have first taught us to live at a high rate, and then refuse to give us any thing to keep it up. Now, as we men of reason could not but foresee this, it is plain nothing but the most disinterested virtue could lead us to act as we have done. Whereas, on the other hand, the orthodox have gained, and do possess the esteem of the common people; and so, it is plain they could have no other view in their conduct but to attain it. However, to shew our

charity, we allow there are some on their side who are indifferently honest; but these are men of very weak intellectuals, as is evident from their not thinking as we do.

The other part of the maxim is abundantly reasonable, but not so easily put in practice, viz. representing the same individual person sometimes as a knave, and sometimes as a fool. This affair is sometimes unluckily managed, when it is incautiously attempted. In order to its being done successfully, therefore let the following rules be observed.

1st. Let a man be represented as a knave and a hypocrite to one sort of people in the world; and let him be represented as a fool, not to the same, but to another sort: let the first be chiefly your better sort of people, particularly those among them that hate much profession of religion, and are apt to call all strictness hypocrisy: the other it is plain, must be the simple and credulous.

The second rule is, that, if possible, there should be different persons employed in spreading these different calumnies of the same man. By this apparent consistency in every one's opinion with itself, they will be the more easily maintained, and be the less liable to discovery: and thus, as the several wheels of a watch, by opposite motions, promote the same end; so the several members of the moderate body, by seemingly different and opposite means, conspire in promoting the good of the whole. The principle upon which these two rules are founded, is, That probability ought to be studied in every falsehood we would have believed; which principle is laid down, and finely illustrated, in the *Art of Political Lying*, said to be wrote by one Dr. Arbuthnot.

It will not, I hope, be reckoned wandering from my subject, when I observe, that the very same principle of studying probability is to be applied to the celebration of the characters of our friends, as well as the defamation of our enemies. These two designs indeed have a very strong connexion, and do mutually support and promote one another. Praising one character is, by necessary and manifest consequence, a defamation of its opposite; and,

in some cases, which may easily be conceived, it is the most eligible, and the most effectual way of doing it. I have been present at a conversation, where the chief intention of one of the speakers, and what he had most at heart, was to ruin the character and reputation of a certain person who happened to be mentioned, with his hearers; but he could not well know, whether they were able to bear a large quantity of unmixed reproach, he chose the wiser and safer method, of celebrating another character, and drawing it with all his art, in such a manner, as the strongest opposition possible might appear, in some of its circumstances, to that of the person intended to be wounded by reflection.

But in this, as in the former case, great judgment and prudence must be used; nothing must be said, the contrary of which is, or may be easily known to be true; and particularly all the antiquated orthodox phrases, in giving a minister's character, are to be religiously avoided. The necessity of this direction will best appear from an example: Suppose I should say of Momus, he was a youth of early, and continues to be a man of eminent piety, walking with God, and spending many hours every day in secret devotion; has a deep and strong sense upon his mind, of the worth and value of time, and lays it out wholly in fitting others and himself for eternity; has so sacred a regard for truth, that he never tells a lie, even in jest; has a most humble deportment, and is perfectly free from that prevailing fault of triumphing over the weak or shame-faced by raillery or impudence; has been frequently heard to express his displeasure at all lenity of carriage, and frothy unprofitable discourse, in persons of the sacred characters; and as he was always himself remarkable for a purity of conversation, so he cannot allow the most distant allusion to obscenity to pass without a reproof; in short, his whole behavior commands both the reverence and love of all who have the happiness of his acquaintance. I say, if I should draw the character of Momus in this manner, as some authors do those of the Puritan clergy about a hundred years ago, it is probable he would give me no thanks: and indeed,

he would owe me none ; for it would have much more the air of a satire than of a panegyric.

It is, however, possible to draw a character of the same person, which shall have some truth, and much probability in it ; and which, as being the character of a modern, shall be much more in the modern commendatory style. He is a man of a most sprightly and lively fancy, of an inexhaustible fund of wit and humour, where he pleases to display it, though the iniquity of the times has, in some measure, checked its indulgence. He is, notwithstanding the grimness of his countenance, entirely free from any sourness or moroseness of temper, so that in his conversation a man may enjoy all manner of ease and freedom. He is a most genteel and elegant preacher and poet ; and, to my knowledge, a man of a warm and good heart.\*

## M A X I M XII.

As to the world in general, a moderate man is to have great charity for Atheists and Deists in principle, and for persons that are loose and vicious in their practice ; but none at all for those that have a high profession of religion, and a great pretence to strictness in their walk and conversation.

THIS maxim seems to be pretty strongly laid ; and yet, upon a strict inquiry, it will be found that we follow it very exactly. That we have charity for the first-mentioned sort of persons, is evident ; for we endeavor to accommodate ourselves to them, and draw as near them as possibly we can, insisting upon nothing in our sermons but what may be said to be a part, or an improvement, of the law of nature. And as to our having no charity for the other sort, it is as evident ; witness the odious idea we have affixed to the name of a professor (unless when it

\* This expression, “ a man of a good heart,” is much in fashion among the moderate, and of great significancy and beauty ; but it is only to be used in speaking to persons of some degree of taste ; for I knew a particular instance in which it disobliterated the person it was intended to gain.



is meant of a professor in a college ;) and witness our ironical way of speaking, when we say of a man, he has a "grave sanctified air." Nay, even holiness and godliness are seldom taken by us in a very good sense : when we say, "One of the holy brethren," or, "A good godly lady," they would mistake us very much that would think we had a high opinion of any of these persons.

This our conduct a certain young man of the orthodox-  
side, reflected very severely upon, as he thought, in a  
sermon, which he afterwards printed, in words to this  
purpose : "They can indeed talk very fluently of uni-  
"versal benevolence, and a charitable candid disposition—  
"but their charity is confined to those who favor their  
"opinions, or perhaps are indifferent about religion alto-  
"gether ; while the least appearance of serious devotion,  
"or fervent zeal for God, is enough to forfeit it. Indeed  
"this charity is as mysterious as the faith of the most bi-  
"gotted Catholic ; it is equally full of contradictions ;  
"and seems resolved to found itself, not upon evidence,  
"but upon the want of it. Where every thing has the  
"worst appearance, there they will believe well ; but  
"where the outward conduct is blameless, they candidly  
"suspect that nothing but hypocrisy lies at the bottom."  
But, with the leave of this smart youth, what he says of  
us is very true, and we maintain it to be right : for the  
very meaning of charity is to believe without evidence ;  
it is no charity at all to believe good of a man when we  
see it, but when we do not see it. It is with charity in  
sentiment, as with charity in supplying the wants of the  
necessitous ; we do not give alms to the rich but to the  
poor. In like manner, when there are all outward ap-  
pearances of goodness, it requires no charity to believe  
well of the persons : but when there are none at all, or per-  
haps very many to the contrary, then I will maintain it  
is charity, and charity in its perfection, to believe well  
of them. Some object to this, Well, since it is your will,  
have charity for them ; but have charity also for such as  
are apparently good. Oh ! the stupid world ! and flow  
of heart to conceive ! is it not evident to a demonstration,  
that if the appearance of wickedness be the foundation of

charity, the appearance of goodness, which is its opposite, must be the foundation of a quite contrary judgment, viz. suspecting, or rather believing ill of them? If any still insist, That if not charity, yet justice should incline us to believe well of them? as I have seemingly confessed; I answer, That we have no occasion for justice, if we have charity; for charity is more than justice, even as the whole is more than a part: but though I have supposed, “argumentandi gratia,” that justice requires this, yet it is not my sentiment; for the person meant being usually great enemies to us, are thereby cut off from any claim in justice to our good opinion; and being also, as has been proved, improper objects of charity, it remains that we should hate them with perfect hatred, as in fact we do.

### M A X I M XIII.

ALL moderate men are joined together in the strictest bond of union, and do never fail to support and defend one another to the utmost, be the cause they are engaged in what it will.

THIS maxim I do not insert so much for the instruction of the ignorant, as for the perfection of my own plan, and the honor of the whole body; for I have hardly ever known it fail in any instance whatever. And as this character belongs, without controversy, to all the moderate, so it belongs to them by an exclusive privilege; for they do most loudly complain of, and load with most opprobrious epithets, any of the orthodox, who attempt to imitate them in it, as has been sometimes known. Nothing indeed can be more just and reasonable than these complaints; for such conduct in the orthodox is a plain desertion of their own principles, a robbery and invasion of the property of others. Conscience, upon which they pretend to act, is, of all things, the most stiff and inflexible; and cannot by any art, be moulded into another shape, than that which it naturally bears: whereas the whole principles of moderation are most gentle and ductile, and may be applied to almost all purposes imaginable.

If any, through an envious infidelity, entertain a doubt of the truth asserted in the maxim, they are referred, for satisfaction, to the history of the proceedings of this church for these twenty years past, which I take to have been the true reforming period; and are hereby defied to produce an instance in which any moderate man, wise or unwise, old or young, grave or sprightly, failed to concur in supporting one of his own side, whatever was his cause, active or passive, a project for advancement, or the danger of a prosecution. Let but one of us start a scheme, in which he may find his account, or become candidate for an office, the whole, upon the first impulse, as the concordant strings of a musical instrument answer to the touch, return and reverberate the sound. If Momus unwarily makes a sally into the territories of "good-humoured vice," and is unhappily betrayed by those who ought not to have been trusted; how powerfully is he upheld by the gravest of the party, and the uncharitable malevolent enemy stung and destroyed, like the bear in the fable, for disturbing the hive of industrious bees? Nay, as a yet stronger instance, (being more against nature) I could shew, in the records of a certain presbytery, declarations signed by the most moderate hands, and yet containing as high and ranting expressions in favor of the rights of the Christian people, as ever were used by the most orthodox writer; because, by a wonderful concurrence of circumstances, they served, at that time, to promote the settlement of a moderate man.

Every eye must immediately perceive the beauty and excellence of this part of our character. What more amiable than union? or what more necessary to the support of any society? and what more hateful and horrid than discord and division? Is it not also, by this very means, that we have obtained the victory, and do still preserve our superiority over the orthodox party? They are wholly ignorant of the laws of society, as they have been lately well explained by some of our brethren in print; and know not that all who enter into it, give up their rights as individuals, and are bound "to follow what they disapprove;" to see with the eyes, and act for the interest of the whole body.

It must be no small commendation of such conduct, that in so doing we either follow, or are followed, by the most eminent and illustrious characters in this nation. It is probable there may be several controverted elections tried before the parliament in a short time ; and I dare say, any wise man will foretel their issue in each case, much more certainly from the character of the person, than from the merits of the cause. And it is with some pleasure I observe, that whoever began this practice first, we have carried it to the greatest perfection : for amongst us, the characters of men have been openly pleaded in defence of their cause, which, if I am not mistaken, hath hardly ever been done in any civil court.

How admirably does this principle fall in with the scheme of philosophy upon which the present generation is formed ! It illustrates the truth of Mr. H——n's doctrine, That virtue is founded upon instinct and affection, and not upon reason : that benevolence is its source, support, and perfection ; and that all the particular rules of conduct are to be suspended, when they seem to interfere with the general good. In short, it shews that the moderate are a transcript in miniature, and do most distinctly exhibit the order, proportion, and unity of design in the universal system.

Time would fail me, if I should go through all the excellencies of this crowning maxim ; and therefore I shall only further observe, that it excels all the known principles of action for clearness and perspicuity. In order to determine which side to chuse in a disputed question, it requires no long discussions of reason, no critical inquiry into the truth of controverted facts, but only some knowledge of the characters of men ; a study much more agreeable, as well as more common, than that of books. To speak more properly, it requires no study at all of any kind ; for, as to the gross, or general tendency of a character, common fame communicates the impression, and seldom or never deceives us. This is probably the reason that the maxim, as has been observed at the beginning of the illustration, is constantly and unerringly followed by the moderate of every age and condition : on which

account I give it as my opinion, that it be added to the number of the feelings, which are at present so much upon the growing hand.

Thus I have laid down and illustrated these excellent maxims, not without labour and expence of thought; and I think, carried them so far as to make a complete system for the education and accomplishment of a moderate clergyman, for his guidance in public judgment, and his direction as to private practice. And now, courteous reader, as a traveller, after having gone through the different parts of a country, ascends some eminence to review the whole, let us stand still and rejoice over the happy state of our mother-church of Scotland, in which moderation so greatly prevails; and let us rejoice in hope of what improvements she may yet arrive at, by adhering to these maxims, now digested into such admirable form and order. O what noble, sublime, and impenetrable sermons shall now be preached! What victories and triumphs shall be obtained over the stupid populace, by forced settlements, which never have such a beautiful and orderly form, as when finished by soldiers, marching in comely array, with shining arms: a perfect image of the church-militant! And what perfectly virtuous and sinless lives shall be led by these clergy, who with steady eye, regard the good of this vast whole, which never yet went wrong! There is nothing indeed that any way tarnishes the beauty of this prospect, but the miscarriage of the augmentation-scheme; over which I could now lament in elegiac strains, but that my hope is not yet quite extinct; for who can tell whether, when we shall have brought moderation to perfection, when we shall have driven away the whole common people to the Seceders, who alone are fit for them, and captivated the hearts of the gentry to a love of our solitary temples, they may not be pleased to allow us more stipends, because we shall have nothing to do but to spend them?

I would now propose, that the next ensuing General Assembly would appoint (what indeed I might not without some reason expect, whether they appoint it or not) that all the professors of divinity in the nation shall lec-

ture one day every week upon this system of moderation, that our youth may be trained up from their infancy in a taste for it. This, I am sure, will be much more profitable than any of the antiquated systems of divinity, as Piſtet or Turretine ; nay, I am persuaded, it is more exactly calculated for the present times, than even the more modern authors, Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus, which last, in Mr. Foulis's translation hath, by many young divines, in their first year, been mistaken for Markii Medulla Theologiæ.

If this my treatise shall meet with the success and acceptance that it justly deserves, it is my intention to offer to the public a still more minute and particular delineation of the moderate character, either in another book of a different form from this, or perhaps in a second edition of the same ; which shall in that case, be the text, and to which I will add large explanatory notes, containing much private history, and referring to many particular facts, in order to render it the more grateful, as well as the more instructing to the reader. I have also by me the "*ſtamina vitæ*" of many useful and edifying treatises, which shall be produced in due time, as the muses shall give assistance ; such as, The art of making a flourished sermon with very little matter, by a proper mixture of similies, and by repeating every paragraph over again in the form of a soliloquy : One resolution of all cases of conscience, from the good of the whole scheme : A directory for prayer, upon the same scheme : The horrid sin and danger of ministers spending too much time in catechising and visiting in country-parishes ; I do not make any mention of towns, to avoid giving offence ; as also, lest it should prove true what I have heard, that the practice is scarcely known in any of our great towns, in which case, my reasonings would look like beating the air. These, with many others, I am with assiduous care purchasing materials for completing, by observation and conversation, that our church may go on in a progressive motion toward the zenith of perfection and meridian of glory.

I shall now shut up this work, by acquainting the reader with a secret, which perhaps he would not otherwise advert to, viz. that I enjoy the pleasure of having done a thing seemingly quite impracticable. I have given the moderate, and those who desire to be instructed in that science, a complete view of the maxims and principles of moderation, without, at the same time, prostituting or giving them up to the possession of every common reader. Perhaps some will ask, how I imagine I have effected this? I answer, that I have so framed the whole of my book, that it is really intelligible only to persons duly qualified; and to every such person it is transparent as the spring-water. I have given only moderate reasons for moderate principles, so that however strongly they may convince some, viz. those of our kidney, others they will be so far from convincing, that they will be thought to operate a quite contrary way. I have managed this so carefully, that I could venture to lay a wager of all that I am worth, that this treatise shall be taken, by very many, to be the work of an orthodox pen, and to be intended as a banter upon moderate men and their way. They will be tempted to laugh at us, whom they will imagine to be exposed by this revelation of our mysteries: but how ingeniously are they deceived? For, by that very means, every properly prejudiced mind is furnished with a complete system, upon which to form his sentiments, and regulate his conduct.



A S E R I O U S

A P O L O G Y

F O R T H E

ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

*By the real AUTHOR of that Performance.*

TO THE  
 NOBILITY AND GENTRY  
 OF  
 SCOTLAND,

PARTICULARLY

*uch of them as are* ELDERS *of the* CHURCH, *and fre-*  
*quently Members of the* GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Right Honorable, and Right Worshipful,

**T**HERE was prefixed to the Ecclesiastical Character-  
 istics a ludicrous dedication; there seems therefore  
 some propriety in prefixing a serious dedication to this  
 Apology. To whom it ought to be addressed, could scarce  
 admit of a moment's hesitation. It professes to aim at  
 promoting the interest of religion in the Church of Scot-  
 land; and certainly none have it so much in their power  
 to preserve or improve the constitution, both in church  
 and state, as your Lordships and Worshipful.

I am not to flatter you with an entire approbation of  
 your past conduct as church-members. The design of  
 this address is rather to beseech you, in the most respect-  
 ful manner, seriously to consider, whether you ought any  
 longer to give countenance to the measures which have for  
 some time generally prevailed. I am encouraged to this,  
 by reflecting, that it is to you, indeed, we are obliged for  
 setting some bounds to the attempts of the high-flying cler-  
 gy. I could give several instances of this; but shall only  
 mention one, because it is very recent. In the Assembly  
 1762, it was evidently owing to the honorable members,  
 that a sanction was not given to a resolution, of inflicting  
 censures upon ministers, merely for preaching to their  
 own people at their desire: a thing so odious in its ap-

pearance, and so dangerous as an example, that no circumstances or ends to be served by it, could possibly justify it.

I have already hinted, that you are most "able" to promote salutary measures in the church-courts; give me leave to add, that I firmly believe you will be first "willing" to make any change for the better. Individuals may, but, in the present state of human nature, it ought not to be expected, that the majority of any body of men will give up private benefit in wealth, power, or ease, for public good. Therefore, when once the clergy are corrupted, their reformation can be looked for from the laity only, and not from themselves. There is an observation to this purpose in the Rev. Dr. Robertson's history,\* which deserves to be written in letters of gold: "They" (i. e. the Protestants) "applied to another assembly, to a convocation of the Popish clergy; but with the same ill success which hath always attended every proposal for reformation addressed to that order of men. To abandon usurped power, to renounce lucrative error, is a sacrifice, which the virtue of individuals has, on some occasions, offered to truth; but from any society of men, no such effort can be expected. The corruptions of a society, recommended by common utility, and justified by universal practice, are viewed by its members without shame or horror; and reformation never proceeds from themselves, but is always forced upon them by some foreign hand." I am so much of that eminent writer's opinion, that I look upon every attempt for reviving the interest of religion as quite hopeless, unless you be pleased to support it; and, at the same time, am not without the strongest expectation, that the period is fast approaching, when you will see it necessary to interpose.

Will you indulge me in adding a fanciful reason for my hope. Many of you have been bred to the study of the law. Now, I have observed in reading the New Testament, that it was a lawyer who took care of the body of our Saviour, after it had been crucified at the instigation of the priests. His name was Joseph of Arimathea, "an honorable man, and a counsellor," and the fact is re-

corded by all the four evangelists. Who knows therefore but the gentlemen of the same profession among us may be the instruments of delivering the church, which is Christ's mystical body, from the tyrannical impositions of churchmen in power ?

Look into the history of this and every other church, and you will see, that the laity never lent their influence to promote the ambition and secular greatness of ecclesiastics, but they received their reward in ingratitude and contempt. I have heard many of you praised as great friends to the church. By this is meant, that you have a friendship for, and are ready to increase the revenues and worldly convenience of those who bear the sacred office, who are also called Clergy. I beg leave to observe, that the wisest of mankind are sometimes deceived by words, and patiently submit to gradual and insensible usurpations. Both the words Clergy and Church are an incroachment on the teachers upon you, and all the other hearers of the gospel. The first of them comes from *kleros*, which signifies inheritance, and when appropriated to ministers, seems to intimate that they alone are God's inheritance, while surely some of the people are as much his inheritance as they. The word Church is a Scripture phrase, and is used about one hundred times in the New Testament. But of all these, in not above one or two at most can it be pretended to signify the ministers, exclusive of the people. Therefore if you be friends to the church, take the word in its proper and genuine sense, and admit the people to a due proportion of your favor.

Far be it from me to blame those who shew a friendship and attachment to ministers, and wish to see them comfortably and decently provided for. This is highly necessary to free them from that anxiety and solicitude which is inseparable from a poor and dependant state. But why are they to be provided for at all ? or why is it an amiable character to be a friend to the church ? Surely that the great ends of their sacred function may be promoted ; that, freed from the necessity of attending to secular pursuits, they may have liberty to bestow their time and pains for the spiritual benefit of those committed to their care.

For this reason, I humbly intreat you, who, by your exalted stations, only can do it with success, to frown upon the luxurious and aspiring, to encourage the humble and diligent clergyman. The interest of religion in this nation, is an object of the highest value in itself, and inseparable from our temporal prosperity. On both accounts I hope it will be the object of your most tender care ; and, in return, may it please God to make you know to your happy experience the truth of his own word, “ Them that honor me, I will honor ; but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.”

I am, &c.

## A S E R I O U S

## A P O L O G Y

F O R T H E

## ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

**T**HE Ecclesiastical Characteristics is evidently a satire upon clergymen of a certain character. It is a satire too, which every body must see was intended to carry in it no small measure of keenness and severity. This was to be expected from the nature and design of the performance. A satire that does not bite is good for nothing. Hence it necessarily follows, that it is essential to this manner of writing, to provoke and give offence. The greatest satirists, in all ages, have made just as many enemies to themselves, as they exposed objects of scorn and derision to the public.\* It was certainly, on this account, easy to foresee what would be the effect of the publication of such a piece, if it was executed in a tolerable manner; and therefore I hope every impartial person will not only acquit me of blame, but confess I acted very prudently in not setting my name to the work.

The event justified this precaution. The rage and fury of many ministers in Scotland when this pamphlet was first published, is known almost to all its readers.

\* History informs us, that Horace, for his admired satires, had many private enemies in Rome; and it has been said, that our countryman Mr. Pope, durst hardly walk the streets of London, some years before his death, through fear of being attacked or pistoled, even when he met with the highest encouragement from the public.

The most opprobrious names were bestowed upon the concealed author, and the most dreadful threatenings uttered, in case they should be so fortunate as to discover and convict him. One gentleman in particular, who fell under the imputation of being concerned in it, has ever since been the object of their detestation and resentment ; although I think it remains yet very uncertain, what hand he had, or whether he had any hand at all, in its composition ; a question which I hope the present production, by a comparison with his other works, will enable the sharp-sighted public to determine.

But though I had by good management provided myself a shelter from the storm, it is not to be supposed but I heard it well enough rattling over my head. The truth is, I have listened with all possible attention to the objections raised against this performance ; and found with much concern, that the great endeavor of its enemies has been to represent the general design of it as contrary to the interest of religion ; and the spirit and manner of it, as inconsistent with the Christian temper. The common cry has been, “ The author must be a man of a bad heart “ ——No good man could write such a piece.” This has given me an irresistible inclination, upon notice that a new edition of it is intended, to send into the world, at the same time, a serious apology for it, not only for my own vindication, but that if it hath any capacity of doing good, this happy purpose may not be defeated by the implicit credit given to so heavy an accusation.

In entering upon this task, I take the liberty to affirm, that what first induced me to write, was a deep concern for the declining interest of religion in the church of Scotland, mixed with some indignation at what appeared to me a strange abuse of church-authority in the years 1751 and 1752.\* The reasons of its particular structure

\* This refers to the rebuking and deposing ministers who did not think themselves at liberty to join in the ordination of a pastor without a people. The first was done in the case of Mr. Adam and the presbytery of Linlithgow, who declined being present at the settlement of Torphichen ; the second, in the case of Mr. Gillespie, in the settlement of Inverkeithing.



will be given afterwards ; in the mean time, the reader may rest assured, that this defence shall be wholly serious, and shall not contain a single proposition which, in its plain and literal meaning, the author does not believe to be true. Not so much as attempting to borrow any assistance from wit and ridicule, he submits his cause to be tried by calm dispassionate reasoning, and only begs the impartial attention of the reader.

To free the question from ambiguity, it will be necessary to consider the performance distinctly, under the three following heads. 1. The subject of it in general ; which is confessed to be an attack upon the principles, manners, and political conduct of certain clergymen. 2. Why it is written in an assumed character and ironical style. 3. What occasion was given for it by those to whom it was evidently applied, viz. the ministers of our own church.

I. Let us consider the subject in general, viz. attacking and exposing the characters of clergymen. While I am speaking upon this head, I must take it for granted, that the faults are real ; that the satire and reproofs are just. An objection against the performance has been often made to this purpose : “ Supposing the things censured “ to be true, what end does it serve to publish them ?— “ If tenderness for the reputation of the offenders could “ not prevent such cruel treatment, ought not a regard “ for the edification of others, and the success of the gospel in their hand, to have disposed a good man to throw “ a veil over their infirmities ? Is not religion wounded “ through their sides, and occasion given to infidels to triumph ?”

In answer to this, I confess myself to have very different views of things from those who speak in this manner. Nay, I believe, that though there are some who speak as they think, yet it is much more frequently the language of those who wish nothing so much as the undisturbed indulgence of themselves in sloth, luxury, or grosser crimes. I am altogether at a loss to know what is the argument in reason, or the precept in Scripture, which makes it criminal to censure ministers when they deserve it. That their station, like that of all other persons of

influence, or in public employment, should make men very tender and cautious how they take up an evil report against them, and careful never to do it but on good grounds, I readily allow ; but where the character is really bad, I hold it as a first principle, that as it is in them doubly criminal and doubly pernicious, so it ought to be exposed with double severity. This is so far from being contrary to the interest of religion, even when done by a clergyman, that nothing can be more honorable to it, than to show that there are some so bold as to reprove, and so faithful as to withstand the corruptions of others. How far secret wickedness should be concealed, or scenes of iniquity not laid open, and so sin turned into scandal in ministers, is a matter that would require a very careful and accurate discussion, and admits of many exceptions : but if, in any case, erroneous doctrine, or degeneracy of life, is plain and visible ; to render them completely odious, must certainly be a duty. When it is not done, it provokes men to conclude the clergy all combined together, like “ Demetrius and the craftsmen,” and more concerned for their own power and credit, than for the interest and benefit of those committed to their charge.

That irreligion and infidelity has made a rapid progress among us for some time past, is a certain, and a melancholy truth. Well ! perhaps I shall be told, That I have contributed to strengthen the cause of infidelity among the quality and gentry, by giving them such a representation of the clergy. I answer, That gentlemen’s forming a bad opinion of clergymen contributes to promote infidelity, I will by no means deny ; so far from it, I affirm that without this, all other causes put together, would not be able to produce it in any great degree. The great, as well as the vulgar, are always more influenced in their regard for, or contempt of religion, by what they see in the characters and behavior of men, than by any speculative reasonings whatever. This is what they themselves make no scruple, on many occasions, to confess. Bishop Burnet, in his Discourse of the Pastoral Care, acquaints us, that, “ having had much free conversation “ with many that have been fatally corrupted that way,

“ they have very often owned, that nothing promoted  
“ this so much in them as the bad opinion which they  
“ took up of clergymen. They did not see in them,”  
says he, “ that strictness of life, that contempt of the  
“ world, that zeal, that meekness, humility and charity,  
“ that diligence and earnestness, with relation to the  
“ great truths of the Christian religion, which they rec-  
“ koned they would most certainly have, if they them-  
“ selves firmly believed it ; therefore they concluded, that  
“ those whose business it was more strictly to inquire into  
“ the truth of their religion, knew that it was not so cer-  
“ tain as they themselves, for other ends endeavored to  
“ make the world believe it was.”

But the great, or rather the only question yet remains : Did the publication of the characteristics give the first occasion to such reflections in Scotland ? Was the first information gentlemen had of the characters of the clergy drawn from that performance ? This, which must be the very foundation of the objection we are considering, is not true : and indeed it is not possible in the nature of things, that it should be true. If there be any such thing as corruption among the clergy, by neglect of duty, luxury in dress or table, laxness in principle, or licentiousness of practice, it can be no secret to people of figure and fashion. It is commonly in their society that the most free conversation and unclerical carriage is found among gentlemen of the sacred order. And though some of the laity who regret such indecencies, may have so much good manners as to forbear upbraiding them openly, and others may perhaps not be displeased at the removal of all restraints, either from the discipline or example of ministers yet it is well known how little to their advantage persons of both sorts have talked, long before the Characteristics had a being. So that, instead of any public rebuke being the occasion of gentlemen’s forming a bad opinion of the clergy, the last, on the contrary, gave a manifest occasion for the first, if it did not make something of that kind indispensibly necessary.

Many wrong opinions arise from confounding things that have some relation to one another, but are notwith-

standing essentially distinct. Thus what ought really to be imputed to the crime, is frequently imputed to the punishment. Because a bad opinion of the clergy leads men to infidelity, therefore, say some, cover their failings, and palliate their crimes: to expose them is doing hurt to religion. On the contrary, I reckon it is far more conclusive to say, Because the bad characters of the clergy are extremely hurtful to religion, let them be told, that the greatest strictness and purity of manners is expected from them; and if any will not comply, let the guilty persons be chastised, that the honor of the order may be preserved. I was never better pleased with a story than one I have read of the late Duke of Orleans, regent of France. It happened, that during his regency, one of the French princes of the blood was convicted of committing robbery on the highway. Great intercession was made with the regent, to save him from the ignominy of a public execution, which, it was alledged, would be an indelible stain upon the royal blood. To this the Duke replied, The royal blood is indeed deeply stained, but it was stained by the commission of the crime; the punishment will only serve to wash out the stain as far as that is now possible.

Christians may, if they please, learn what ought to be their own conduct, by observing the contrary conduct of infidels, who generally understand what is the real interest of that unhappy cause. It is of no consequence to an infidel to make it appear that there are some ministers bad men. His great business is, to transfer the faults of particulars to the whole order, and to insinuate, that, "priests of all religions are the same." This appears from the general strain of their writings and conversation. Neither is it uncommon to see infidels, who on all occasions discover the most rancorous malice against ministers of the gospel in general, maintain the greatest intimacy with some particulars of that denomination. Whether their friendship is an honor or disgrace to the persons so distinguished, I think is not difficult to determine. However, in opposition to this conduct, every real Christian, while he maintains upon his mind the

deepest sense of the importance and usefulness of the sacred office, should, at the same time, hold in detestation those who, by an unworthy behaviour, expose it to contempt.

That I am not singular in this opinion, appears from the history of the Christian church in every age. Were it not that it might be considered as an unnecessary ostentation of learning, I could easily shew, from almost every writer renowned for piety and worth, with what boldness and severity they treated the corrupt clergy of their own times. And what is remarkable, though their characters have now received a sanction from their antiquity, and indeed a lustre from this very zeal and fidelity; yet while they lived, their invectives were constantly complained of by the indolent or vicious of their contemporaries, as injurious to the interests of religion. That this was the case at the reformation, may be easily seen by any who will look but a little into the writings of that age.—In our neighbor country, when Mr. Richard Baxter wrote his *Gildas Salvianus, or, Reformed Pastor*, which contained a very plain and very severe reprehension of his brethren the clergy, the same objection was made against the publication of it, at least in the English language, by some prudent softeners. To this he answers, among other things, as follows. “When the sin  
“is open in the sight of the world, it is in vain to attempt to hide it; and such attempts will but aggravate  
“it, and increase our shame. If the ministers of England had sinned only in Latin, I would have made  
“shift to have admonished them in Latin; but if they  
“will sin in English, they must hear it in English. Un-  
“pardoned sin will never let us rest, though we be at ever  
“so much care and cost to cover it. Our sin will surely  
“find us out, though we find not it. And if he that con-  
“fesseth and forsaketh be the man that shall have mercy,  
“no wonder then if he that covereth it prosper not. If  
“we be so tender of ourselves, and loth to confess, God  
“will be less tender of us, and indite our confessions for  
“us.—Too many that have set their hand to this sacred  
“work, do so obstinately proceed in self-seeking, negli-

“ gence, and pride, &c. that it is become our necessary  
 “ duty to admonish them. If we could see that such  
 “ would reform without reproof, we could gladly forbear  
 “ the publishing of their faults: but when reproofs them-  
 “ selves do prove so ineffectual, that they are more of-  
 “ fended at the reproof, than at the sin, and had rather  
 “ that we should cease reproving, than themselves should  
 “ cease sinning, I think it is time to sharpen the remedy.”

I shall produce but one example more, to which I beg the attention of those who have been inadvertently taught to think that one who endeavors to expose the characters of the clergy cannot be a good man. Does not all history bear testimony to the learning, piety, and worth of the gentlemen of the Port-royal, a society of Jansenists, who, a little more than a hundred years ago, made a most violent attack upon the Jesuits in France; particularly M. Pascal, in his Provincial Letters, which are written almost entirely in the way of wit and humor. These pieces are still universally admired; nor are they at this time counted any objection to his character for piety and integrity. At the time of publication, however, the very same objections which are now made to the *Characteristicks*, were made to his writings.\*

The reader may possibly recollect, that I hinted above, a suspicion, that many are not sincere in offering this objection. One reason for this suspicion I am almost ashamed to mention, for the reproach which it brings, in my apprehension, upon many members of the church of Scotland; but as it is well known, it is unnecessary to conceal it, and in my own defence I am intitled to repeat it. There have been, within these few years, writings published in Scotland directly levelled against religion itself, taking away the very foundations of morality, treating our Redeemer's name with contempt and derision, and bringing in doubt the very being of a God. Writings of this kind have been publicly avowed, and the names of the authors prefixed. Now, where has been the zeal of the

\* This any man may see, who will look at his eleventh letter, and some of the subsequent ones, as well as the notes on them, which are generally ascribed to Mr. Arnauld.

enemies of the *Characteristicks* against such writings? Have they moved for the exercise of discipline against the writers? Have they supported the motion when made by others? Are not books in opposition to the gospel, and abusing all clergymen, as such, more contrary to the interest of religion, than one which only impeaches the fidelity of a part of that order, from at least a professed concern for the honor of the whole? Does not this tempt men to say, as was said an age ago by Moliere in France, or by some there, on occasion of a play of his called the *Tartuffe*, That a man may write what he pleaseth against God Almighty in perfect security; but if he write against the characters of the clergy in power, he is ruined for ever.

Another reason why I suspect the sincerity of the enemies of the *Characteristicks*, when they pretend a regard for the interest of religion as the ground of their displeasure, is, that it hath often happened, that both speakers and writers have charged another party of the ministers of the church of Scotland with hypocrisy and deceit, the most villainous of all characters; and yet it never occurred to these gentlemen, that such a charge was hurtful to the interest of religion. I am now to let the reader into a secret. What very much contributed or rather indeed what chiefly brought me to a resolution of publishing the *Characteristicks*, was a pamphlet published a few months before it, called, *A just view of the constitution of the church of Scotland*. This universal uncontradicted fame attributed to the late Dr. H——n: and the express purpose of it is, to represent a certain set of ministers, as agitators of the people, and in general, as not acting upon conscience, even where they pretend it, but from a love of popularity. Besides this he tells a story, which he calls a “scene of iniquity,” with the initial letters of the names of the persons supposed to be guilty. Was ever this pamphlet charged by my enemies as contrary to the interest of religion? It will not be pretended. Now, I should be glad to know, what it is that makes the discovery of a scene of iniquity, when committed by some whom I must not name, contrary to the interest of religion, but the discovery of a scene of iniquity committed by certain



others, no way contrary to it at all? I am not able to find any reason for this difference of judgment but one, which is not very honorable to them, viz. That perhaps scenes of iniquity supposed to be committed by them, are more probable in themselves, and actually obtain more credit, than those which they alledge against others. I do not affirm that this is the reason: but I think, since they had been the aggressors, both in censuring ministers for scrupling obedience to their unconstitutional decisions, and attacking their characters in print; if some nameless author thought fit to retaliate the injury in the last kind, and did it with so great success, they ought to have lain as quiet under it as possible, both from equity and prudence; from equity, because they had given the provocation; and from prudence, because in fact their conduct tempted many to say, 'The charge must have been just, or it would have been treated with contempt; the stroke must have been well aimed, the wound must have been very deep, since the scar continues so long, and is never like to be ever forgotten or forgiven.

This, however, is in itself but of small moment. It would be of little consequence whether their conduct had been reasonable and consistent or not, if the objection itself were just. But I hope it appears very clearly, from what I have offered above, that supposing the conduct of the clergy to be unbecoming their profession, a regard to religion not only permits, but loudly calls for a severe reprehension of it. This is agreeable to the sentiments and practice of the wisest and best men in every age. There have been indeed a few exceptions: but the lenity which some excellent persons have shewn to the vices of the clergy, has been generally reckoned among their weaknesses and not their virtues. I mention this, lest it should come into any person's mind, what is related of Constantine the Great, viz. that when he received a bundle of papers, which he was told contained accusations against the vicious part of the clergy, he publicly burnt them, after having taken an oath that he did not know what they contained; and added, that though he should see a bishop in the very act of a crime that shall be name-

less in English,\* he would cover him with his purple. If the account be true, and this be the charity which some plead for with so great earnestness, one can hardly help crying out, O Emperor, great was thy charity !

II. According to the distribution I made of my subject, the next point is, To account for the *Characteristics* being written in an assumed character and ironical style. "If concern for the interest of religion prompted you," say some, "to attack the characters of the clergy, why was it not done in a serious way ? Would it not have been better, gravely to have convicted them of their sin, and warned them of their danger, than to set them in a ridiculous point of light, and expose them to the public scorn ?" This objection, I am sensible, made an impression on some well-meaning persons ; and therefore it will be necessary to consider it with care. A very good man, when he first read the *Characteristics*, expressed himself thus : "Alas ! if there was occasion given for it, would it not have been better to have had recourse to prayer than to satire ? In general, I humbly apprehend, there is no opposition between these two means ; and therefore, in many cases, it is proper to employ both. Let me therefore intreat the attention of the reader, while I briefly consider, first, the lawfulness of employing ridicule in such a cause ; and secondly, what particular circumstances concurred to render it the most proper method, if not in a manner necessary, in the instance before us.

That it is a lawful thing to employ ridicule in such a cause, is evident from the very highest authority. There are many instances of irony in the sacred writings. In the third chapter of Genesis, ver. 22. we have an expression used by God himself, which interpreters do generally suppose to be in irony : and as it is of the most severe and penetrating kind, in a most deplorable calamity, so I cannot well imagine what other rational meaning can be put upon the words : "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." It must be remembered, that Adam had

\* *Alienum torum labefactantem.*

broke his Maker's command, from a foolish expectation, upon the devil's promise, of becoming like God. On this, an ancient interpreter says, "Adam deserved to be derided in this manner; and he was made more deeply sensible of his folly by this ironical expression, than by any other that could have been used." The conduct of Elijah, and his treatment of the prophets of Baal, is another known example of the same kind. It is recorded, 1 Kings xviii. 27. "And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a God, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

There are several instances of the same manner of speaking in the prophetic books; particularly, the prophet Isaiah, in an admirable manner, and at great length, exposes the sottish folly of idolaters. The passages are well known; as are also some in the apostolic writings; and therefore I omit them for the sake of brevity: and only mention an expression of our Saviour himself, who, though a man of sorrows, and in a state of humiliation, yet in some places uses a language plainly ironical; as in John x. 32. "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" It was certainly making them very ridiculous, to ask them, for which of his good works they proposed to stone him, as well as it was the strongest way of signifying that he had never done any works among them but such as were good.

After these examples, none will be surpris'd when I say, that the most grave and venerable of the fathers have not only wrote in this manner themselves, but asserted its necessity and use. To be convinced of this, let any man only read St. Jerom, in his letters, and his writings against Jovian and the Pelagians; Tertullian, in his apology against the folly of idolaters; Agustine, Irenæus, and Bernard, and many others of the most approved characters. It is indeed founded upon the plainest reason.—There is commonly a pride and self-sufficiency in men under the dominion of error, which makes them deaf to

advice, and impregnable to grave and serious reasoning : neither is there any getting at them till their pride is levelled a little by this dismaying weapon. But lest the reader should be less willing to yield to my reasoning than to that of greater men, I shall beg leave to translate three passages from three different writers in distant ages, which could not be more applicable to the times in which they lived, than they are to my present purpose.

The first is from Tertullian : “ That which I have  
“ done, is nothing else but a play before the real combat.  
“ I have rather pointed out the wounds which might be  
“ given you, than given them in effect. If there are  
“ places which oblige people to laugh, it is because the  
“ subjects themselves are ridiculous. There are many  
“ things which ought to be treated with contempt and  
“ mockery, through fear of giving them weight, and  
“ making them important by seriously debating them.  
“ Nothing is more justly due to vanity than derision ; and  
“ it belongs to the truth to smile, because it is cheerful,  
“ and to despise its enemies, because it is assured of victo-  
“ ry. It is true, we ought to be careful that the raillery  
“ be not low, and unworthy of the truth ; but if that be  
“ attended to, and one can use it with address and deli-  
“ cacy, it is a duty to do so.”

The Second passage is from St. Augustine, in the following words : “ Who will dare to say, that the truth  
“ ought to remain defenceless against the attacks of fal-  
“ hood ? That the enemies of religion shall be permitted  
“ to terrify the faithful with strong words, and to entice  
“ or seduce them by agreeable turns of wit ; but that be-  
“ lievers ought never to write but with such a coldness of  
“ style as to lull the reader asleep ?”

The third passage is from Pascal, in the eleventh of his Provincial Letters : “ As the truths of the gospel are  
“ the proper objects both of love and respect, so the errors  
“ which are opposite to them are the objects both of hatred  
“ and contempt. There are two distinct qualities in  
“ the first, a divine beauty which renders them amiable,  
“ and a sacred majesty which renders them venerable ;  
“ there are also in the last, a guilt and impiety which

“ renders them horrible, and a delusion and folly which  
 “ renders them silly and contemptible. Wherefore, as  
 “ the saints have always, for truth, the united affections  
 “ of love and fear ; so, for error, they have also the cor-  
 “ respondent sentiments of hatred and contempt. Their  
 “ zeal equally disposes them to resist the malice of bad  
 “ men with boldness and courage, and to discredit their  
 “ folly by derision and scorn.”

That it is lawful in some cases to use ridicule, I hope  
 is now sufficiently proved. The truth is, though it is  
 common and natural for men to cry out, That this is an  
 unbecoming manner of handling the subject, when their  
 own mistakes are exposed ; yet I have met with very few  
 controversial writers, who do not, in proportion to their  
 skill, endeavor to enlist ridicule in the service of reason.  
 It is often indeed a sorry and motley mixture of grave  
 and comic ; but it sufficiently shews the natural sense  
 men have of the propriety, not only of contradicting what  
 is false, but smiling at what is absurd : I might therefore  
 very justly rest my defence here. It was, in the first  
 place my business to judge, whether there was sufficient  
 occasion given for such an attempt, as well as, whether  
 I was endowed with proper talents for the execution.  
 After this, it fell of course to the readers to determine,  
 how far I had judged right in either, or both of these par-  
 ticulars.

But as, in fact, it was not merely the lawfulness of the  
 thing in general, nor any confidence of my own untried  
 ability in that way of writing, that determined me to make  
 choice of it, but some particular circumstances that seem-  
 ed to render it necessary. I shall now take the liberty  
 of laying them before the reader. The first of them is  
 the reigning taste of the age. Nothing is more plain,  
 than that a certain levity of mind prevails at present  
 among all ranks ; which makes it very hard to fix their  
 attention on any thing that is serious. The very title of  
 a grave discourse is sufficient to disgust many, and to pre-  
 vent them from ever inquiring what it contains : so that  
 though I resolve to adhere to my promise at first setting  
 out, I am this moment writing with but little hope, that

above one twentieth part of the readers of the former treatise will vouchsafe it a perusal. Nay, it is ten to one that many will deny this to be the work of the former author; and affirm. that it is greatly inferior in point of style; that is to say, no style appears to them just or pure, but that which is humorous and poignant.

Besides levity, or an aversion to what is serious, there is another characteristic of the present age, which is perhaps the child of the former; I mean sloth, or an unwillingness to bestow great or long application of mind upon any subject, be it what it will. This disposition has been wonderfully gratified, and wonderfully increased by the generality of writers among us for some time past. The authors of periodical publications, such as reviews, magazines, and even common newspapers, for their own interest, have long vied with one another in the variety and liveliness of the pieces which make up their several collections. From perusing these, it is so easy to get a little superficial knowledge of every subject, that few look any further for the means of forming their opinions in religion, government, or learning. Another species of composition, proceeding upon the same principles, is novel-writing. What an inundation of these we have had these twenty years past in Great-Britain, is sufficiently known. It would even be an entertainment to enumerate them by their titles, and see what proportion they make of the whole new books in any given period of time.

From these circumstances, it is easy to see what an intending author must have before his eyes. Those who have long had their appetites quickened by variety of dishes, and the most pleasing sauces, are not able to relish plainer, though, to those who can use it, far better and more solid food. This made it necessary for me to fall upon a method of composition which might have some chance to procure the attention of the public; and I could think of none more proper than irony; which, when well executed, is almost universally pleasing. Besides, I must acknowledge, that the conduct of the prevailing party did often appear to me in a very ridiculous light; and never more so, than when the *Characteristics*

were published. Moderation had been long a fashionable or cant phrase among them; and yet they were running headlong into the most violent and tyrannical measures. They made great pretences to charity, and a large manner of thinking; and as a testimony of it, very modestly supposed, that all who did not form the same opinions in religion and government with themselves, were weak silly fools, except two or three knaves who had the direction of the rest. This, I do affirm, was not barely hinted, but openly and confidently asserted; so that I never knew greater bigots, in the proper and genuine sense of that word. How far my attempt would be successful, could only be guessed at; but I imagined, that if I could exhibit them to the public in the same light in which they appeared to myself, they would make a pretty comical figure: and so it happened in fact. My first intention was only to have published, in May 1753, a half sheet, containing the maxims themselves, under the title of, “A list of self-evident truths:” but that having been neglected, upon the provocation hinted at above, the illustrations were added, and sent abroad a few months afterwards, in the form they now bear.

Another circumstance which seemed to render this way of writing necessary, was the little regard that had been paid to several well written treatises of a serious kind. The persons chiefly pointed at in the *Characteristics* had greatly relaxed discipline in point of morals; had, by a course of decisions, planted the country with useless ministers; and though the whole office of ordination proceeds upon the supposition of a call from the people, gravely admitted them without any call at all. This, when done as a part of the public worship of God, as it always is, must be considered by every impartial person, not only as a piece of gross absurdity, and mocking of the people, but a piece of flagrant impiety, and mocking of God. Conscientious ministers absented themselves from these pretended ordinations, till at last it came into the heads of their enemies to force them to be present under pain of the highest censures of the church. They had the hardiness all the while to affirm, that this was absolutely necessary to



support the constitution ; although every man must agree, that if any of our fathers, who lived about fifty years ago, were to rise up out of his grave, he would say, it was the constitution turned upside down. Many attempts had been made to reason with them, and clear appeals to the history and standing acts of the church ; but all were trodden under foot by the decisions of the annual assemblies, in their judicative capacity. Nay, they at last became so confident of their own power, and so deaf to all reasoning on the subject, that they refused even to read what was written by those of different sentiments ; and when they did read it, disdained to make any answer to it, or attempt to convince them any other way than by the unanswerable argument of deposition. This induced me to write in a manner that has obliged them to hear whether they will or not ; and though it has not been so happy as to bring them to conviction, I am sure it was no more than well merited correction.

One other reason I shall mention for making choice of this way of writing, was drawn from the modern notions of philosophy, which had so greatly contributed to the corruption of the clergy. The great patron and advocate for these was Lord Shaftsbury, one of whose leading principles it is, that “ Ridicule is the test of truth.” This principle of his had been adopted by many of the clergy ; and there is hardly any man conversant in the literary world, who has not heard it a thousand times defended in conversation. I was therefore willing to try how they themselves could stand the edge of this weapon ; hoping, that if it did not convince them of the folly of the other parts of their conduct, it might at least put them out of conceit with this particular opinion. The last of these I do really think the publication of the *Characteristics* has, in a great measure effected ; at least within my narrow sphere of conversation. It is but seldom we now hear it pretended, that ridicule is the test of truth. If they have not renounced this opinion, they at least keep it more to themselves, and are less insolent upon it in their treatment of others.

I hope the reader will not imagine, that, by wresting this principle out of the hands of my adversaries, I intend to adopt it myself. There may be truth in it in an equivocal sense; for to be sure nothing that is true can be really ridiculous: but there are few things more pernicious than this principle, as it is commonly understood and applied. It is most certain, that many things both true and excellent may, by a person possessed of the talent of humor, be made apparently ridiculous: and this will have its full effect upon the bulk of mankind, who are not able to discover where the fallacy lies. Dr. Brown, in his *Essays on the Characteristics*, says with great propriety, That ridicule is not fitted for the discovery of truth; for, so far as it is distinguished from reasoning, it “is only putting imagination in the place of reason;” than which few things are more ready to lead us astray. But he allows, that it is very proper to “disgrace known falshood:” and as the application of it to this purpose is warranted by the judgment and example of the best and wisest men in all ages, there was nothing to hinder me from making use of the same privilege. In the mean time, if there has been any character of real worth, or any measure truly commendable, ridiculed in the treatise now under consideration, let this be shown by clear and plain deductions of reason, and I am ready to repent of it, and renounce it.

III. This leads me to the third and last part of my defence, viz. To show what occasion was given for such a treatise among us. This I confess to be absolutely necessary, as it is plainly applied, in the title-page, to the church of Scotland. It will be in vain to have shown, that there is nothing sinful or hurtful in attacking the characters of clergymen, where they act in a manner unworthy of their office, or that this may lawfully be done even in the way of ridicule. The question will still be, Have the ministers of the church of Scotland really deserved it? Very great difficulties, however, present themselves in this branch of the subject. There are many things demonstrably true, which it is dangerous to affirm, at least in some places. Upon the supposition, that the

prevailing party in this church is of the spirit and disposition painted in the *Characteristics*, one would think, a man who should unbraid them with their faults in a direct manner, would be in a sorry situation if ever they should be his judges. The "*veritas convitii*" would do him very little service, or rather would only serve to envenom their resentment. Have they been already so enraged against me for a little pleasant raillery? and am I so mad as to hope to defend myself, by bringing against the same persons a serious and deliberate accusation? However formidable this difficulty may appear, I am not without hopes, that such of them as have any measure of impartiality and candor, after weighing what is now to be offered, may be more inclined to forgive the attack already made; and, by breaking their attachment to the most corrupt members, recover the merit and dignity of the general body.

With this view let me make a preliminary remark.—Many from the beginning either really did, or at least affected to suppose, that all who joined in the measures carried on by the majority in our general assemblies, were represented in the *Characteristics*, as infected with every bad principle or practice satirized through the whole. Nothing was farther from the writer's mind. An answer to that objection, such as the nature of the performance would admit, was inserted in the preface to the second edition of the book itself; and I shall now deliver my judgment upon the point, without the least ambiguity. The political measures which have been carrying on for these thirty years past in the church of Scotland, appear to me to be ruinous to the interests of religion. At the same time I am sensible, that there are many worthy and good men who join in most of those measures; and one great end of the *Characteristics* was, to open the eyes of such persons, both on their employment and company.

A train of circumstances, not always in our own power, sometimes leads good men themselves to support the most corrupt part of a church in their public measures. The boundaries of prudence and zeal are not easily fixed. Union of opinion in politics, often establishes a connex-

ion between men of very opposite principles in religion and morals : and there are few greater instances of the weakness of human nature, than the readiness of men to give protection and countenance to those who are worse than themselves, because they are staunch friends to their party views. Such complacency do some take in this, as an exertion of Christian charity and tenderness, that it is wonderful to think what they will do, and much more wonderful that they are not ashamed of it, but openly, and to all appearance honestly, defend it.

Whatever unites them with one party, alienates their affection from, and interrupts their correspondence with the opposite : hence extremes are produced on both hands. Persons of fierce and violent tempers, in their zeal, throw out indiscriminate reflections ; and those engaged in another interest, turn a deaf ear to every accusation, as the mere effect of party-malice and resentment. Nay, it has been observed, that it is somewhat natural for clergymen, to be more easily irritable at such of their brethren as rise above them in apparent concern for religion, and zeal for promoting it, than at those who fall below them. The first are a reproach to their own conduct and character, the other are a foil to it. So that every one who espouses any bold or vigorous measure, may lay his account with a sensible coldness, even from such of his brethren as are in the next immediate degree below him.

Another very considerable difficulty lies in my way. The more the complaint of degeneracy in the church of Scotland is just, the more difficult, in one respect, it will be to carry a conviction of it to the minds, either of those who are guilty of it, or those who observe it. The corruption of a church always implies, a light sense of the evil of sin ; and therefore, however plainly I may make it appear, that such and such facts are done, it will be hard to convince many that they are wrong, at least in any great degree. Many a clergyman will not yield the one half of those things to be sins that were admitted to be so a century ago ; nor do they see the one half of the evil of sin, either in clergy or laity, that was once taken for granted. Those who have not the same ideas of morality, can never

be supposed to have an equal impression of the insufficiency of the same degree of it. Those who look upon family worship, for instance, as an unnecessary piece of devotion, will never be brought to imagine, that an assembly is one whit worse for consisting of so many members who habitually neglect that duty, if I may be permitted to use so old-fashioned a phrase. On the other hand, though I should produce the names and surnames of those clergy who, mounted upon their couriers at the public races, join the gentlemen of the turf, and are well skilled in all the terms of that honorable art; though I should name those who are to be found at routs and drums, and other polite assemblies of the same nature, and can descant with greater clearness on the laws of the gaming-table than the Bible, instead of being commanded to produce a proof of the facts, I should expect to find many who denied the relevancy of the crimes.

For this reason, before we go farther, perhaps it will not be improper to introduce a general observation. If we consider the circumstances of the church of Scotland, we may, from a knowledge of human nature, and the experience of past ages, safely affirm, she is in a lax and degenerate state. If it were not so, it would be a miracle. Nay, I will venture to go further, and to say, it would be such a miracle as never happened before. We in this church have enjoyed uninterrupted outward prosperity for more than seventy years; and during all that time, have not only been free from persecution, but have enjoyed the favor and protection of the civil power. If this long course of temporal prosperity has had no effect in bringing on a depravation of our manners, it must needs be a miracle; because it is contrary to the natural course of things; and he that will pretend to find a period, when any such thing happened before, will, I am confident, be unsuccessful. The primitive church was never long without persecution during the three first centuries; yet they had a trial how they could bear prosperity, in the interval between the ninth and tenth persecution, immediately before that dreadful one which they suffered under the Emperor Dioclesian. And history

informs us, that though they had not then any civil establishment, yet the ease and prosperity which they enjoyed had a most fatal influence upon their manners.

So long as a minister is only in the post of greatest danger, there will be less hazard of worldly men endeavoring to push themselves into that situation : but as soon as that office begins to be considered as a quiet and safe settlement for this life, how can it be but many, from no higher end than worldly interest, will get and keep possession of it ? Therefore, though I were living in Japan, and knew nothing else of the church of Scotland, but that she had enjoyed such a course of outward prosperity, I would as certainly conclude, that a corruption of manners was affecting even the clergy, as I would that iron which had been long out of the furnace, and had not been rubbed or scoured, would be growing rusty.

After all, it is somewhat strange, that this performance should stand in need of an apology, or that the accusation against it should be so often repeated, That the author must be a bad man ; and that it is hurtful to the interest of religion. This is certainly the clamor of the guilty, and not the judgment of the candid. There is no such apprehension of the thing being criminal among those who are the most unprejudiced and impartial judges ; I mean the laity. It is well known, with how much approbation it was read by them, when first published ; and notwithstanding the love of defamation, which is natural to mankind, I am persuaded its admirers would have been of quite a different class than they generally were, if it had been against the interest of religion ; and that it would have had no admirers at all, if it had been a satire without an object.

Let us suppose any person had taken into his head to write a satire against the ministers of the church of Scotland, and had thought proper to represent them in an opposite light ; suppose he had represented them as having arrived to such a degree of bigotry, as to believe, that no person could be saved who had the least doubt of any thing contained in the large systems of Piclet and Turretine ; as so severe disciplinarians, that they were conti-

nually harrasing gentlemen and noblemen, and summoning them before their sessions, for but walking out in their gardens a little after sermon on the Lord's day, or sitting half an hour too long at their bottle after dinner on other days; as so rigid and mortified in their own lives, that they were in danger of bringing back the monkish austerity of the church of Rome. Whether would the author of such a pamphlet have been reckoned sound in his judgment? Would any body have been so idle as to read it? or, if they did, would they not have understood it backwards? Whereas, in the present case, there was a testimony given to the truth and justice of the characters drawn, by the assent and approbation of almost every reader.

The laity were not the only witnesses of its propriety: many of the most eminent and respectable of the clergy of our neighbor-country, gave evidence in favor of the *Characteristics*. I have been well informed, that the Bishop of L——n, in conversation with a nobleman of our own country, gave it a high commendation; and added withal: "It seems only directed against a certain party of the church of Scotland; but we have many in England to whom the characters are very applicable." It is also said by those who deserve credit, that the Bishop of O——d spoke much in the same way; and said, He wished their own clergy would read it for their instruction and correction. And several have seen a letter from the present Bishop of G——r, then Dr. W——n, one of the most eminent authors of this age, to a minister in Scotland; in which he commends the performance, and, particularly uses these words: "A fine piece of raillery against a party to which we are no strangers here."

Is it to be supposed, that such persons, eminent for worth and penetration, would have approved a thing so evidently criminal as some are pleased to think this tract? Or are there indeed persons of the characters there represented in the church of England, and none in the church of Scotland? Shall the persons above-named openly affirm, there are many such in England; and must the man be condemned, without hearing, and without mercy,



who is suspected of hinting there are some such in her sister-church ? I have often indeed reflected, with some surprise, on the different situation of affairs in Scotland and in England. I have seen many books printed in England, with the names of the authors, which plainly and without ambiguity affirm, that there are some of the clergy proud, ambitious, time-servers, and tools of those in power ; some of them lazy and slothful, lovers of ease and pleasure ; some of them scandalous and dissolute in their manners ; some of them wholly ignorant and insufficient ; and that all are tolerated by those who preside. These things they affirm, without the least danger, or apprehension of it. But were any man to publish a book that had the tenth part of such severity in it, in Scotland, he ought, at the same time, to have a ship hired to fly to another country.

But the strongest of all general proofs of the justice of the satire in the *Characteristics*, is the behavior of those who are supposed to be aimed at. The lamentable outcry they made at first, the malice and resentment they have ever since discovered against the author, prove to a demonstration, that his reproofs are well founded. We shall reduce the argument to this short form : Either there was ground for this satire, or there was none. If there was none, neither surely could there be for one half of the complaints that have been made against it, for it would have been perfectly harmless. Many, even of the present clergy of the church of Scotland, do not find themselves touched by it in the least degree. If the characters of the rest lay no more open to the strokes of raillery, why should they have been so much disconcerted by it ? If they were not hit, it is impossible they could be hurt.

These general arguments, of themselves, might satisfy any impartial person ; but let us now go a little further, and consider particularly the present state of the church of Scotland, and how far it might give occasion to the satire. It would be tedious to mention every single stroke of raillery contained in that performance ; but so far as it carries a censure of principles or characters generally

prevailing, they may be reduced to the three following classes, Doctrine, Discipline, and Government. We shall examine each of these distinctly and separately.

1. Let us consider our present state in point of Doctrine. It is certainly hinted, that there are many who have departed from the old protestant principles contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. And is it possible to deny this fact? Is it not the general complaint of the people through the whole kingdom, that from many pulpits there is little to be heard of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel? or, if they be mentioned at all, it is no more than an awkward and cold compliment to save appearances, while something very different is chiefly insisted on. If I am not mistaken, the leading doctrines, both in the holy Scriptures, and in the confessions of all the protestant churches, are, “The lost and fallen state of man by nature;—The absolute necessity of salvation through Jesus Christ;—The pardon of sin by the riches of divine grace, through the imputed righteousness of the Saviour;—Sanctification and comfort by the Holy Ghost.” These doctrines are of so great moment, and have so extensive an influence on the whole of practical religion, that where they are firmly believed, they will not only be often brought directly in view, but the manner of speaking upon every other subject will be such, as to leave no jealousy of an intended omission; yet certain it is, that many are the complaints upon this subject from every quarter; and therefore I am warranted to infer, either that the doctrine is corrupted, and something else intentionally taught, or that the persons complained of are utterly incapable of expressing themselves in such a manner as to be understood.

I shall now put the argument in another form. There is unquestionably a great difference in point of doctrine between some ministers and others. If the one sort therefore preach the doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, undoubtedly the others either contradict or omit it. I am persuaded there are some who would be ashamed to have it thought, that they preached this doctrine; and nothing is more plain, than that those who are known to

do so in the most clear and explicit manner, are usually the objects of their jealousy or hatred. It is probable I shall be told here, Why do you make these general complaints? name the particular persons, produce your evidence, and prove the charge: they will, in that case, be immediately laid aside. To this I answer, that it is a very easy thing for a man to preach erroneous doctrine in such a manner, that it shall be impossible to convict him by a legal prosecution in a free country. Every day shows, that men may print sedition, treason, and even blasphemy, in such a way, that no human law can take hold of it. What then should hinder men to preach heresy under the same prudent disguises? Besides, what would a prosecution signify, if it must come before a court, of which, between clergy and laity, perhaps a plurality of members differ little in opinion from the pannel.

My subject does not oblige me to say any thing upon the excellence and importance of the neglected truths, yet I will take this opportunity of delivering my opinion in a few words. These doctrines I am persuaded are not only true in themselves, but the great foundation of all practical religion. Wherever they are maintained and inculcated, strictness and purity of life and manners will be their natural effect. On the contrary, where they are neglected, and a pretended theory of moral virtue substituted in their room, it will immediately and certainly introduce a deluge of profanity and immorality in practice. Of this the present state of our own church and nation, compared with that of former periods, is a strong and melancholy proof.

But there is no occasion for entering further into this subject; the ridicule in the *Characteristics* turns not so much on the truth or importance of these doctrines, as the gross absurdity of men's subscribing what they do not believe. However firm a persuasion I may have of any system of opinions, the right of private judgment and freedom of inquiry, I would wish to remain sacred and inviolable. Those who use this liberty, with courage, and with candor, ought to be held in the highest esteem by every one who differs from them. But for men, at their

entrance on the sacred office, solemnly to subscribe to the truth of what all their lives after they endeavor to undermine and destroy, is at once so criminal and so absurd, that no reproof given to it can possibly exceed in point of severity. I take the liberty here of transcribing a passage from a printed sermon, preached at the opening of a synod in Scotland: where, speaking of these subscriptions, the author says, “ This is so direct a violation of sincerity, that  
“ it is astonishing to think how men can set their minds  
“ at ease in the prospect, or keep them in peace after the  
“ deliberate commission of it. The very excuses and  
“ evasions that are offered in defence of it, are a disgrace  
“ to reason, as well as a scandal to religion. What suc-  
“ cess can be expected from that man’s ministry, who be-  
“ gins it with an act of so complicated guilt? How can  
“ he take upon him to reprove others for sin, or to train  
“ them up in virtue and true goodness, while himself is  
“ chargeable with direct, premeditated, and perpetual per-  
“ jury? I know nothing so nearly resembling it, as those  
“ cases in trade, in which men make false entries, and at  
“ once screen and aggravate their fraud, by swearing, or  
“ causing others to swear, contrary to truth. This is  
“ justly reputed scandalous, even in the world; and yet  
“ I know no circumstance in which they differ, that  
“ does not tend to show it to be less criminal than the  
“ other.”\*

There may be some of the laity who have themselves an inward aversion to the system of doctrine contained in our Confession and Catechisms, and who, for that reason are pleased with such of the clergy as preach in a different strain: but sure I am, whoever will reflect upon the circumstance of their having all subscribed to it, can never have a high opinion of their conduct upon the whole, but must condemn the insincerity, let the propositions subscribed, be in themselves either true or false.

What is above, may suffice as to doctrine in general. The particular strictures in the *Characteristics* against a false taste in composition, may well enough answer for

\* Mr. Wither Spoon’s Synod-sermon.

themselves without any defence. That there have been many instances of strange incongruity in this particular, is beyond all question. A cold, heartless, indifferent manner of speaking on these subjects, in which both speaker and hearer have so great, nay no less than an infinite concern; an ostentatious swell of words, or a pointed ornamented soppery of style, so ill suited to the gravity of the pulpit; an abstracted, refined, or philosophical disquisition, which, if it has any meaning at all, perhaps not three in the audience can possibly understand; are these imaginary, or are they real characters? If they are characters drawn from real life, where is the sin or danger of exposing them? For my own part, I am grieved to see so little learning among the generality of the ministers of this church, which is probably owing to their poverty. But I am in a good measure comforted with this reflection, that the weakest commonly do as much service as the wisest; because, though they were ever so willing, they are not able to fill the audience with any admiration of themselves, and therefore their attention must be fixed upon the truths delivered, and not the parts and manner of the speaker.

2. Let us consider a little the state of the church of Scotland with respect to Discipline; that is to say, the inspection of the morals of ministers and people. Upon the most deliberate review, all I can find intimated in the characteristics upon this subject, is, that there is far less strictness and tenderness of conversation, less of the appearance of piety and devotion, in persons of the spiritual function, than formerly; and less severity, in the exercise of discipline, upon those who offend.

What shall I say in defence of this, but that the thing appears to me to be manifestly true? There are no particular crimes charged, but in general, levity and worldly conversation, with a neglect of the duties of the sacred office. And would to God there were not the greatest cause of charging, not merely some few disorderly persons, not merely the youngest sort in general, but all without exception, as in some measure guilty. If there is a remarkable increase of corruption among the worst, there will also be

a visible declension in zeal and piety among the best. This is what the natural course of things teaches us to expect. It is also what our Saviour himself hath forewarned us of; "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," Matt. xxiv. 12. The present age is a moving example of this, both with respect to the clergy and laity. As there is an alarming degree of infidelity and impiety among many of every rank, so even those who preserve some regard for religion, fall very far short of that eminent and exemplary piety which some alive have seen in Christians of the last age, and of which our fathers have told us.

I am very sensible, that the degeneracy of their own times has been the constant and uniform complaint of religious and moral writers in every age, and that they may be liable to some deception in this particular: but at the same time, the records of history put it beyond all question, that there have been many instances, among all nations, of local and temporary reformation, of local and occasional depravation. Perhaps (though I see no reason for affirming it) the quantity of human virtue, through the whole earth, may be nearly the same in every age; yet certainly it often changes its residence, and leaves one nation, to settle in another. Nay, it seems very reasonable to believe, that as human things are never at a stand, a church and nation, in a quiet and peaceable state, is always growing insensibly worse, till it be either so corrupt as to deserve and procure exterminating judgments, or in the infinite mercy of God, by some great shock or revolution, is brought back to simplicity and purity, and reduced, as it were, to its first principles.

They are much to be blamed therefore, who, because the complaints of some moral writers are exaggerated, and their comparisons not always well founded, treat every thing of this nature as foolish and visionary, refusing so much as to examine whether the charge brought against themselves is just or groundless. On the contrary, I cannot help being of opinion, that it is every man's duty to do all in his power to retard the progress of corruption, by strictness and tenderness in his own personal

walk, fidelity and vigilance in the duties of a public station, and a bold and open testimony against every thing contrary to the interest of true and undefiled religion.

But because we have now chiefly to do with the clergy, let us return to them. If it were proper, I could easily produce examples of indecency and impiety in clergymen, sufficient to fill every serious person with the deepest concern ; and which the most relaxed moralist would not be able to defend ; but as I would fain believe, that things very gross are yet but seldom committed among us, and are not commonly known, I shall confine myself only to things more openly practised by many, and too easily tolerated by all. This is the more proper, that the book I am defending can scarcely be charged with disclosing hidden scenes, but dwells on such deviations from duty, as are epidemic and general, and rather smiles at the ridiculous, than exposes the guilty part of every character.

There is one circumstance which I am afraid betrays many into a mistake. The world in general expects a great “ comparative” sanctity in those who bear the sacred office ; therefore, when ministers take a little liberty, others think themselves warranted to take a great deal more. These sentiments, which are universal, contribute to keep the proportion between the clergy and laity always nearly the same. When therefore clergymen see the distance still remaining between them and others, they are ready to forget how far they are both from the place where they ought to have been.

Many things are faults in a minister, which, if not innocent, are certainly far less criminal in other men. There is also a species of faults which I apprehend do render a minister justly contemptible, upon which no law, either civil or ecclesiastical, can lay hold ; and which, for that reason, are the proper objects both of serious and satirical reproof. If one set apart to the service of Christ in the gospel, manifestly shows his duty to be a burden, and does no more work than is barely sufficient to screen him from censure ; if he reckons it a piece of improvement, how seldom, or how short, he can preach ; and make his boast how many omissions he has brought a pa-



nent and an injured people to endure without complaint; while at the same time, he cannot speak with temper of those who are willing to do more than himself; however impossible it may be to ascertain his faults by a libel, he justly merits the detestation of every faithful minister, and every real Christian.

That such is the case with not a few amongst us, there is the greatest reason to believe. The heavy and general complaints of the people from some quarters, and their gross ignorance in others, prove it beyond contradiction. Those whose conduct is not liable to this imputation, will not find, that they have suffered the smallest injury, in point of character, by the publication of the *Characteristics*, excepting such as feel the wounds given to their friends as sensibly as those given to themselves. In this case, however, they have an easy remedy: Let them "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

I am unwilling to enter farther into the characters of ministers; and therefore shall only add, let the impartial but consider what happened a few years ago, and then say, whether we are not greatly relaxed in point of discipline. Did not several ministers think themselves at liberty to attend the entertainments of the stage? I am sensible, many will immediately pass sentence upon me as a person of very narrow principles, for introducing this as a mark of our depravity. I must however insist upon it, from the united testimony of the best and wisest of the Heathen writers, the uniform sentiments and practice of the primitive church, and the pieces written for the stage in modern times, which any man may peruse, that the performances of hired players have never yet been conducted with so much decency as to deserve the countenance and presence of a minister of Christ. The General Assembly did indeed judicially disapprove of that liberty taken by ministers; but the censure inflicted on the offenders is so gentle, that it was then the opinion of many, it would have a greater tendency to encourage, than to prevent the repetition of the offence. It now appears they judged right; for, if I am not greatly misinformed,

the offence has been repeated since that time with absolute impunity.

If the morals of the clergy themselves are corrupted, there is all the reason in the world to expect, that the reins of discipline will be slackened as to the disorders of others. This indeed is so notorious, that it would be idle and unnecessary to attempt a proof of it; and therefore I shall only make a reflection or two upon the reception given, not long ago, to a proposal for censuring those writers who had published and avowed irreligious and immoral sentiments. It is well known what violent opposition this proposal met with; nor will it soon be forgot, what sort of reasoning was used against it; and nothing can show, in a clearer light, that low and languid state to which our discipline is now reduced. It was generally represented as a species of persecution, and as flowing from a persecuting spirit. Upon this I shall lay before the reader one or two very short reflections.

1st. What is ecclesiastical censure? Is it any more than a judicial declaration, that such and such things are contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and inconsistent with the character of a Christian? No civil penalties follow upon it among us, and no civil penalties ought to follow upon it in any nation. From this it is very plain, that such censures, as they are in their nature just and necessary, so they carry the evidence of their justice in themselves. If in any case they are misapplied, and a person is condemned for what is laudable, such condemnation can reflect no dishonor but upon those who pronounce it.

2dly. Whether should we be most ready to be provoked at the impudence of professed unbelievers, desiring to retain the name of Christians, or to smile at the absurdity of calling it persecution to deprive them of it? If infidelity were a principle, properly speaking, or implied a system of real and positive opinions, all of that persuasion would reckon themselves bound as honest men, to renounce their baptism, and every apparent relation to the deluded believers. Instead of desiring admission to what Christians call their privileges, they would consider the imposition of such things as a great hardship, and beg that

they might have nothing to do with them ; and in such a case, certainly due regard would be paid to their tender consciences. As to the charge of persecution, it is the most ridiculous imaginable. They themselves are the aggressors ; and though they are our open enemies, think proper to be greatly offended, when we say they are not our friends.

3dly. What can be the meaning of those professing Christians who desire to retain in their communion the enemies of the gospel ? Can they, or will they do us any service ? Is it possible that they can bring us any honor ? Can it be of any benefit to themselves ? None of all these. But it must visibly lessen the sanctity of the Christian character in the apprehension of mankind in general, and give the unhappy persons themselves more reason than any other circumstance whatever, to say, the whole is nothing at bottom but deceit and imposition.

3. It now remains only to consider the present state of the church of Scotland with respect to its government. This, so far as it is different from the former, or at least so far as it is touched upon in the *Characteristics*, relates chiefly to the admission of ministers, with a few hints upon the qualifications and attestation of elders who sit as members in the supreme court.

The admission of ministers into vacant congregations is indeed a matter of the highest moment, and the opposition of sentiments among us upon this subject, probably lies at the bottom of all our other differences. I am also of opinion, that the continuance of what have been commonly called “ violent settlements,” will have the most certain and powerful influence in banishing religion and decency, and bringing us into a situation of which I charitably believe many who prosecute these measures have not the least suspicion. Willingly therefore, were it in my power, would I contribute to open the eyes of some of my brethren, on the pernicious consequences of their own conduct. But I have the discouragement to reflect, that the force of custom, and the power of prejudice, will probably shut their ears against any thing I have to offer.

In order, if possible, to procure some attention, let me intreat the reader not to imagine, that I have embraced, or am about to plead in favor of such ridiculous and absurd notions, as through ignorance or malice are commonly imputed to me and others of the same sentiments, such as, That every Christian, as such, has a right to call a minister upon an establishment; and that Christ hath purchased this right for them by his death; and therefore that they ought to assert this right, though in the most seditious and disorderly manner. We know perfectly well, that it is a question, not of right but of fact, Who has a title to call a minister to enjoy the public maintenance? and that none have any title to it at all, excepting those to whom the law gives it. Neither would we contend, that every man ought to have such a right, though we have it in our power to make new laws upon that subject. Such a seeming equality would be a real inequality. The sum of my belief in this matter is contained in the following propositions. Every man hath a natural right, well secured to him in this happy island, to judge for himself in every thing that regards religion, and to adhere to any minister he pleases, on the establishment, or in opposition to it. The legal stipend, levied originally from the public, was certainly intended to provide a sufficient and useful pastor to the people within the bounds of a certain parish. He cannot be of much service to them, if they be upon ill terms with him; he can be of none at all, if they will not hear him. No man ought to be compelled, by ecclesiastical or civil penalties, to submit in such a case; and though he were, such forced religion would be worse than none. The only inference I draw from these principles, is, that decency, and our indispensable duty as church-courts, requires us to make no such settlements, without the deepest regret, and never without a real necessity. Perhaps I might go a little farther, and say, that nothing can excuse us from making them at all, while our office of ordination continues in its present form.

The question then rests precisely on this single point: Does the law as it now stands, compel us to make all these

settlements without exception, and without expostulation? If it does, what is the benefit, and what is the meaning of the separate independent jurisdiction of our courts, to which the decision of such causes is committed by law, and secured by the treaty of union? It is in vain to dissemble it, we have brought a great part of the hardships upon ourselves; and those who in their hearts are averse from parochial elections, only pretend the law as a color for their conduct. Were settlements refused when highly inexpedient, and patrons treated with decency, we should have little trouble from them. At any rate, as the persons presented, whether probationers or ministers, are entirely in our power, by authority exerted here, every remaining difficulty would be removed.

I believe this is the first instance that ever happened, of churchmen surrendering the power and influence which the law gave them, into other hands, without resistance, and without complaint: nay, many of them zealously contending for it, and establishing it by their own repeated decisions. It would be no hard matter to point out the real cause or causes of this conduct; but at present I forbear, and leave it to every man to assign them for himself: only I cannot help lamenting, that our noble, venerable, republican constitution, seems to be so near its period. Whether it is likely to undergo any outward change is of little moment: when the spirit is gone, the remaining name and form is not worth being contended for.

But that I may not wholly yield to despondency, since an alteration of measures is yet possible, I shall now lay before the reader a few of the certain consequences of our continuing in the same. When it comes to be a settled point, that a presentation, alone and unsupported, infallibly secures a settlement, they will be openly and scandalously bought and sold. This is the case in England, notwithstanding the strongest laws against simony, and a tremendous oath, which the incumbent himself must take before his induction. And it will always be the case in every country, in the present state of human nature. Our own experience may teach us this. Within these few years, there have been several complaints of simony in

this church, and very great zeal has been shown to make laws for preventing it. That zeal is highly commendable: but, alas! it will be quite ineffectual. To strengthen the power of presentations, and yet prevent simony, is just as hopeful an attempt, as to open the windows, and keep out the light. The art and invention of interested persons, to find a way of evading laws after they are made, is always far superior to the foresight of the wisest men, in providing against cases which have not yet happened.

There is one distressing circumstance in this prospect, that simoniacal passions among us will be hurtful and reproachful in an uncommon degree. The settlements in Scotland are generally small; they will be every year of still less value by the improvements of the country, and increasing wealth of other classes of men. In what a beggarly condition then will those be who have been obliged to pay dear for so scanty a provision? Perhaps the reader will say, Happily, few of the purchasers have any money to give. I believe so: but this will not mend the matter; for the most mean and sordid, perhaps scandalous, compliances must come in the place of money. I am ashamed even to mention some of the ways by which it is undoubtedly certain presentations will be, because they have been procured. Can any minister think of this without the deepest concern?

Such a ministry must fall into the lowest and most contemptible state, through poverty and ignorance. We differ much from the church of England. In that church, though there are many of the inferior clergy in the most abject condition, there are also many dignified persons, as they are called, who enjoy ample revenues and great ease. These have noble opportunities for study, and are enabled to distinguish themselves by works of literature. By this means the church of England derives a lustre from the characters and writings of particular members, which she does not deserve for the general frame of her constitution. But what must be the case in Scotland? Shall we venture to look a little further into futurity? Have our countrymen so little spirit as to submit to so much misery and scorn? No; it is more than probable some of them,

at once stimulated by ambition, and compelled by necessity, will gradually alter the constitution. They will introduce sinecures and pluralities, that they themselves may live in splendor and dignity, while the remaining part shall be thrust down to a state more despicable than ever. It is in vain to think, that the equality of votes in a General Assembly will hinder this : for as power follows property, a very few persons enriched by additional salaries, with the faithful assistance of those who are dazzled with the same expectations, will easily govern the rest. The truth is, many of them, despairing of success, and ill able to bear the expence of travelling, will stay at home, and let them do just as they please.

The above is no doubt a very melancholy prospect, and will in time have a most malignant influence upon the morals of the clergy. But the truth is, the settlement of parishes by presentations, is directly and immediately hurtful to the characters of those who are training up for the sacred office. When they know that their future settlement does not depend upon the apostolic qualification, their being "of good report," but upon interest with the great, it must necessarily introduce, in many cases, licentious and irregular practices, as well as habituate them to fawning and servility. There is more danger in this than many apprehend. On consulting the history of the church, we shall find few characters more odious in clergymen, than ambition, and open solicitation of ecclesiastical preferment. I am sorry that so much way has been given to this already, without having been observed. Small changes in forms and language, do often introduce great changes in manners and characters. In ancient times men could hardly be persuaded to take on them the weighty and important office of a bishop. In times not very distant, in our own church, the minister or probationer called, was never considered as a party, but as the subject concerning which the process was carried on by the callers or refusers. But they have been for some time past declared to be parties : they begin to attend the cause, to appear at the bar, to urge their claim, to consider the people who are to be under their charge as their ad-



versaries, and too often to treat them with contempt and disdain.

I know some treat with great neglect the danger of a lax and immoral ministry, from the present method of settling vacancies. So long as they are of this mind, it is no wonder they continue in the practice; for it can be of very little consequence how men are chosen, if they are fit for the office. They tell us, an edict is served before admission, where every man has access to object against the life or doctrine of the presentee. The effect of this will be very small. Judicial processes of that kind are always expensive and invidious, often difficult, and sometimes dangerous. How few then will be so public spirited as to undertake them? The example of England may satisfy us of this. It is as competent to prosecute a man for error or immorality in England as in Scotland: yet what person or parish ever thinks of making the experiment?

Others tell us, "It is all in your own power: why do you license improper men? it is impossible to present any man who has not a regular license." How surprising is it, that persons of ever so little reflection should make use of this argument? It proceeds upon a supposition, which the least knowledge of human nature must show to be unreasonable, viz. That every presbytery, through the whole kingdom, will be unalterably faithful and vigilant. If there be but a corrupt or negligent majority in any one of them, the license will operate over all. Nay, let them be supposed ever so faithful, they may be deceived by an hypocrite, or not able to find such proofs of what they strongly suspect, as to found and support a sentence of refusal. The more we consider the matter in every possible view, we shall find, that a parochial election of ministers would be a better security for regularity and decency in the clergy, than all the laws that ever were framed on the subject. Frequently men cannot, and sometimes they will not, execute the laws; but this rule would operate uniformly and powerfully, and would execute itself.

I add only one other unhappy consequence of continuing the present method of supplying vacancies. If a pre-

sentation must supercede all judgment of the church-courts, as to the propriety of an ordination, and even the expediency of a translation, we may expect to see some of the weakest, and most contemptible ministers, settled in the most conspicuous and important charges. Persons of this character are not always free from vanity and ambition, nor always destitute of interest by male or female connexions. We have had some instances of this kind already; but much greater and more shameful may be expected, so soon as presentations have acquired an irresistible power. It will be said, perhaps, They have had all the force in law, for above forty years, that it is likely they ever will have. I answer, that is very true; but every one knows their very different effect in practice at the beginning and at the end of that period. Patrons continued long to pay a regard to the opinion of the heritors, according to rank and character in the congregation concerned. As they found their own strength increasing, however, they paid gradually less and less; they now pay very little; and the time seems just at hand, when they will pay none at all.

This argument will, I hope, have the greater weight, that I have known instances of different persons, both among the clergy and the laity, who had concurred in supporting presentations in other cases, but who were both alarmed and provoked when they themselves came to be treated in a tyrannical manner. The heritors in general indeed have been long made instrumental in bearing down the common people; and this being finished, they themselves, as is almost constantly the case in political struggles, must feel the weight of that authority which they have established. The evil hath taken so deep root, that it is somewhat uncertain whether a remedy be now possible; nay, it is still more uncertain, whether any resistance will be seriously attempted. The consequences however are like to be so terrible, that they may well justify complaint, and, in particular, be my excuse for endeavoring to expose the conduct of those whom I considered as betraying the liberties of the public.

As to the censures inflicted on ministers who refused to be present at the ordination of ministers to no body, I shall say but little, because that severity seems to have ceased. Several ministers have absented themselves, in like cases since the deposition of Mr. Gillespie, and yet have escaped with impunity. The reason probably is, the thing is now so common, that the odium attending it is become inconsiderable, and not worth the pains of an endeavor to divide it. But as that measure was once like to become universal, may I not observe, that it remains in the history of our church an example of what, alas! appears but too plainly in the history of every church, That, in proportion as authority is relaxed in enforcing the laws of God, it is commonly stretched and carried to excess in support of the unnecessary, doubtful, or pernicious commandments of men. Let any man produce a period in which there was less rigour in punishing ministers for neglect of parochial duties, or irregularity in private practice, than when they were threatened with deposition if they refused to join in these not very honorable settlements, Nay, though we should look upon the preservation of church-authority as a matter of great moment, it was not obedience to the standing laws, on which the welfare of the whole, depends, that was so strictly required, but compliance with or approbation of the decisions of the annual Assemblies in their judicative capacity. It hath often surprised me to hear the plea of conscience, in such cases, treated as a mere pretence. What sentiments must those persons have, who look upon it as a thing incredible, that a man should scruple being present at an ordination where some of the answers to the questions put to the candidate, though joined with in a part of divine worship, are either directly false, or wholly absurd?

This part of the Apology has been so much lengthened out, that I wholly omit the attesting unqualified and admitting unattested elders into the church courts. There is indeed so manifest a breach of truth in the one case, and of law and order in the other, that if men do not see it themselves, it must be owing to such invincible prejudice as it is in vain to contend with.

Thus I have laid before the reader, in a serious and candid manner, what I hope will appear a sufficient apology for this offensive performance. Nothing could have induced me to the attempt, but the unwearied endeavors of many to represent it as an evidence of a bad temper and unchristian disposition, which the particular structure of the book made some undiscerning persons rashly assent to. I have not the smallest reason to repent of it on account of its nature, its design, or its effects upon the public. If there was any mistake, it was in point of prudence, which should have directed me to avoid bringing such a load of malice and resentment upon myself. This has afforded me one observation not very honorable to human nature, viz. That the rage of enemies is always more active and more lasting than the affection of friends. It often happens, that some who are very much pleased to find one stand forth as a champion for their political opinions, and ready to go, as it were, to the front of the battle; when their enemies smarting with the wounds he has given them, traduce and vilify his character, these esteemed friends often, in a great measure, give it up, and discover much satisfaction with themselves, that they had acted in a wiser and more cautious manner.

I conclude the whole, with beseeching all who are convinced, that the present state of the church of Scotland is such as I have represented, to exert themselves with zeal and activity for her preservation and recovery. There is a wonderful, though a natural union, among all worldly men against the spirit and power of true religion, wherever it appears. I am sorry to add, that this is one of the instances in which the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light. There are many whose conduct shows them to be actuated by an equal mixture of sloth and despair. They are unwilling to act with vigor, and defend themselves, by alledging, that nothing can be done with success. How much better would the old Roman maxim be, "*Nunquam desperandum est de republica?*" and how much better reason have we to adopt it? Nothing is impossible to the power of God. I add, that the most remarkable times of the

revival of religion, in this part of the united kingdom, immediately succeeded times of the greatest apostacy, when "truth" seemed to be "fallen in the street, and "equity could not enter." This was the case immediately before the year 1638. Corruption in doctrine, looseness in practice, and slavish submission in politics, had overspread the church of Scotland: and yet, in a little time, she appeared in greater purity and in greater dignity than ever she had done before, or perhaps than ever she hath done since that period. Let no Christian, therefore, give way to desponding thoughts. We plead the cause that shall at last prevail. Religion shall rise from its ruins; and its oppressed state at present should not only excite us to pray, but encourage us to hope for its speedy revival.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF A  
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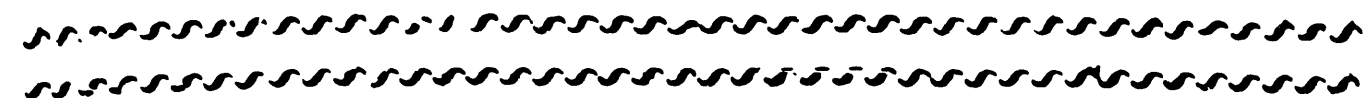
Discovered a few Years ago in the Interior Parts of  
SOUTH AMERICA.

CONTAINING SOME VERY SURPRISING EVENTS AND EXTRA-  
ORDINARY CHARACTERS.

## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*THE Reader will find himself obliged to the Author of the following History, for the pains he hath taken to render it as entertaining, and sentimental as possible. With this view he hath entirely avoided the use of foreign names, often hard to pronounce, and when pronounced wholly without meaning. Instead of this, when he had occasion to mention particular ranks of men, offices, or customs, he chose to express them by what did most exactly correspond with them in our own country. By this means the narrative, disencumbered of definitions or circumlocutions, is rendered quite easy and intelligible.*





T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F A  
C O R P O R A T I O N  
O F  
S E R V A N T S.



I N T R O D U C T I O N.



**T**HE skill of an author, like that of a merchant, lies chiefly in judging with readiness and certainty, what kind of commodities, and in what quantity, any particular age or place is able and willing to receive. This I have, of late, made very much my study, with regard to our own age and country, and the result of my inquiry is as follows. There are two sorts of subjects for which there is a general demand in Great Britain at this time, viz. (1.) Biography, if any thing may be so called that gives an account of the lives of persons that never existed, but in the imagination of the authors. This is indeed, a most fruitful subject, and under the various titles of Histories, Lives, Adventures, Memoirs, &c. teaches people how to live after any imaginable plan. (2.) The other is the formation of schemes and projects, to be carried on by subscription, for the good of mankind, which

never were so favorably received as at present, the abortion or mismanagement of nine in ten of them not having in the least abated the ardor of the public. If any be of opinion, that new discoveries in the science of morals, for the support of infidelity, are as favorably received as any of these, such must be told, that they are but superficial observers, or under the prejudice of religious enthusiasm. The discoveries here pointed at, have been of late years so various, so contradictory and so short-lived, that they really raise very little curiosity. As an instance of this, the reader is desired to recollect if he can, the most extraordinary thing of the kind that ever was attempted. A great living author, David Hume, Esq. not long ago, made health, cleanliness, and broad shoulders capital virtues, and a running sore an unpardonable crime; yet was it but little taken notice of when first published, and is now almost wholly forgotten.

Therefore, an author is undoubtedly happy who hath hit upon, or happens to be furnished with a subject suited to the taste of the age. This I humbly presume to be my own case. I have had the good fortune, lately, to obtain distinct information of a most extraordinary history, which also may perhaps lay a foundation for some new scheme, or, at least, for mending and cobbling those which are now cracked and old. The only misfortune that it labors under is, that it is true; for I remember the lofty and sonorous earl of Shaftsbury, whose memory I greatly revere, tells us there is much more truth in fiction than in fact. The meaning of this is, that authors of taste and genius like himself, employing their fancy in delineating feigned characters, give ordinarily a juster view of nature than tedious relaters of what really happened.

This loss however, I trust, will be abundantly made up by the extraordinary and wonderful nature of the passages I am to relate, which, it is to be hoped, will have the effect of fiction in enlivening the imagination of the writer, and, indeed, very possibly, may be mistaken for fiction by many readers. The truth is, I hope there is a singular felicity in my subject in every respect. If the excellency of history, according to lord Shaftsbury, lies in its being

like fiction, and the excellency of fiction in its being like to real facts, according to all other men, the subject in hand must needs excel, as it partakes of both these characters. It will be like truth, because it is true : and it will be like fiction, because the same train of events, perhaps, never happened in any other place or nation.

To introduce myself to my subject, and inform the reader how I came by the knowledge of it, he may be pleased to recollect, That in the year 1741, when commodore (afterwards lord) Anson made a voyage round the world, one of the ships of his squadron, called the *Wager*, was cast away upon a desert island in the South Seas. The greatest part of the crew who were saved lengthened the long-boat, and made a long and dangerous voyage through the straits of Magellan, to Brazil. As they were often obliged to swim ashore for provisions and water, it happened that, at one time, there were to the number of fourteen of them ashore upon a part of the coast very far south, near the mouth of the straits. Having staid all night, unfortunately next morning the wind blew so hard in shore, that only six of the fourteen were able to get aboard, and the vessel was obliged to go away and leave the other eight.

It is needless here to insist upon the various accidents they met with in this perilous situation. The difficulty of obtaining food, without which they must very soon have died : the mean and scanty provision with which nature will be sustained, when there is no more or better to be had : the inventive faculty of man for supplying his wants when reduced to absolute extremity, and a hundred other things which have been represented in all possible lights by other writers of adventures. Let it suffice, therefore to say that, in process of time, four of them were killed by the inhabitants of the country, and the remaining four taken prisoners. After changing their masters several times, they came at last into the hands of one who carried them a great way off to the capital of an empire, and the court of a powerful prince. There they lived many years, learned the language, and had occasion to see the

manners of the country. Two of them, at last, acquired such a degree of favor, that, in compliance with their earnest request, they were sent to the Portuguese settlements, and came from thence to Great Britain.

One of these persons, who was a man of tolerable education, as well as good sense and comprehension, coming to live in my neighborhood, communicated to me what follows of this history. In general he told me the conduct and characters of men, bating some little differences of fashion and modes of address, which are ever changing in every country, were much like what they are among ourselves. Court favor was precarious and changeable. Interest and ambition prevailed more in obtaining places of power and profit, than modest and peaceable merit. Cold and sober men gathered wealth, and crept up, by slow but sure steps, to station and dignity; while the lively sprightly fellows threw away all that they had, and soon became contemptible to others, and useless to themselves. The knowledge of the world was of very little benefit; for though every class of men could clearly discern the errors that adhered to those of a different rank, they could scarcely observe, and never would imitate their commendable qualities. For example, says he, a profuse, diseased, needy lord, would speak with infinite contempt of the meanness of soul, and hardness of heart frequently to be found in traders and men of business, but never once thought of following their example in sobriety, application, and regularity in the distribution of their time, to which they manifestly owed all their success. So that upon the whole, he concluded that human nature in all ages and in all places was the same. A sage remark, the reader will say, but I can easily remember to have heard it before.

There was however one class of men in that nation, whose constitution as a body, and many of whose characters and practices were of the most extraordinary kind, viz. the SERVANTS. Their state and conduct, at the time which fell under his own observation, were so singular that they excited his curiosity; and induced him to in-

quire with great care into their condition, as far back as history could trace them. This is what I am now to communicate to the public, being willing that my book should be buried in oblivion, or burned with disgrace, if a story can be produced equal, or even similar to it, in any other age or country.

## C H A P. I.

*Of the original State of the Servants, and their erection into a Corporation.*

**I**N very early times, of which there are still some accounts handed down by tradition, the servants were in a state not much different from what they are at present among us. It does not appear that ever they were slaves, or were treated with excessive rigor or severity. They were trained up in some acquaintance with, and applied themselves to such work as they seemed to be fitted for by the turn of their minds, and the strength or agility of their bodies. They were chosen or hired by every family as they pleased, made a voluntary agreement, and were employed in doing what was necessary of every kind. They were paid as they and the family could agree, eating of their own labours, and were cherished and caressed in proportion as they deserved it. In cases of remarkable neglect, disobedience or misbehavior they were turned away. This, indeed, happened but seldom, for they were in general honest, sober and industrious. They had the interest of their masters at heart, nay, so remarkable were some of them in these times for fidelity, that (it is reported) they seemed to have as much or more pleasure in doing their work, as in receiving their wages.

But it happened, some ages ago, that one of their princes was saved from a formidable conspiracy against his life and crown, just upon the point of execution, by the fidelity and courage of a servant. The prince was a man of a warm heart, and an uncommonly generous disposition. Not content with bountifully rewarding his benefactor by kindness to himself and family, he conceived a design of perpetuating the memory of the fact, and showing his gratitude by doing something in favor of

the whole order or body of men. For this purpose, being posselt of absolute power, after consulting upon it for some time, he established the following regulations, not doubting that they would be highly beneficial to his subjects in general, as well as the servants in particular.

1. It was ordered that the wages of servants should be considerably augmented, and fixed to a certain rate in all the king's dominions. This was evidently dictated by compassion. He observed that it was very hard and unequal, that those who were constantly employed in labor, who promoted the interest of their masters so much, should notwithstanding live so poorly; that they should have nothing but the coarsest diet, and no more money than was barely necessary to purchase the meanest clothing. He used, when the matter was under deliberation, to reason thus, "For my part, I think a king ought to have  
" the heart of a man; I consider the servants as my fel-  
" low creatures, and am desirous that they should taste  
" some of those pleasures and delicacies of life, which  
" they contribute so largely to procure for the accommo-  
" dation of others."

He also observed, that interest, as well as compassion, dictated the same thing; that keeping them poor would entirely dispirit them, and make them do their duty in the most careless and slothful manner, by which their masters must receive manifest prejudice. On the other hand, a good and secure provision would give them great vigor and alacrity. He ventured to foretel, that a third part increase of their salary would increase their work in a far greater proportion, so that the public would be gainers by this seeming burden. Besides that such a fixed provision would free them from all temptation to pilfering and stealing, and so be an improvement upon their honesty as well as activity.

Another advantage he proposed to reap by this measure was increasing the number of Servants. It was well enough remembered that, at no very distant period, the kingdom had suffered not a little from the scarcity of servants; so that the land lay uncultivated, and many branches of business neglected. Now it was impossible



to avoid seeing that this measure must increase the number of servants, by inducing them to come into the kingdom from the most distant places, as well as encouraging them to marry and propagate, and bless their country with a multitude of useful hands.

Nay, he even called in the aid of luxury to enforce his argument, alledging, that keeping the servants poor, must make them sordid and nasty, so that it would be odious to people of taste and elegance to have them about their persons, or even to see them in their houses. But by carrying the proposed design into execution, he said, he hoped to see the servants in general genteel, well dressed, well behaved, and conversable men. That this must be an advantage in particular to families in the country, who were considerably distant from one another, and, in certain seasons of the year, could have very little intercourse: nay, even that in cities and places of greater resort, it would be better, in many respects to have opportunities of conversation within doors, than to be always obliged to seek society abroad.

In short, he supposed that the regulation now established would put an entire period to all the murmurings and complaints of servants, and their desires of shifting from one family to another, which was a source of daily inconveniencies. They must be touched, says he, with a sense of gratitude for so unexpected and so happy a change in their situation, and will therefore be thoroughly content, and *never ask for more*.

2. Having the public good all along at heart, as much as the advantage of the servants, he ordered schools and places of exercises to be built, and masters appointed to train up servants and fit them for their several trusts.—There were different tracts of education chalked out for all different sorts of employments. It was particularly expected of the directors of these academies, that they would select the servants fit for every branch, and both educate and dispose of them according as their genius should intimate they were most capable. As for example, for cooks, waiting-men, and other domestic servants, and

grooms, gardeners, and laboring men of all sorts without doors.

The advantage of this regulation, in both its parts, seemed very evident. Education, it was said, is all in all. Education makes the man, and makes the servant. It will therefore prepare them for their work. They will enter upon it expert and proven, very much to the public emolument ; instead of being awkward and unhandy for some time, till experience has given them facility, or, perhaps, retaining some measure of rulicity and inactivity through their whole lives.

It seemed also a matter of great moment, that no man should be suffered to profess what he could not do, but that he should be confined to that only which he could best do. Neither was it proper that this should be left to the caprice of families, or the ambition and presumption of the servants themselves. And it was never once imagined the masters of academies would be defective in *judgment* and *impartiality* on their part.

3. The third and last regulation he established, was ordering the servants to be erected by charter into a large corporation, containing many smaller bodies and societies within it. To this corporation he gave authority over the several members of which it was composed, and established a complete subordination. This was thought a piece of admirable wisdom and policy. They were to be strictly watchful over one another, and it was supposed they would get all the advantage in this shape, which men united in society have over those in a state of nature.—The several classes and divisions of the corporation were to try the sufficiency of all servants before they were admitted, and had power to turn them off when they misbehaved or neglected their work. That this might proceed with the greater regularity, they were every one secured by law in their employments. They were not left in a vague dependant state : a servant once hired by any family could not be turned away but by an order of his fellow-servants, to whom all complaints of his conduct were to be made, and by whom they were to be judged.

The whole was founded upon the most excellent reasons. Who so proper to judge of the capacity and diligence of servants as those who are servants themselves? who can be supposed so attentive to their conduct, or so jealous of their behaviour, since the character of particulars must evidently reflect either disgrace or credit on the whole collective body?

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Effects produced by these Regulations.*

**A**T first, and indeed for a considerable time after these regulations were established, experience seemed to confirm the wisdom as well as generosity of the prince, and to discover their happy consequences every day. Servants were trained up and instructed in every branch of business, and were very expert in their work. They understood the cause, the reason and the end of every thing, and could talk upon it, in a most intelligent and consistent manner. They did every thing with much exactness, and had plainly a far greater air of neatness and elegance than formerly. The fields were dressed and trimmed to great perfection; the utensils of the houses were all brightened and put in order; the outsides of the houses and avenues to them were all adorned in a very pretty and fanciful manner. They were not content with what was barely profitable to their masters, but paid also a due regard to show and appearance. Persons who travelled were exceedingly delighted, and the proprietors were not a little proud of the change; for every house was like a little palace, and every country-seat like a little paradise. Thus far the servants seemed to be much upon their honor, and, from a sense of gratitude to the emperor, endeavored to behave themselves with great care and diligence; so that every body, as well as themselves, sincerely rejoiced in the change of their state.

But alas! how short-sighted are human creatures? this universal satisfaction did not last long. It was quickly seen, notwithstanding so good a beginning, that the regu-

lations laid down would but ill answer the end proposed. The change to the worst took its rise from the enlargement of their wages, which yet seemed, at first, to be the chief and most reasonable article of the regulations : for, after they had obtained good wages, and the best of food, and accommodation, some of them began to grow fat, and consequently, lazy. When they were suddenly called, sometimes by dozing and sleeping they did not hear at all ; and when they did hear, were very slow in their motions, and always ready furnished with an excuse for their neglect ; or, perhaps, raised some very strong objections to what they were desired to do. When they were sent of an errand, they took a long time before they returned ; and yet would positively stand to it, that it was impossible to return sooner. If this was not satisfying, they would, in a great rage, before they delivered their message, return and measure the ground they had traversed, in order to determine the dispute.

Having now more to eat and drink than formerly, they behoved to take more time to it ; and so the hours of their work were very much diminished. This seemed to them not only reasonable, but necessary ; and great disputes arose upon it with the families in which they served. The families in general, gave them to understand, that they expected greater diligence and activity, as they were now better paid than before, whereas the servants counted that highly ridiculous ; for with them it was a fixed point, that the more liberally they were paid, they ought to do the less for it. It is needless to enlarge upon this part of the subject ; let it suffice to say, that, in general, having now got so good provision made for them, they began not to serve, but to live. The delicacies of the world began to captivate their hearts, and instead of satisfying themselves with necessaries, and being useful in their generation, they bethought themselves of enjoying what had thus so luckily fallen to their share.

Changes in all respects came on insensibly. It was before observed, that one advantage proposed by the regulations, was the increase of the number of servants. This effect indeed did follow with a witness. Whereas before

the country was not overstocked with servants, and families were at great pains in looking out for proper ones, now they increased to an almost incredible number. Not only was there a great confluence of strangers from distant places, but many of the inhabitants, not inconsiderable in point of station found it their interest to become servants. Now you would every where see them going about and soliciting employment, and very wonderful were the arts they sometimes used to obtain it. Of these I shall say nothing in this preliminary part of the history, because I shall probably have afterwards a better opportunity to introduce them.

As the state of things and the way of thinking began to alter, the language and manner of speaking altered also at the same time. In former times they used to speak of getting a master, or being hired, or getting an employment, now they spoke of getting into bread, of getting a salary, a settlement, or a living. I know nothing that resembles this difference so much, as the difference between our way of speaking in Scotland, and what is usual in our neighbor country of England about servants. Here we speak of a servant's getting into service : in England they call it getting a place, and a footman turned away, they term with the highest propriety, a footman out of place.

Things having once come into this situation, it happened with these servants as it happens with all men when once they begin to gratify their desires : they become inordinate, excessive and insatiable. Instead of being content with what they had obtained, they began to fall upon all imaginable methods of increasing their revenues. They contrived an infinite number of perquisites besides their ordinary wages. When a family had of their own free motion bestowed any mark of favor upon a good servant, the thing was immediately spread abroad, and all other families were harrassed with complaints, and teased to death by their servants till the same was bestowed upon them. They would often, in a clandestine manner, lay hold of some of the goods of the family, and appropriate them to their own use ; and, when it came at last to be discovered, they would take the advantage of their own covetousness,

and prove clearly, that by immemorial custom it belonged to them as their due. Where families were ignorant, they would affirm with the greatest boldness, that such and such were the privileges of servants in all other places, and by that means procure their consent. When they were not only ignorant, but timid and cowardly, they would go a short way to work, and threaten to burn their houses to the ground if they did not comply with every demand.

But, what they excelled most in were the arts of flattery and deceit in rich families. Such as got near great men, would stand as it were in perpetual admiration of the beauty of their persons, the gracefulness of their manners, and the excellence of their understandings. The servants of some persons of great rank, had a custom of making up a long list every day, of the virtues which such persons had that day put in practice, and reading it over to them next morning before they got out of bed, which was observed to render them quite facile and tractable for a long time after.

They persuaded the credulous, that the public good was inseparably connected with their thriving and opulence. ‘Industry,’ said they, ‘is the source of wealth to a nation. Servants, every body must acknowledge, are the means of industry: thence it follows undeniably, that the more servants the better.’ By the help of this argument they obtained, that many new establishments were made for servants. And such was the fascination that prevailed, that frequently there were settlements made for the provision of menial servants in a wilderness, where there was hardly a single creature to serve; and of husbandmen upon a sea shore, where there was not an inch of ground to cultivate. They also got about sick and dying persons, and by their officious services, by tending them with apparent care, and by frequently and readily giving them cordials, they prevailed, that many left great legacies to them in their wills.

## C H A P. III.

*Continues the same Subject. And particularly gives an account of a very remarkable step taken by the Servants.*

**W**HEN their possessions, privileges and immunities were thus enlarged, they began to claim greater respect than formerly, and to assume additional titles and designations. Some of them would be no longer servants properly speaking, but overseers. They affirmed that it was essential to the nature of servants, that some of them should be overseers, and that there could be neither order nor œconomy in a family without some such. To this they added sub-overseers, and several other officers for their assistance. They then proceeded to arch-overseers, who had all the other overseers, as well as servants, under their jurisdiction. At a great meeting of the whole corporation, this was determined and decreed to be, and to have been, a part of the original institution of servitude, without which it could not possibly subsist.

These encroachments were very patiently submitted to, and, one would think, had been carried as far as the nature of the thing would admit. Yet there remained one step more which exceeded every thing that had been formerly seen, and happened as follows. An overseer of the capital city gathered a great many of his contemporaries about him, and after begging their most serious attention to a proposal he had to lay before them, made a speech to the following purpose. ‘Honored and very dear Brethren, ‘You know that the life of society is order, and the soul ‘of order is subordination. The greatest service, there- ‘fore, that we can do to our corporation, is to keep up ‘the subordination of officers among us with as much ‘strictness, and to make it as compleat and extensive as ‘possible. There are no structures which stand so secure- ‘ly, as those that are built in the form of a cone or a py- ‘ramid, because they have a broad base, and gradually ‘lessen towards the top. Neither of these, however, is ‘compleat, but maimed or imperfect, unless it be carried



‘ on till it terminate in a point. Therefore, the subordi-  
‘ nation of our society can never be entire and perfect,  
‘ till it end in a single person, who may unite the whole,  
‘ and enjoy absolute uncontrollable dominion. And, as  
‘ the person who is on the top of a pyramid, must necessa-  
‘ rily see farther than those who stand upon any of the  
‘ lower steps of it, so the person who is at the head of the  
‘ whole society of servants must, in virtue of his office, sur-  
‘ pass them all in wisdom and sagacity. Nay, as this or-  
‘ der is of the institution of nature, and as a last resort or  
‘ supreme judge is necessary to determine controversies in  
‘ any society, so I do think it may be proved, that nature,  
‘ to be uniform and consistent in her operations, must im-  
‘ mediately inspire the person so exalted, with infallible  
‘ knowledge, and a sort of infinite mind. Now, I hope  
‘ it is very plain, that I myself am the person to whom,  
‘ and to my successors in office, this power and authority  
‘ do of right belong.’

One of the assembly then rises up and says, ‘ I greatly  
‘ suspect this will be attended with no good effects upon  
‘ the interest of the servants in general, not to mention  
‘ the interest of the families, which, from a sense of duty  
‘ to the corporation, I entirely give up. At any rate, it  
‘ ought not to be gone into precipitately ; for it is a pro-  
‘ digious innovation.’ ‘ Quite otherwise,’ says the former  
speaker ; ‘ for though I have condescended to reason with  
‘ you, and show you, that in the nature of things, there  
‘ must be one who, like the top stone of a pyramid, is in-  
‘ cumbent on the whole body ; as also, that this can be no  
‘ other than myself, who dwell in the centre of this vast  
‘ empire ; yet I can give undeniable evidence, that it hath  
‘ been always so in fact, since there was an empire here,  
‘ and since there were servants.’ The objector then shook  
his head, as who should say that is far from being a clear  
point, and seemed to wonder from whence this evidence  
was to proceed. The other immediately goes on, ‘ It is  
‘ as clear as the sun ; for though all the records that con-  
‘ tained this regulation are lost, yet I very well remember,  
‘ that my nurse told me before I was two years of age,  
‘ that her grandmother’s sister’s cousin-german assured her  
‘ it was fact.’

However unwilling, one would think, men should be to give up their natural rights, and submit to usurped authority, yet so it was that they soon agreed to this scheme; and, indeed, it appeared to have been not ill projected for their own ends. It is not to be conceived at how speedy a pace they advanced, in acquiring and extending their dominion. They quite inverted the use of language; for when they spoke of the family they always meant the servants; or, if they said any thing would tend to the good of the family, it was to be understood, that it would promote the increase of the wages, privileges and immunities of the servants. In many places the servants grew upon the families, and turned them out altogether. In some of the most delicious spots of the country, you would have seen fine seats and inclosures wholly possessed by servants, who absolutely refused to do any work, but gave themselves up to lazy contemplation. If any body had presumed to ask them the meaning of this, they said they were employed in studying the theory of service, and wishing that all servants might be good, and all families well supplied.

It has been observed above, that they began their scheme by flattering the rich and great men, and endeavoring to insinuate themselves into their favor. But as soon as their power was sufficiently established, they changed their note, and treated the most considerable men of the country with great haughtiness and contempt. They affirmed it to be absolutely necessary for the public good, that they should have much honor and respect paid them. That, as they were undeniably the most useful rank of men, by consequence they were the most honorable. Instead of being humble and submissive, they insisted, that all the people, from the highest to the lowest, should pay a profound respect to the overseers, arch-overseers, and other dignitaries, whose names I have forgot, because they had neither sense nor meaning. Nay, the emperor of the servants arrived in time at such power, that he made the richest men in the country, even the governors of provinces to tremble. He ordered them sometimes to wipe his shoes; and, when they misbehaved or showed the least backwardness, commanded them to be whipt.

When my informer mentioned this circumstance, I could not help discovering much amazement at the pusillanimity of these people, and even modestly hinted some suspicion as to the truth of the fact. He insisted, however, in the most positive manner, on the truth of his account, and added, that he had many things still more wonderful to communicate; as an instance of which he affirmed, that it was not only usual for the emperor to order great men to be whipt, but even to command them to whip themselves. All this they were obliged to submit to, for he had the lower servants, and the whole kingdom absolutely under his influence. If any person or family had disputed his will in the least article, they would either, without more ado, burn the house and them in it, or they would wholly give over work, and neither provide them with food nor fuel, so that they behoved immediately to starve.

What contributed not a little to establish this usurpation, was a very singular scheme which they fell upon while they were flattering great men, and persuading them to make new establishments for servants. This was, that families should not be permitted to choose servants for themselves, but that a lord, or any other great man, should have the power of nominating the servants within a certain district. They never failed to invent plausible reasons for all their schemes. In support of this it was alledged, that families were often whimsical in their choice. That some would prefer a servant because he was tall, and others because he was short; some because his hair was red, others because it was black. That they did not know when they were well served, and when they were not. That they were apt to be imposed on by such as had smooth tongues and could flatter them. That, if families and servants were in a good understanding, they would raise sedition and subvert the constitution.

On the other hand it was thought exceeding clear, that great men would understand the interest of the country, and the capacity of servants, much better than the vulgar. As also, that they were above all suspicion of partiality, and would be sure always to send fit and accomplished

servants to every house. But alas, the contrary of all this was soon found by experience. They learned speedily to sell every place to the highest bidder, unless when they had a favorite or dependant to gratify, which indeed, at bottom, was the same thing. However, they were soon made dupes to the servants, for when the profit of this sale was found out, the overseers and arch-overseers gradually usurped the nomination to themselves, and at last, it came to be made an addition to the great and overgrown power of the emperor.

It may easily be supposed, things were now in a sad situation, and they continued so, as tradition and written records assure us, for many ages. The lands lay uncultivated; the people were reduced to the greatest misery imaginable; they were sorry clothed, and worse fed. No body prospered but the servants, or rather, only the upper ranks of them, the noble and honorable servants, the overseers and arch overseers. To these indeed may be added the idle and speculative sort, who were settled in hives, in the most pleasant and fruitful vallies, in every province. As for the poorer or lowest class of servants, who actually did any work for the families, they were as much oppressed, by this time, as their masters. Their wages were mostly taken up by lazy overseers, or exhausted by heavy taxes which they were obliged to pay to the emperor, and his court.

#### C H A P. IV.

*A terrible Blow given to the Domination of the Servants; and particularly to the Power of the Emperor.*

**I**T appears to be a fact, though not very well accounted for by philosophers, that, when men have been long accustomed to slavery, they hug their chains, and become so blinded, as to pride themselves in their misery itself. A poor peasant, in a neighboring country, whose face is pale with hunger, and his family scarce covered with rags, through the oppression of his prince, yet will be very ready

to venture his life in vindication of the tyrant's honor, and count himself extremely happy to lay it down in defence of his person. So it happened with the people under consideration. They were so deluded by these servants, that, as their condition, so their reason itself was turned upside down. They gloried in the usurpation of the servants over them, worshipped them often as they passed, and stoutly defended all their rights and privileges.

If by chance it happened, (as there were always some in every age) that one thought fit to complain of the sloth, debauchery, avarice and tyranny of the servants, his brethren immediately raised a hideous accusation against him, and the stupid people generally joined in the cry. They immediately assisted his fellow-servants to seize him, to imprison him, and, according to the degree of his offence, to punish him. They first, indeed, took the most charitable pains to convince him of his error. If, upon this, he was willing to recant, and solemnly to declare that the conduct of the servants was admirable, and the character of them all unblameable, he was dismissed only with a good beating. But, if he was obstinate, and insisted on telling the truth, he was carried to a dreadful subterraneous place, and there put to the most horrid and shocking tortures, which at length ended in death.

However, at last, this mystery of iniquity got a terrible blow. One of the lower servants, of an honest heart, and a determined resolute temper, being filled with indignation at the oppression which the rest were guilty of, set himself to open the eyes of the public, and expose their wickedness. He made a full discovery of all the frauds he had any how been acquainted with, and spared not the corruption of the emperor's court. Laying down only this plain principle, that servants were obliged to promote, at all times, the real interest of their masters, he set the abominable conduct of the covetous blood-suckers in the most odious light. Whenever he went to a fair, or other place of public concourse, he would get upon an eminence, and, in a long discourse, endeavor to rouse the people from their lethargy, and inflame them with resentment against their oppressors.

This furnished his brethren with an opportunity of representing him as a disturber of the peace, and loading him with innumerable calumnies. Many tumults were raised against him, and he was often in imminent danger of his life. When he had narrowly escaped being stoned in public, they would often hire desperadoes to assassinate him in private; and, sometimes, attempted to bribe his intimate friends to take him off by poison. However, by a mixture of bravery and caution in himself, together with the assistance of some faithful friends, who saw how much he was promoting their interest, or rather, by a most singular providence, he was always brought off safe. At last, a few of the other servants joined him, and they together opened the eyes of several provinces of the empire. These came to a formal resolution of casting off the yoke of the emperor, and settling the servants upon a quite new, or rather bringing them back to the old, reasonable and natural foundation.

This was not brought about without a most violent and pertinacious opposition. The emperor immediately sounded the alarm, and set the servants in motion throughout all his dominions. He could not be supposed, indeed, to look upon such a scheme with indifference; for it plainly tended to strip him of a great part of his revenue and power: nor was it easy to see where it would stop. He therefore cried out against it with all his might. He sent out a proclamation, in which he affirmed, that it struck against the very being of servants, and that the design was no less than to exterminate them from the face of the earth. He represented it as the most unnatural thing that ever was heard of. That there had been sometimes conspiracies of servants against their masters, but a joint conspiracy of masters against their own servants, and of servants against their fellow-servants, was absolutely without precedent. He concluded with a solemn execration, devoting all who should continue in this rebellion to complete and irretrievable ruin.

The consequence of this was a civil war in the kingdom. Many battles were fought, in which there was a dreadful slaughter on both sides, and multitudes taken

prisoners, who were none of them used very well. The emperor indeed, and his court had a manifest advantage, by long practice, in devising the most exquisite methods of revenge and cruelty. But, to shorten my narrative, after many violent and bloody disputes, as well as useless conferences, at last some provinces agreed to keep the old way, and some established the new. Particularly, in one Northern province there was at the time of the change, a most excellent method and order established with regard to the servants. They not only renounced the authority of the emperor; but all overseers, arch-overseers, auditors, controllers, accountants, keepers of records, and other unnecessary officers were banished at once: and none suffered to continue but useful working servants. The speculative drones were expelled, and their lands given to persons of rank and worth in the province. That regulation was abolished, as extremely pernicious, which permitted lords or great men to name servants to others, so that every family chose such as best pleased themselves, and such as were well qualified for the business for which they were hired. The exorbitant increase of their wages was reduced, as well as all extravagant perquisites, and only a moderate provision continued and settled.

## C H A P. V.

*Some account of the Reformed Establishment, in a Northern Province; and the happy effects that followed upon it for a time. It begins however again to degenerate.*

THE people of this province were now so fully convinced of the terrible consequences of the late usurpation, that they resolved to use all possible precautions, to prevent the return of corruption for the future. In this the servants themselves seemed to concur very heartily, and were, apparently, animated with a warm zeal against the worthless part of their own order. Many excellent rules were laid down in the meetings of the corporation. They were ordered under the severest pe-



nalties to apply themselves diligently to their business; to live sober, grave and mortified lives; to forbear all ranting, junketing and gaming. They were forbid all travelling abroad, or wandering from their families, but upon urgent occasions, and with leave asked and given. If any were convicted of dishonesty, laziness, or disobedience, they were not only dismissed, but stript of their clothes, branded in their foreheads, and declared utterly incapable of ever being again employed.

The greatest strictness imaginable was used in trying them, as to their sufficiency in every branch of business for which they were hired; and very diligent inquiry made into their character for honesty and sincerity. When they were introduced to any family, they were solemnly bound by a tremendous oath, to have the good of the family always at heart, and that they should never do any thing, directly or indirectly, that might tend to its prejudice. But above all, there was a strict law made, and declared to be unalterable, that no servant should be forced upon any family against their will. In order to secure, in the most effectual manner, the execution of these laws, it was resolved, that, in the government of the corporation, there should be joined with the servants certain persons of the most prudent sort from the families. These were called helpers, they had no salaries, but being naturally a sort of representatives of the people, it was expected they would universally support their interest.

For a long time this province was exceeding happy in their reformed constitution. The most perfect harmony subsisted between masters and servants. The work of the servants seemed to be a pleasure to them, and, on the other hand, the members of every family seemed to vie with one another who should treat their servants with the greatest tenderness and humanity. Once or twice there was an attempt made to introduce overseers and arch-overseers among them, from a neighbouring province which had retained these officers, though they would not suffer them to be subject to the emperor. However, the people showing a proper spirit, they were still thrown out. All this time matters went on exceedingly well, the fields were

assiduously cultivated, and brought every year immense crops; and plenty as well as harmony was every where to be seen.

But alas, after a long season of peace and quiet, things began to alter for the worse. Ambition, avarice and luxury, would not be kept out by the banishment of the old titles. They found a way of introducing themselves, under cover of the form that then prevailed, without any apparent change. The most important step towards bringing this about, was re-establishing the law which empowered great men to nominate servants to inferior families. This was submitted to the more easily, because they only nominated them to the salary, provided that the corporation should think proper to introduce them to the family. For this purpose, the most sacred laws required an invitation from the family itself. But the young servants soon began to find, that it was far easier for many of them to play the parasite or sycophant about great men's houses, that they might procure a writ of nomination, than to acquire a good reputation for diligence in their work. That was the road, therefore, in which the greatest part of them travelled to preferment.

Many and fierce were the struggles, for several years, in the meetings of the corporation about introducing servants to families. As all the laws required an invitation from the family, when any person was nominated, a neighbouring court would send a deputation to the family, to ask them whether they would take such a one for their servant or not. Sometimes they wheedled and flattered, and sometimes threatened them, if they would not comply. If any consented, their names were set down three or four times, to swell the number; if any were angry and spoke impertinently, they were supposed to be out of their senses, and incapable of judging. After these arts were used they would sit down gravely to determine the matter, and find, that there was in this instance a most agreeable and harmonious invitation.

It is impossible to help smiling, when one reflects upon the various methods used in conducting this business.— Sometimes they could not get a single person in a house

to accept of the servant who had been nominated. When this happened, they used to send for all the relations of the family, even the most distant cousins, and ask their consent, which was easily obtained, because it was nothing to them whether the family were well served or ill.—When they had obtained it, if a complaint was made, they endeavored to prove, by very ingenious reasonings, that these distant relations had as good a title to invite a servant as any person whatever. Matters however drove on very heavily for a while ; but in order to facilitate them, many gentlemen of estates, who knew not much either about service or servants, procured themselves to be chosen to the office of helpers. Not that they helped to do any thing : but, getting in to be members of the courts of the corporation, they contributed to provide servants in places. By this means many were provided with a piece of bread, who had been poor sneaking fellows, and had followed them in their youth, in hunting, fishing, and other diversions.

Such was the situation of affairs when my informer went into the country, and, as the case was very singular, the reader may easily guess how much it engaged his attention. He resided chiefly in this Northern province, and, therefore, his remarks were mostly confined to what happened among them. It would be endless to mention all that he told me, but the principal observations shall be communicated to the world in the following chapters.

## C H A P VI.

*Of the great impropriety often seen in the appointment of servants ; and the sentiments of the inhabitants on that subject.*

**T**HERE is commonly, in every society, some radical principle which governs and modifies the rest, and gives a tincture to all the measures that are carried on, whatever be their particular subject, or seeming intention. In the case before us, the fundamental error appears to have been the power of nomination which was given to

great men. The consequence of this was, an excessive impropriety in the appointment of servants to different families. If a poor ordinary family wanted a household servant, sometimes a lord would send them a foreign cook out of his own kitchen. This fellow would speak such minced broken language, that they could not understand him; and the meat he dressed for them they could not endure to look upon. When they desired him to provide plain solid food, such as they had been in use to eat, and in sufficient quantity to fill their bellies, he would serve them up a course of flimsy dishes, finely garnished, but entirely disguised, so that the poor people could not imagine what they contained. If at any time they made complaint of this, he triumphed over their clownish ignorance and unrefined taste, and would offer to prove to the satisfaction of all men of sense, that he perfectly understood his art.

In innumerable such instances they went entirely in the face of common sense, in the choice and appointment of servants. Sometimes, if a family wanted a plowman or a gardiner, they would send them a huntsman, or a running footman. If a considerable merchant wanted a book-keeper, they would find him a stupid ignorant fellow who could neither write nor read. For this preposterous conduct there was no remedy. The great men counted the right of nomination as a precious jewel, which no consideration could induce them to part with. And as the power of determination, in all disputed cases, lay in courts composed of servants, they strenuously supported the most unreasonable appointments. This was naturally to be expected, because a contrary conduct would have been a silent impeachment of many of themselves, as unfit for their present stations.

Besides, it happened in this case, as I observed had happened in a former age, many loved to have it so. The people of better rank, and those who would be thought to be of better rank, by an unaccountable fascination, not only approved, but admired these measures. To allow families, they said, to choose servants for themselves, would be a source of endless confusion, but that the present was

plainly a simple, rational, uniform and peaceable method of proceeding. It was a common and a fashionable topic of conversation, to despise the folly and impudence of the common people, who had always a strong inclination to choose their own servants, and looked with a very evil eye upon those who were thus billeted upon them against their wills. If any person, in a company, had but signified that he thought this conduct inconsistent with equity or good policy, he was not thought fit to be reasoned with, but a great and loud laugh was immediately raised against him, so that he was not only put to silence, but to confusion. Nay, there were not wanting many who affirmed, that nobody could be sincerely of that opinion, but that it was only pretended, from base and sinister views.

I must observe here, that when my informer was on this part of the subject, which indeed he often resumed, as what had made a great impression upon his own mind, I could not help again discovering marks of astonishment. I told him, I very well knew the absurdities of which the human mind is capable, yet this seemed to be the most incredible of any thing that I had ever read or heard of; that it should be laughed down as a ridiculous notion, that families ought to be at liberty to choose their own servants. On this he was not a little offended, and speaking with some acrimony, says, ‘It was to gratify your curiosity, Sir, that, in this and former conversations, I have given an account of my observations in foreign countries. If you desire to hear no more, I shall be wholly silent; but give me leave to say, that the treatment which we travellers meet with when we return home, is at once unreasonable and ungrateful. If we tell you things that are common, you look upon them as insipid and trifling; and, if we tell you things that are quite new and surprising, you let us know with great good manners, that you do not believe us.’

Then after a little pause, ‘Pray Sir,’ says he, ‘how many nations are there in Europe, Asia or Africa, who think themselves at liberty to choose their own prince, or to bring him to an account for oppression or bad government.’ Truly, said I, I believe not above five

or six. 'Well then,' says he, 'if, perhaps, fifty to one of mankind, have thought it a sin or folly for them to choose their own masters, is it modest in you to suspect my veracity, when I tell you of one nation, where it became fashionable to think that they ought not to choose their own servants.'

'But to come a little closer to the point,' says he, 'are you not a member of the select society in E———h?' I am, and glory in it as a most honorable distinction. 'Have you not taken agriculture under your patronage?' Undoubtedly; and by what means can we better promote the interest of the public? 'By none, I admit. But suffer me to proceed with my interrogatories. Have you bought any land with the profits of your improvements?' Not yet. They are but in their infancy, and have cost me a great deal of expence. 'Are the crops of improvers generally better than those of other people?' I cannot say they are. 'You ought,' says he, 'to have confessed that they are commonly worse; for, according to my observation, the mark of an improver is not to have a good crop, but to be able to give a rational and philosophical account how he came to have a bad one. But have you not also encouraged a man to write books, and read lectures upon agriculture, who made himself a beggar by putting it in practice?' Perhaps it may be so, but he understood the theory. 'How came you to believe that he understood the theory? Alas! alas! sir, absurdities coming into fashion is not so rare a thing at home, as to entitle you to doubt the truth of my narrative, when I told you of the mistakes and delusions of a certain people abroad.'

I confess I was never more nettled at any thing, than at this unexpected attack upon the laudable attempts among us, of late, to improve our native country. To compare them with the monstrous conduct of the unpolished American people described in this book, was unsufferable. I could not, therefore, let the matter drop, but told him, all that you have said, sir, might easily be answered; however, not to spend time upon it at present, what do you think of, or what have you to say against the excellent and

rational tracts which have been published by private gentlemen of fortune among us, upon agriculture? Do they not contain the clearest arithmetical calculations, of the profit to arise from the method laid down? ‘I say,’ answered he, ‘they are all what the lawyers call *sclo de se*, ‘and totally inadmissible.’ Your reason, pray. ‘My reason! why, truly, I have more reasons than one. In the first place, they always put me in mind of a quack doctor with his *catholicon*. They have but one remedy for all diseases. A gentleman happens to be struck with some new theoretical principle, and immediately falls to work, runs down every thing else, and applies this wonderful discovery to all purposes, all soils, and all seasons. You know what enthusiasts the horse hoers and pulverisers are. Many of them are clearly of opinion, that dung is prejudicial to ground, as serving only to engender weeds. I was once quite of this opinion myself, and found no other difficulty in it, than how gentlemen and farmers would get quit of their dung, which, not being returned to the ground in the way of manure, must soon grow up to an enormous, and at the same time, most nauseous and offensive heap. When under these apprehensions, I remember to have projected a scheme to be carried on by subscription, which would have proved an effectual remedy. The method was to have plans taken of every country, in which the level should be marked, then canals to be carried through all the low grounds, and smaller ducts drawn from every gentleman and farmer’s house, terminating in these canals, which, by the help of a collection of rain water at every house, would, at certain seasons of the year, carry away the whole dung, and at last empty it into the sea. The expence of this scheme would, indeed, have been very considerable; but the great advantages to be reaped from it, I apprehended, would soon convince every body of its utility. Now, however ridiculous such a scheme may be, I am fully convinced it would have been put in practice in a certain county, if it had not been for the incorrigible obstinacy of the common people. I am also of opinion, that it would have succeeded, and that dung



‘ would have been wholly banished in a short time. This  
‘ would have happened, not only by the help of the canals,  
‘ but the crops would have been so thin and spiritual,  
‘ that the cattle who fed upon them would have passed ve-  
‘ ry little of a gross or excremental nature.

‘ I shall not trouble you, continued he, at this time,  
‘ with any more of my reasons but one. It seems  
‘ highly incredible that, if the new schemes of agriculture  
‘ were so profitable as their authors give out, they would  
‘ be so generous as to discover them gratis to the public,  
‘ and even press the said public to accept of them. It is  
‘ more probable they would keep them as a secret in their  
‘ own families, till their excellence were discovered by  
‘ their visible effects. I know a manufacturing town,  
‘ where, if any man falls upon a method of working, or a  
‘ fabric of goods, that is likely to bring a good profit, he  
‘ is so far from pressing it upon his neighbours, that he uses  
‘ every possible precaution to keep it to himself. On the  
‘ other hand, his neighbours are as inquisitive as he is se-  
‘ cret; and commonly both discover and imitate it in a  
‘ very little time. There is a disposition in mankind to  
‘ resist what is forced upon them, and to leave no method  
‘ untried to come at what is industriously placed out of  
‘ their reach.

‘ I would, therefore, humbly recommend it to all im-  
‘ provers, to give over talking upon the subject, and to  
‘ fall heartily about putting their rules in practice; and, I  
‘ can promise them, that, if they be successful, it will  
‘ not be long before they will be quite common. Or, let  
‘ every person who discovers a nostrum in agriculture, ap-  
‘ ply to the government for a patent that no body may be  
‘ suffered to use it except himself, and those who shall pay  
‘ him sufficiently for the ingenuity of his invention. I  
‘ can assure you, sir, that if I had said to the people whom  
‘ I left a few years ago, that I knew a nation, where it  
‘ was common for benevolent persons to point out to them  
‘ plain, easy, cheap and certain methods of growing rich,  
‘ but they would not be persuaded to use them, I would  
‘ have had the same compliment paid me which you were  
‘ pleased to pay me some time ago, that I was taking the  
‘ privilege of a traveller.’

I shall not trouble the reader with saying how far I was convinced by this reasoning, only it made me resolve to be entirely silent, as to any further particulars I should learn concerning the corporation of servants, how strange and unaccountable soever they might be. Having therefore, brought this unavoidable digression to a close, we proceed with the history.

## C H A P. VII.

*Great partiality in the trial of Servants, and uncertainty in the characters given of them.*

**I**F the reader recollects what was said in the preceding chapter, it is probable he will be surprised, that the corporation, with the powers given them, did not, for their own credit, look better into the qualifications of servants. Since it was in their power to license them or not, it may be supposed they would take effectual care, that no insufficient person should be admitted. But it is to be observed, that so soon as the method of fixing servants, upon the nomination of lords or great men, came to be again in use, the trial of their sufficiency turned to a mere farce. There might be some degree of integrity found in one court; but, in such a case, the candidate had nothing to do but apply to another, where he would find, perhaps, a set of rascally fellows who were ashamed of nothing. To what a degree of boldness they ventured to proceed, may be seen from the following account of what literally happened.

A certain court was going upon the examination of a young man, who desired to have a certificate that he was fully accomplished as a servant, and particularly well skilled in the cultivation of land. A grave and ancient member asked him, Pray, sir, what is the best way of plowing hard stiff land? *Ans.* By running a wheel-barrow over it. The examiner was highly offended with the absurdity of the answer, and showed plainly in his countenance a mixture of surprize and indignation. But

another member of court, being of a meek and gentle temper, and a great enemy to severity, thought proper to interpose. He says to his brother, My dear sir, the young man is modest and bashful, which in itself is a most amiable disposition, though it hinders him from answering so distinctly, as were to be wished. Then, turning to the candidate, he says, I dare say, sir, you know well enough that a wheel-barrow cannot plough land, because it will not enter into the soil, nor open it sufficiently. Must not hard stiff land be broken and pulverised, in order to make it fruitful? *Ans.* Yes, sir.

Then the first resumed his examination. Now, pray sir, Can you tell me how deep land ought to be ploughed when it is well done? He, though quite ignorant of the subject, being naturally a man of mettle and acuteness, imagined, from what he had heard, that the deeper the better, and immediately answered, six yards. On this his examiner fell into a violent passion, and said, How have you the impudence, sir, to ask us to instal you as a ploughman when you know nothing of the matter? Was there ever such a thing heard or seen, since the beginning of the world, as ploughing land six yards deep? or what conception could you have, in your own mind, of the possibility of the thing? You ought to have a sentence passed against you, wholly incapacitating you for any place in this country.

The noble and generous spirit of the candidate was roused by this severe treatment; so, he replied, Pray sir, do you imagine that, in this improved age, the servants of the established corporation are brought up to a thorough knowledge of the several branches of business, for which the salaries are appointed? For my own particular part, you ought not to be surprised that I could not tell you how land should be ploughed, for I never saw a plough in my life. How, when, where and by whom were you educated then? says the other in amaze. *Ans.* I served an apprenticeship in a toy-shop. Very well, says the examiner, blessed, precious, happy, improved times? I have no more to add, I give up the examination to any body that pleases.

When this discontented zealot had dropt the discourse, some other moderate man asked him a few polite and fashionable questions, such as, what is the genteelest lining for a read coat? in what manner should you present a glass of wine to a lord, and how to a farmer? whether is hunting or fishing the pleasantest diversion? whether should the servants or the children of a family have the best lodging, diet, &c.? After a few minutes had been spent in this manner, it was carried by a great majority that he had answered extremely well, and was, in every respect, a most accomplished servant.

It was usual for the servants to carry certificates with them, from the inferior courts of the corporation, wherever they went; but if any man had trusted to these certificates, he would have found himself miserably mistaken. They had taken up a principle, that a man might attest any thing to be true, which he did not know to be false. On this principle, for a proper consideration, a vagrant fellow, of whom they knew little or nothing, would easily obtain a certificate, declaring him to be a compleat servant for every branch of business, and in particular, an admirable cook, gardiner, or whatever else he himself desired to be specified. If, upon trial, he was found totally deficient in any of the branches mentioned, and complaint was made to the court who certified for him, they thought they were fully excused if they could say that, upon their honor they knew nothing about him, and were wholly ignorant whether he was a good servant or a bad. On all such occasions they used to launch out in praise of charity, and alledge, that every man had a right to another's good word, as far as it would go, unless he had forfeited it by some particular and known misdemeanor.

## C H A P. VIII.

*Servants of different characters. A sketch of the good and bad. The inveterate hatred of the bad against the good.*

**H**OWEVER general the corruption was, the reader is not to imagine that all servants were of the same character, or behaved in the same manner. There were still some, here and there, who acted in a manner suitable to their station, who minded their business, who loved their masters, and were beloved by them. These made as great a struggle as they could to keep matters right in the meetings of the corporation, though, commonly, with very indifferent success. The opposite principles and conduct of the two sorts may be learned from the following particulars.

They differed *toto cælo*, in their very profession and manner of speaking. The modern fashionable party affirmed, that courage and self-sufficiency ought to be the leading character of a servant. That he ought always to be speaking in praise of his own deeds. That he ought never to allow of any error or mistake in his behavior; but, on the contrary, to insist that he deserved the highest approbation. Who is obliged, said they, to speak well of a man who speaks ill of himself? can there be any thing more pusillanimous, than for a servant to be always confessing that he can do very little to any purpose.

On the other hand, the honest sort of servants declared, that they thought pride and confidence were in themselves hateful, and quite intolerable in servants. That they should not make high pretensions, lest they should be brought but to the greater shame; that they should acknowledge the great imperfection of every thing they did, and expect to be rewarded, not for the worth or value of their service, but from the goodness and indulgence of their masters.

It was curious to observe the different effects of these principles. Those who spoke in the highest terms of their own qualifications, were always the most negligent and the most unfaithful. They grudged every thing they did, and laid hold of innumerable pretences for shortening their hours of labor, and procuring days of relaxation. If, at any time, one of them had done a piece of work in a tolerable manner, he could hardly be brought to do any more for two days; but was wholly taken up in admiring his own ingenuity, and commending it to all who would take the pains to listen to him. On the contrary, the humble and self-denied were always busy, applied themselves to their duty with the utmost care and assiduity, and thought they could never do enough. They never once called in question the hours of labor, but considered the necessity of the family, or the importance of the work they were engaged in. When any body happened to commend one of them for his diligence, he intreated them to forbear such discourse, for he was very sensible he had not done the thousandth part of what he ought to have done.

Men came to be so sensible of the different effects of these principles, that almost every family earnestly wished to have servants of the self-denying character, and perfectly hated the other. If they entered into conversation with an unknown servant, they were particularly attentive to the strain of his discourse, and, though he were upon his guard, would with great sagacity penetrate his sentiments. But, alas! this served very little purpose; for, if he had interest to procure a writ of nomination, they were obliged to receive him, and then being fixed in the saddle, he made a full discovery both of his principles and practice.

Nothing was more remarkable than the rancorous hatred which the self-sufficient bore to the humble servants; especially such as showed the most remarkable diligence in their work. They spread slanders against them without number. They used to go about with indefatigable diligence, among the great men, and nominators to the established salaries, to exasperate their minds against them,

and prevent their settlement or promotion. They represented them as a set of poor, silly, sneaking, spiritless fellows, who, for no other end than to throw an odium on the more free and generous livers, would work longer than usual. For the same reason, it was pretended, that, when the rest were at their pastime, running jumping, or cudgel playing, then to be sure, these hypocrites would be driving a stake, or pruning a tree about a farm, or picking weeds from a garden or field of corn. They represented them, also, (which was indeed partly true) as acquiring a stiff rustic air, by often stooping, and habitual application to their work.

Neither were they wanting in executing their revenge against their enemies themselves, whenever an opportunity offered. If two or three of the looser sort met, by chance, one of the industrious in a solitary place, or going of an errand, they cunningly solicited him to join with them in some diversion, for example, blind-man's-buff, or any other. If he complied, they all conspired against him, and drubbed him heartily: and, after they had done so, one was immediately dispatched to inform against him, and let the family he belonged to know how he had been spending his time, so that he was no better than his neighbors. Whenever they discovered a servant in a field after the usual time of labor, they would get behind the hedges and pelt him unmercifully with stones, so that he returned home, not only fatigued with his work, but severely smarting with the wounds he had received.

Such was not only the conduct of individuals, but the very same spirit prevailed in the meetings of the corporation, from the lowest to the highest. None met with so severe treatment from them as honest industrious servants, who were beloved in the families where they were placed; neither was there any crime so heinous as being more diligent than the generality of other servants. If any family accused a servant of pilfering, negligence, drunkenness, or wantonness among the maids, these were all human infirmities, no way atrocious in their nature. They were also hard to be ascertained; so that it was almost impossible to bring a proof of the facts to the satisfaction of



the court. But, if one happened to be accused of doing any uncommon service to the family at their desire, or working when others were allowed to play, this was high treason against the constitution ; and he was condemned without mercy, and sometimes without hearing.

But, of all the crimes of this sort, the most unpardonable was whatever tended to impeach the wisdom, or weaken the authority of the annual meetings of the corporation. When an inferior court was ordered to introduce a servant into a family who had refused to receive him, sometimes a member or two would humbly represent, that the terms of the oath appeared to them absurd and profane, in that instance, and beg to be excused.—Whenever this happened, they were dragged as delinquents to the bar, rated and abused, stript and branded, declared infamous, and incapable even of repentance. It was many times affirmed in the general meeting, that no man could be guilty of a crime which, so much as, approached in guilt to that of disparaging the authority of the corporation of servants.

I must take this opportunity of acquainting the reader with a story that happened a few years before my informer left the country. One of the servants, who was a great opposer of the prevailing measures, finding his brethren to be deaf to serious reasoning, fell upon a singular device. Being posselt of a vein of humor, and knowing a little of the art of painting, he drew a picture of the droll or ludicrous kind, in which, by ænigmatical characters, he represented the various impositions of the servants in general. He also took off the likenesses of the principal and most active leaders of the corporation, and put them in the most comical postures imaginable. Here was to be seen a fellow capering and dancing in a garden all full of weeds, and his instruments lying beside him, quite grown over with rust.—Another carrying a basket over his arm, with the sign of a pine apple in his hand, and a passenger, on examining the contents, finds nothing but stinking fish, and stops his nose.—A great bloated fellow, swelled like a tun, challenging the whole country to run a race with him.—Another hurrying away a girl into a corner,

and covering her with his frock.—These, and many others, he drew in such a manner, as clearly to expose their knavery and ostentation.

This picture was stuck up, in the night-time, near a public road leading to a great town. As the persons were all very well known, it is not to be imagined what entertainment it afforded to the people. No body could look upon it without laughing: and when ever any of the servants, honored with a place in it, were seen upon the streets, the boys gathered about them in crowds, and, to their unspeakable mortification, mimicked the postures in which they had been represented. Copies in miniature were taken of this performance, and kept in many families; so that, whenever the servants were in ill humor, they would pull out the draught, and hold it in their eye.

The fury and resentment of the servants, on the publication of this piece, is not to be conceived. The author had done it with so much caution and secrecy, that they could not get him legally convicted. However, they either discovered, or at least thought they had discovered who he was, and employed themselves night and day, in devising methods of revenge. Above all, that unlucky fellow, who had been represented following the girl, was so transported with rage, that he scarce ever returned to his right senses. He had been something of a draughtsman himself, so he set about making a picture in ridicule of the industrious servants; but, either the thing itself was so difficult, or he proceeded with so much rage and trepidation, that it was a perfect caricature, and his friends prevailed with him to suppress it.

The poor author, in the mean time, was obliged to be constantly upon his guard, as there was always a set of desperadoes lying in wait for him, armed with clubs, and fully determined to beat his brains out, if they could catch him in a proper place. In the mean time, they all agreed in telling lies upon him without ceasing. They affirmed, that no body but a complete rascal could be capable of such a performance; that to betray servants to their masters was, at any rate, a malicious trick: but, that for a servant to laugh at his fellow servants, and set

other people a laughing at them too, was the clearest demonstration of a depraved heart. It was ten years after the fact was committed, that my informer left the country ; and he declared that their repentment had not abated in the least degree : a circumstance which, I observed, had made a deep impression upon his mind ; so that he would often say, From the fury of an enraged servant, good Lord deliver me. He also told me, that he was convinced by this example, that wit and humor was a talent unspeakably prejudicial to the possessor : and therefore, if ever he had a child, and observed in him the least turn that way, he would apply himself with the utmost assiduity to eradicate it as a vice.

## C H A P. IX.

*The carelessness of Servants in their work. A curious debate in a certain family, which issued in nothing.*

**I**T will be easily perceived, from what has been said above, that the greatest part of the servants were excessively negligent. They seemed to have two great objects constantly in view, and to carry them on hand in hand ; the increase of their wages, and the diminution of their labor. The truth is, however strange it may seem these always bore an exact proportion to one another. Whenever a servant got more wages settled upon him, he looked upon it as a consequence, that he should be more slothful than before. In the mean time, it was remarkable what ingenious and plausible reasonings they always fell upon to justify their conduct. On this subject particularly they would say, What is well done is soon done, A small piece of work, executed as it ought to be, is better than marring a great deal, which is worse than idleness.

Instead of any other general remarks, I shall entertain the reader with a curious example of their ingenuity, in devising excuses for their own neglect. This happened in the family of a great man, about three years after the publication of the ænigmatical picture, and plainly showed

that, though the reproof had enraged them, it had contributed nothing to reform them. One morning, almost the whole servants of this family were gathered together in a large hall, to consider what work it would be proper for them to fall about that day. A servant who, indeed, was not very well looked upon, as inclining a little to the sober industrious kind, complained, that there had been for a long time an intolerable negligence in keeping the fences, and excluding straying or strange cattle from their masters grounds. He therefore proposed, that they should immediately go in a body, drive out all the strange cattle, without exception, that were in the inclosures, and mend up the fences, which were now in so sorry a condition. He told them that there were many strange cattle pasturing where they ought not to be; particularly, that he himself, not an hour before, had seen a large bull, with a thick neck, and dull heavy eyes, but *bread shoulders, firm joints, and a lank belly*, which made him fit for jumping. On this a dispute arose, of which the reader may take the following just and faithful account.

One observed, that he could not agree to the motion, which proceeded from a person no way remarkable for a good temper. ‘If our brother would look a little more at home, says he, perhaps he would find less reason for these snarling complaints of the negligence of others. The proposal is unkind and unbenevolent. There should be great forbearance used in every family toward their neighbors. No doubt there have been, and there will be trespasses upon both sides; and therefore, I am humbly of opinion that no notice should be taken of it at all.’

A second then rises up, and speaks to the following effect. ‘If I thought that any good would follow upon what is now proposed, I should readily agree to it. I am perhaps as much attached to my master’s interest, as the person who made this motion, notwithstanding all his fine professions; but I am persuaded it would be altogether in vain. There is a strange disposition, in beasts of all kinds, to break into those places from which there is any attempt to keep them out; it would therefore only increase the evil it pretends to remedy. All persecution

‘ we know, helps the cause of the persecuted ; so that, sup-  
 ‘ posing one has made an encroachment at this time, if  
 ‘ he were driven out, we may depend upon it, he would  
 ‘ immediately return with twenty more at his heels.’

A third made a very sage and learned observation.  
 ‘ Take notice, says he, what you are about to do. There  
 ‘ is more difficulty in it than you apprehend. Is there  
 ‘ not a very great similarity in color, shape and size, be-  
 ‘ tween our master’s cattle and his neighbor’s ? It would  
 ‘ oblige us to a very strict and particular examination, be-  
 ‘ fore we could determine the point. This would create  
 ‘ such difference of opinion, such zeal and keenness in  
 ‘ every one to support his own sentiments, that we might  
 ‘ spend the whole time of our service before we could  
 ‘ come to any conclusion. I acknowledge it is a fixed  
 ‘ principle, that every beast should be kept only on his  
 ‘ own master’s grounds ; put, I hope you will be sensible, it  
 ‘ is only a speculative point which beast belongs to one  
 ‘ master, and which to another. On this subject, wise and  
 ‘ good servants have differed in all ages, and will differ  
 ‘ to the end of the world.’

A fourth delivered the following opinion. ‘ I cannot  
 ‘ help being against the motion, for a reason that nobody  
 ‘ has yet taken notice of. I can assure you from my  
 ‘ certain knowledge, it would give great pleasure to the  
 ‘ strange cattle themselves, and, in particular to the bull,  
 ‘ who seems to have given occasion to the present debate.  
 ‘ He has a vast satisfaction in being gazed upon and won-  
 ‘ dered at, which would be the certain consequence of  
 ‘ this attempt. Besides, he is infected with an inveterate  
 ‘ itch, which gives him an infinite pleasure in being dri-  
 ‘ ven through the gaps of hedges, and being scrubbed  
 ‘ and clawed by the thorns in the passage.’

A fifth said, ‘ I am surpris’d to see so much time spent  
 ‘ upon this ridiculous proposal. The author of it seems  
 ‘ to have forgot a fundamental law of the corporation, that  
 ‘ no servant should meddle with the affairs of another fa-  
 ‘ mily, or pretend to take the inspection or government  
 ‘ of any beasts, but such as belong to his own master.  
 ‘ Now, says he, this is manifestly the case in the present

‘ instance ; nay, it is even implied in the proposal itself,  
‘ which is, therefore, quite irregular and incompetent. If  
‘ that bull does not belong to us, let his own master send  
‘ for him when he pleases : we have nothing to do with  
‘ him. Let us mind our own affairs.’

Then rose a servant of ancient standing, several of his teeth having been lost by old age, who bore a particular mark of his master’s favor. He was remarkable for making long speeches, of which it was difficult to comprehend the meaning. After speaking about half an hour, quite unintelligibly, he concluded thus. ‘ Brethren, I do  
‘ not deny that such a proposal as this might have done  
‘ very well in former times, when the fences were almost  
‘ entire, and the offending strangers very few ; but, at present, it is quite romantic and impossible. Will any man  
‘ seriously pretend, at this time of day, when the hedges  
‘ are almost wholly broke down, and so many encroachments on every hand, to affirm, that none ought to continue in the inclosures but such as truly belong to our  
‘ master. I am afraid his fields would make a very desolate appearance, for there would be few left behind.’

Last of all, one tells them in a few words, that the debate was altogether idle ; that there was a mistake at the very bottom of the affair : for, by the best information he could procure, the beast in question was not a bull but an ox.

To sum up the matter, one or other of these various and contradictory reasons prevailed upon a great majority, to come to this resolution, That it was not prudent or expedient, at this time, to agree to the proposal ; and, therefore, the intruders in general should be winked at, and that beast in particular, whether he were bull or ox, should continue where he was.

## C H A P. X.

*Of the ambition and covetousness of the Servants, and the various methods they fell upon to gratify their desires.*

**I** HAVE observed before, that the constitution in this province was framed with great care, and seemed particularly calculated to prevent ambition and love of pre-eminence. For this reason, they established a parity among the servants, and took every measure they could think of, to prevent the introduction of overseers and arch-overseers. By this time, however, the servants had not only degenerated in point of fidelity and diligence, but had made great encroachments upon the constitution itself. They had a prodigious hankering after the high-sounding titles, and immense revenues, which were given to servants in the neighboring province. It grieved them to hear, and sometimes, when sent upon business to that country, to see, that some of the overseers lived in splendid palaces, and were carried about in chariots, while they themselves were still obliged to wear the dress of servants, and generally to walk a-foot.

Gladly would they have introduced these offices in their own province ; but the great men, who had hitherto assisted them, dreaded the expence, and would not agree to it. They were, therefore, obliged to proceed cautiously and gradually. In some few instances, they made it appear, that one servant might be introduced to two different families, and enjoy both the salaries. As to the work, they might be sometimes in the one, and sometimes in the other ; or, if one of them was a family of small consequence, they might do well enough without any servant at all. They begged, in the most abject manner, of the governor of the province, that a small number of salaries might be appointed, without any office annexed to them, by way of gratuities, for the encouragement of good servants. This was done ; and there followed a terrible competition for obtaining them, which produced a most



malignant hatred between those who were successful and those who were not.

The reader may perhaps imagine, that the hope of meriting these salaries would excite them to vie with one another, in doing the business of the families where they served. It was quite the contrary. They tried every method of advancement but that only ; or, if any did try it in that way, they were sure to be disappointed. Some of them used the old way of flattery, which had always a very great effect. Some became political tools, spies, and informers to the prevailing party at court. Some were not ashamed to become pimps and panders to great men, and even sometimes to attend them in their nocturnal expeditions. Some endeavored to make themselves remarkable for feats and achievements quite out of the way of their own business. One of them, for example, would make a wind-mill, of curious structure, and put it upon the top of the house where he lived. The consequence of this was, that passengers going that way, after, standing still and admiring it a little, would ask any person they saw near, who had done it. The answer immediately followed, *The servant who lives here, he is a most ingenious fellow, as ever was seen.* Thus was his fame spread abroad, and sometimes came to the ears of the people above.

I cannot help particularly mentioning one, who was the most successful of all that had gone before him, who was alive when my informer left the country, and probably may be alive at this very time. The method he fell upon, was telling wonderful stories of the heroic actions of that people's predecessors, a subject of which they were enthusiastically fond. He had acquired a very great knack of story-telling, and could describe things so to the life, both by word and gesture, that every body was delighted to hear him. He immediately gave over all work in the family to which he belonged ; and when they civilly put him in mind of his neglect, he told them they might go about their business, for they were a pack of seditious scoundrels, altogether below his notice. He was a fellow of uncommon ability ; and no less remarkable

for enterprise and resolution. He carried on his schemes ; procured for himself one salary after another ; and did not fail to laugh at the simplicity of those who bestowed them, saying among his intimate companions, *He blessed God that mankind were so easily deceived, by the formal countenance of a servant.*

The supernumerary salaries, however, were so few, that they were soon exhausted, and did little else, indeed, than excite a hungering and thirsting after more. To remedy this, they fell upon a method of gratifying the vanity of those whose pockets they could not fill. A title was invented, which, (like the honorary rewards of the ancients in this part of the world) they said, would serve to distinguish illustrious merit, and raise a happy emulation. The title was, Master of Service ; and the directors of the schools or places of exercise were appointed to bestow it, according to the skill and proficiency of the candidates. Immediately applications came in from all quarters, and it was dealt about very liberally, and, if possible, even more absurdly than the salaries had been before. There was hardly an instance of its being bestowed for real knowledge or useful industry ; but for some whimsical qualification of a different kind. If a man had invented a new dance or song, or collected a whole barrel of salted butterflies in one summer, or made a gold chain for binding a flea to a post, he was instantly created a Master of Service.

## C H A P. XI.

*Of the sentiments of the People concerning the Servants, and their manner of treating them.*

THE reader may probably be wondering in himself, how the people behaved in these circumstances, and what became of their affairs. He may be ready to think that their patience must be by this time nearly exhausted, and some terrible revolution at hand. The truth is, the patience of many of them had been at an end for many

years ; but, being divided among themselves, their influence was not sufficient to produce a general change. It is impossible to mention all the effects which the conduct of the servants had upon the people ; but it will be worth while to take particular notice of two classes of men, and their behaviour upon the subject.

One set of people rose among them, whose sentiments and conduct were as singular and extraordinary, as any thing recorded in this book. They were men who made high pretensions to reason and penetration, and gave themselves much to abstract reflections upon the nature of things. They were of opinion, that all the wisdom of the nation centred in themselves ; and that all the rest were downright fools or madmen. However, entering upon their speculations with such an overweening conceit of themselves, their boasted reasons first led them into many mistakes, and at last fairly turned their heads.

It was their custom to search into history, and particularly into the history of the servants. There they found, that in every age, there had been a great deal of knavery among the servants. All the instances of this sort they used to collect, publish, and compare with the conduct of the servants in their own times ; which they exposed with the greatest severity. At last, by long dwelling upon this subject, they came to be of opinion, that there ought to be no such thing in nature as a servant ; that they never had done any thing but harm ; and that the world would be much better without them. Sometimes sober-minded people attempted to set them to rights, and alleged, that though the dishonest had always been too numerous as well as noisy, yet still there were some of great worth and usefulness ; nay, that society, in the nature of things could not subsist without persons in lower stations, to serve and accommodate those in higher. This was so far from having an effect upon them, that they became always more positive upon contradiction, and scarce ever failed to advance opinions still more wild and romantic than before. Instead of yielding that servants were necessary in society, they affirmed, that it was not only desirable, but extremely possible, to have a whole

nation of lords, without one person among them of inferior degree.

They affirmed, that excepting servants, all other men were by nature wise, honest, and active ; fully sufficient for their own happiness ; and that they would have been quite virtuous and happy, without any exception, if they had not been blind-folded and deceived by the servants. To this race, whom they used often in a fit of raving, to curse in a most dreadful manner, they imputed all the envy, malice, oppression, covetousness, fraud, rapine, and bloodshed that ever had happened since the beginning of the world. In support of their scheme, they made learned disquisitions on nature, and the first cause of all things. They shewed that nature was, and must be wise and good in all her productions ; and, therefore, that man must needs be free from every thing that is evil, and his original constitution perfectly just and sound. All the disorders that were to be seen in society were easily accounted for, from the hellish machinations of the servants.— In the mean time, it was obvious, that the servants were the product of nature too ; and according to the same reasoning, must have been of as gentle and tractable dispositions, and in all respects as faultless as their masters. This manifest difficulty in their own scheme, however unaccountable it may appear, they never once reflected upon, nor by consequence attempted to resolve.

Sometimes they were pressed with the necessity of servants to cultivate the ground, which, if neglected, it was plain, would grow over with briars and thorns, and every noxious weed. Here they immediately recurred to their old argument, the excellency of nature's productions ; and upon the strength of it, presumed absolutely to deny the fact. They said, were the earth only left to itself, it would produce nothing but what was useful and salutary, and that in great abundance, for the support of its inhabitants ; that all the pretended cultivation of it by the servants was but spoiling it ; and that they themselves had sowed the seeds of every hurtful or unnecessary plant. It was to no purpose to mention to them, either the vast tracts of uncultivated ground, or the desolate condition of

a neglected field ; all this, they pretended, arose from a certain sympathy in the several parts of the earth one with another, and from poisonous vapours easily carried by the wind, from the places where servants had been at work. In short, they sometimes projected a scheme for a new settlement where no servants should be admitted ; and where they hoped, in a little time, every man would be as wise as a philosopher, as rich as a merchant, and as magnificent as a king.

After all, the perfection of their absurdity appeared in the following circumstance. Though it was plain, to any person of reflection, that their delirium took its rise from the tricks and misbehavior of bad servants, yet they had the most rooted and inveterate antipathy at those that were good. The reason, probably was, that the diligence and usefulness of this last sort stood directly in the way of their scheme, and prevented the rest of the nation from being of their opinion. All seemingly good servants they affirmed to be at bottom arrant knaves ; and in one respect, unspeakably worse than any of the rest, because they appeared to be better. The idle, slothful, worthless servants, were frequently their companions ; and it was one of their highest entertainments to lead such fellows into frolicks, mischief, or debauchery, and then point them out to their fellow citizens, and use words to this purpose, ‘ You poor hood-winked fools, do you see these rascals ? why will you any longer harbor them in your houses ? they are all of one complexion, and will infallibly bring you to misery and speedy destruction.’

## C H A P. XII.

*Continuation of the same subject. The sentiments and conduct of others, in consequence of the behaviour of the Servants.*

**W**E are not to suppose that the whole nation lost their senses. No ; by far the greater number acted as prudently and rationally as men could do in their

circumstances. According to plain common sense, in proportion as corruption and degeneracy increased among the servants, they set the higher value on such as were honest and faithful. They used every mean in their power to procure such for their own families, agreeably to the laws of the corporation. When this could not be brought about, or when a good-for nothing-fellow was buckled to the salary, they put themselves to the additional expence of hiring one according to their own mind ; paid the former his wages duly, and only desired the favor of him to give them no trouble, but spend his time according to his own fancy.

It was pleasant enough to observe the different conduct of the established servants, according to their different tempers, when they fell under this predicament. Some of them were greatly enraged to see the service of another preferred to theirs, used many artful methods to prevent it where they could, and took every opportunity of venting their malice, or glutting their revenge when they could not. Where they could get any body to believe them, they asserted that all skill and power of doing good was confined to the corporation ; that it was inherent in them, and descended in their blood from one generation to another, like courage in the race of game cocks. The others, they pretended, were a spurious brood, and that it was impossible to train them so as to make them fit for service.

If this did not gain credit, all possible pains were taken to disparage the conduct of the additional servants. Their work was examined with the greatest strictness, every flaw in it pointed out, and many faults imputed to it merely through envy. If any piece of work appeared to be substantial, they pretended it wanted neatness, and was altogether inelegant. This charge, however, made little impression upon the people. They had been so long plagued with servants who minded nothing but ornament, both in their persons and their work, that they were rather pleased than disgusted with one of a more homely carriage.

When nothing else would do, the grossest lies and calumnies were spread, both of the new servants and those who employed them. It was pretended, that they sowed the seeds of sedition and disaffection, in the families where they got admittance. Sometimes this accusation, though utterly groundless, obtained such credit with the governors, that, if they had a complaint to make, or a cause to try, they could scarcely expect justice. It was also alledged, that they terrified the children out of their wits, by telling frightful stories in the winter evenings. You might meet with many of the established servants who asserted, and even seemed to believe, that all who employed any other than themselves, were idiots or crack-brained, and destitute of common sense.

On the other hand, not a few of the established servants were altogether indifferent how many others were hired, and how little work was left to themselves. They knew that their wages were well secured to them, which was the main chance; and they found rather more time and liberty to follow the bent of their inclinations. Perhaps they would have been better satisfied if the people had been content with what kind and quality of work they thought proper to do. But, as this was not to be expected, the hiring of others rendered all matters perfectly easy, and their lives were one continued scene of indolence or pleasure.

In the mean time, it was highly diverting to hear how they expressed themselves upon this subject, and with how much art and cunning they made a virtue of necessity. They used to extol their own candor and benevolence. ‘Gentlemen,’ one of them would say, ‘you see with what discretion I use you. I am always glad to see liberty prevail, and every man suffered to do what seems proper to himself. I am well pleased, that you should hire as many servants as you incline. I ask no more, than that I may have a clean neat bed-chamber, in a convenient part of the house, my wages well and regularly paid, and a small bit of ground in the garden, to bring up a few delicious herbs and fruits for my own use. If these things are properly attended to, you shall find me



‘ a good man to live with ; I shall never interfere with  
 ‘ your work in the least, or give you any manner of trou-  
 ‘ ble, even by making remarks upon it.’ In such a case,  
 it would happen now and then, that one of the family,  
 touched a little with the absurdity of this phlegmatick  
 speech, would answer, ‘ That very well he might make  
 ‘ himself easy, since, all the while, he was well fed and  
 ‘ clothed at their expence.’ This he would receive with  
 silent contempt, and display the greatest satisfaction in his  
 own composure of spirit, and meekness of temper.

As for the remaining part of the nation, they reflected  
 very little upon their condition, but took such servants as  
 were sent to them, and rubbed on as well as they could.  
 Such quiet and passive people were highly extolled by  
 the servants, who took all opportunities of declaring, that  
 they were the only solid and rational persons in the whole  
 kingdom. These praises delighted them greatly ; so that  
 they lived as poor and as merry as beggars, who have no-  
 thing to hope, and nothing to fear.



## C O N C L U S I O N.

**T**HUS I have given the reader an account of this ex-  
 traordinary class of men ; and, I am certain, he  
 must confess, there is something in their characters and  
 conduct, proper to excite a mixture of laughter and in-  
 dignation. It is also probable, that he feels a considera-  
 ble degree of sympathy with the deluded and oppressed  
 people, and is anxious to know whether there appeared  
 any prospect of deliverance. This was a question I often  
 asked at my informer, who assured me that, from what he  
 had heard and seen, there was not the most distant pros-  
 pect of reformation by the servants themselves. The  
 honestest sort were always borne down, traduced and slan-  
 dered ; and those of an opposite character, had so long

kept the management of the corporation in their hands, that they reckoned themselves secure in their authority, and openly set at defiance both the people in general, and their fellow servants.

There remained just a glimpse of hope from one quarter, viz. the gentlemen who had been chosen to the office of helpers. They had at first contributed as much as any to the introduction of wrong measures; but, not being under the temptation of interest, they began to open their eyes at last. For some years they had been a considerable restraint upon the violence of the servants, and had prevented them in several instances from degrading, stripping, and branding those who had incurred their displeasure, by doing business at unseasonable hours. They had also contributed to the disgrace and dismissal of some drunken sots, and lascivious wretches, whom several of the leading servants had a strong inclination to spare. From these circumstances, some flattered themselves that a change might be brought about; and that, though the servants would never think of any reformation themselves, it would soon be *forced upon them by a foreign band*.

After all, it was but very uncertain whether any material change would soon take place; and therefore, while we can only send that unhappy people our good wishes, we have reason to rejoice in our own good fortune, that we are perfectly free from impositions of the same or any similar kind.

LECTURES

ON

MORAL

PHILOSOPHY.

*IN JUSTICE to the memory of Dr. Witherspoon, it ought to be stated that he did not intend these lectures for the press, and that he once compelled a printer who, without his knowledge, had undertaken to publish them, to desist from the design, by threatening a prosecution as the consequence of persisting in it. The Doctor's lectures on morals, notwithstanding they assume the form of regular discourses, were in fact, viewed by himself as little more than a syllabus or compend, on which he might enlarge before a class at the times of recitation; and not intending that they should go further, or be otherwise considered, he took freely and without acknowledgment from writers of character such ideas, and perhaps expressions, as he found suited to his purpose. But though these causes would not permit the Dr. himself to give to the public these sketches of moral philosophy, it is believed that they ought not to operate so powerfully on those into whose hands his papers have fallen since his death. Many of his pupils whose eminence in literature and distinction in society give weight to their opinions, have thought that these lectures, with all their imperfections, contain one of the best and most perspicuous exhibitions of the radical principles of the science on which they treat that has ever been made, and they have very importunately demanded their publication in this edition of his works: Nor is it conceived that a compliance with this demand, after the explanation here given can do any injury to the Dr's. reputation. And to the writer of this note it does not seem a sufficient reason that a very valuable work should be consigned to oblivion, because it is in some measure incomplete, or because it is partly a selection from authors to whom a distinct reference cannot now be made.*

# LECTURES

ON

## MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

**M**ORAL Philosophy is that branch of Science which treats of the principles and laws of Duty or Morals. It is called *Philosophy*, because it is an inquiry into the nature and grounds of moral obligation by reason, as distinct from revelation.

Hence arises a question, is it lawful, and is it safe or useful to separate moral philosophy from religion? It will be said, it is either the same or different from revealed truth; if the same, unnecessary—if different, false and dangerous.

An author of New-England, says, moral philosophy is just reducing infidelity to a system. But however specious the objections, they will be found at bottom not solid.—If the Scripture is true, the discoveries of reason cannot be contrary to it; and therefore, it has nothing to fear from that quarter. And as we are certain it can do no evil, so there is a probability that it may do much good. There may be an illustration and confirmation of the inspired writings, from reason and observation, which will greatly add to their beauty and force.

The noble and eminent improvements in natural philosophy, which have been made since the end of the last century, have been far from hurting the interest of religion; on the contrary, they have greatly promoted it. Why should it not be the same with moral philosophy,

which is indeed nothing else but the knowledge of human nature? It is true, that infidels do commonly proceed upon pretended principles of reason. But as it is impossible to hinder them from reasoning on this subject, the best way is to meet them upon their own ground, and to show from reason itself, the fallacy of their principles. I do not know any thing that serves more for the support of religion than to see from the different and opposite systems of philosophers, that there is nothing certain in their schemes, but what is coincident with the word of God.

Some there are, and perhaps more in the present than any former age, who deny the law of nature, and say, that all such sentiments as have been usually ascribed to the law of nature, are from revelation and tradition.

We must distinguish here between the light of nature and the law of nature: by the first is to be understood what we can or do discover by our own powers, without revelation or tradition: by the second, that which, when discovered, can be made appear to be agreeable to reason and nature.

There have been some very shrewd and able writers of late, viz. Dr. Willson, of New Castle, and Mr. Riccalton of Scotland, who have written against the light of nature, shewing that the first principles of knowledge are taken from information. That nothing can be supposed more rude and ignorant, than man without instruction. That when men have been brought up so, they have scarcely been superior to brutes. It is very difficult to be precise upon this subject, and to distinguish the discoveries of reason from the exercise of it. Yet I think, admitting all, or the greatest part, of what such contend for, we may, notwithstanding, consider how far any thing is consonant to reason, or may be proven by reason; though perhaps reason, if left to itself, would never have discovered it.

Dr. Clark was one of the greatest champions for the law of nature; but it is only since his time that the shrewd opposers of it have appeared. The Hutchinsonians (so called from Hutchinson of England) insist that not only

all moral, but also all natural knowledge comes from revelation, the true system of the world, true chronology, all human arts, &c. In this, as is usual with most other classes of men, they carry their nostrum to extravagance. I am of opinion, that the whole Scripture is perfectly agreeable to sound philosophy; yet certainly it was never intended to teach us every thing. The political law of the Jews contains many noble principles of equity, and excellent examples to future lawgivers; yet it was so local and peculiar, that certainly it was never intended to be immutable and universal.

It would be more just and useful to say that all simple and original discoveries have been the production of Providence, and not the invention of man. On the whole, it seems reasonable to make moral philosophy, in the sense above explained, a subject of study. And indeed let men think what they will of it, they ought to acquaint themselves with it. They must know what it is, if they mean even to show that it is false.

### *The Division of the Subject.*

Moral philosophy is divided into two great branches, Ethics and Politics, to this some add Jurisprudence, though this may be considered as a part of politics.

Ethics relate to personal duties, Politics to the constitution, government, and rights of societies, and jurisprudence, to the administration of justice in constituted states.

It seems a point agreed upon, that the principles of duty and obligation must be drawn from the nature of man. That is to say, if we can discover how his Maker formed him, or for what he intended him, that certainly is what he ought to be.

The knowledge of human nature, however, is either perplexed and difficult of itself, or hath been made so, by the manner in which writers in all ages have treated it. Perhaps this circumstance itself, is a strong presumption of the truth of the Scripture doctrine of the depravity and corruption of our nature. Supposing this depravity.



it must be one great cause of difficulty and confusion in giving an account of human nature as the work of God.

This I take to be indeed the case with the greatest part of our moral and theological knowledge.

Those who deny this depravity, will be apt to plead for every thing, or for many things as dictates of nature, which are in reality propensities of nature in its present state, but at the same time the fruit and evidence of its departure from its original purity. It is by the remaining power of natural conscience that we must endeavor to detect and oppose these errors.

(1) We may consider man very generally in his species as distinct from and superior to the other creatures, and what it is, in which the difference truly consists. (2) As an individual, what are the parts which constitute his nature.

1. Philosophers have generally attempted to assign the precise distinction between men and the other animals; but when endeavoring to bring it to one peculiar incommunicable characteristic, they have generally contradicted one another and sometimes disputed with violence, and rendered the thing more uncertain.

The difficulty of fixing upon a precise criterion, only serves to show that in man we have an example of what we see also every where else, viz. a beautiful and insensible gradation from one thing to another, so that the highest of the inferior is, as it were, connected and blended with the lowest of the superior class. Birds and beasts are connected by some species, so that you will find it hard to say whether they belong to the one or the other—So indeed it is in the whole vegetable as well as animal kingdom.

(1) Some say *men* are distinguished from brutes by reason, and certainly this, either in kind or degree, is the most honorable of our distinctions. (2) Others say that many brutes give strong signs of reason, as dogs, horses and elephants. But that man is distinguished by memory and foresight: but I apprehend that these are upon the same footing with reason, if there are some glimmerings of reason in the brute creation, there are also manifest proofs of memory and some of foresight. (3) Some have thought it proper to distinguish man from the inferior creatures by

the use of speech, no other creatures having an articulate language. Here again we are obliged to acknowledge that our distinction is chiefly the excellence and fulness of articulate discourse ; for brutes have certainly the art of making one another understand many things by sound.—

(4) Some have said that man is not completely distinguished by any of these, but by a sense of religion. And I think it must be admitted that of piety or a sense of a Supreme Being, there is not any trace to be seen in the inferior creatures. The stories handed about by weak-minded persons, or retailed by credulous authors, of respect in them to churches, or sacred persons, are to be disdained as wholly fabulous and visionary. (5) There have been some who have said that man is distinguished from the brutes by a sense of *ridicule*.

The whole creation (says a certain author) is grave except man, no one laughs but himself. There is something whimsical in fixing upon this as the criterion, and it does not seem to set us in a very respectable light. Perhaps it is not improper to smile upon the occasion, and to say, that if this sentiment is embraced, we shall be obliged to confess kindred with the apes, who are certainly themselves possessed of a risible faculty, as well as qualified to excite laughter in us. On the whole there seems no necessity of fixing upon some one criterion to the exclusion of others.

There is a great and apparent distinction between man and the inferior animals, not only in the beauty of his form, which the poet takes notice of, *Os homini sublime dedit*, &c. but also in reason, memory, reflection, and the knowledge of God and a future state.

A general distinction, which deserves particularly to be taken notice of in moral disquisitions, is, that man is evidently made to be guided, and protected from dangers, and supplied with what is useful more by reason, and brutes more by instinct.

It is not very easy and perhaps not necessary to explain instinct. It is something previous to reason and choice. When we say the birds build their nests by instinct, and man builds his habitation by reflection, experience or

instruction, we understand the thing well enough, but if we attempt to give a logical definition of either the one or the other, it will immediately be assaulted by a thousand arguments.

Though man is evidently governed by something else than instinct, he also has several instinctive propensities, some of them independent of, and some of them intermixed with his moral dispositions. Of the first kind are hunger, thirst, and some others; of the last is the *storge* or parental tenderness towards offspring.

On instinct we shall only say farther, that it leads more immediately to the appointment of the Creator, and whether in man, or in other creatures, operates more early and more uniformly than reason.



## LECTURE II.

2d. **C**ONSIDERING man as an individual, we discover the most obvious and remarkable circumstances of his nature, that he is a compound of body and spirit. I take this for granted here, because we are only explaining the nature of man. When we come to his sentiments and principles of action, it will be more proper, to take notice of the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and how they are proved.

The body and spirit have a great reciprocal influence one upon another. The body on the temper and disposition of the soul, and the soul on the state and habit of the body. The body is properly the minister of the soul, the means of conveying perceptions to it, but nothing without it.

It is needless to enlarge upon the structure of the body; this is sufficiently known to all, except we descend to anatomical exactness, and then, like all the other parts of nature, it shows the infinite wisdom of the Creator. With regard to morals, the influence of the body in a certain view may be very great in enslaving men to appetite, and yet there does not seem any such connexion with

morals as to require a particular description. I think there is little reason to doubt that there are great and essential differences between man and man, as to the spirit and its proper powers; but it seems plain that such are the laws of union between the body and spirit, that many faculties are weakened and some rendered altogether incapable of exercise, merely by an alteration of the state of the body. Memory is frequently lost and judgment weakened by old age and disease. Sometimes, by a confusion of the brain in a fall, the judgment is wholly disordered. The instinctive appetites of hunger, and thirst, seem to reside directly in the body, and the soul to have little more than a passive perception. Some passions, particularly fear and rage, seem also to have their seat in the body, immediately producing a certain modification of the blood and spirits.— This indeed is perhaps the case in some degree with all passions whenever they are indulged, they give a modification to the blood and spirits, which make them easily rekindled, but there are none which do so instantaneously arise from the body, and prevent deliberation, will and choice, as these now named. To consider the evil passions to which we are liable, we may say those that depend most upon the body, are fear, anger, voluptuousness; and those that depend least upon it, are ambition, envy, covetousness.

The faculties of the mind are commonly divided into these three kinds, the understanding, the will, and the affections; though perhaps it is proper to observe, that these are not three qualities wholly distinct, as if they were three different beings, but different ways of exerting the same simple principle. It is the soul or mind that understands, wills, or is affected with pleasure and pain. The understanding seems to have truth for its object, the discovering things as they really are in themselves, and in their relations one to another. It has been disputed whether good be in any degree the object of the understanding. On the one hand it seems as if truth and that only belonged to the understanding; because we can easily suppose persons of equal intellectual powers and opposite moral characters. Nay, we can suppose malignity joined

to a high degree of understanding, and virtue or true goodness, to a much lower. On the other hand, the choice made by the will seems to have the judgment or deliberation of the understanding as its very foundation. How can this be, it will be said, if the understanding has nothing to do with good or evil. A considerable opposition of sentiments among philosophers, has arisen from this question. Dr. Clark, and some others make understanding or reason the immediate principle of virtue. Shaftsbury, Hutcheson, and others, make affection the principle of it. Perhaps neither the one nor the other is wholly right. Probably both are necessary.

The connexion between truth and goodness, between the understanding and the heart, is a subject of great moment, but also of great difficulty. I think we may say with certainty, that infinite perfection, intellectual and moral, are united and inseparable in the Supreme Being. There is not however in inferior natures an exact proportion between the one and the other; yet I apprehend that truth naturally and necessarily promotes goodness, and falsehood the contrary; but as the influence is reciprocal, malignity of disposition, even with the greatest natural powers, blinds the understanding, and prevents the perception of truth itself.

Of the will it is usual to enumerate four acts; desire, aversion, joy and sorrow. The two last, Hutcheson says are superfluous, in which he seems to be right. All the acts of the will may be reduced to the two great heads of desire and aversion, or in other words, chusing and refusing.

The affections are called also passions, because often excited by external objects. In as far as they differ from a calm deliberate decision of the judgment, or determination of the will, they may be called strong propensities, implanted in our nature, which of themselves contribute not a little to bias the judgment, or incline the will.

The affections cannot be better understood than by observing the difference between a calm deliberate general inclination, whether of the selfish or benevolent

kind, and particular violent inclinations. Every man deliberately wishes his own happiness, but this differs considerably from a passionate attachment to particular gratifications, as a love of riches, honors, pleasures. A good man will have a deliberate fixed desire of the welfare of mankind; but this differs from the love of children, relations, friends, country.

The passions are very numerous and may be greatly diversified, because every thing, however modified, that is the object of desire or aversion, may grow by accident or indulgence, to such a size as to be called, and deserve to be called, a passion. Accordingly we express ourselves thus in the English language. A passion for horses, dogs, play, &c.

However all the passions may be ranged under the two great heads of *love* and *hatred*. To the first belong esteem, admiration, good-will, and every species of approbation, delight, and desire; to the other, all kinds of aversion, and ways of expressing it, *envy*, *malice*, *rage*, *revenge*, to whatever objects they may be directed.

Hope and fear, joy and sorrow, though frequently ranked among the passions, seem rather to be states or modifications of the mind, attending the exercise of every passion, according as its object is probable or improbable, possible or least.

Jealousy seems to be a passion of a middlie nature, which it is not easy to say whether it should be ranked under the head of love or hatred. It is often said of jealousy between the sexes, that it springs from love; yet, it seems plainly impossible, that it can have place without forming an ill opinion of its object, at least in some degree. The same thing may be said of jealousy and suspicion in friendship.

The passions may be ranged in two classes in a different way, viz. as they are selfish or benevolent, public or private. There will be great occasion to consider this distinction afterwards, in explaining the nature of virtue, and the motives that lead to it. What is observed now, is only to illustrate our nature as it really is. There is a great and real distinction between passions, selfish and benevolent. The first point directly, and immediately at

our own interest in the gratification ; the others point immediately at the happiness of others. Of the first kind, is the love of fame, power, property, pleasure. And of the second, is family and domestic affection, friendship and patriotism. It is to no purpose to say, that ultimately, it is to please ourselves, or because we feel a satisfaction in seeking the good of others ; for it is certain, that the direct object in view in many cases, is to promote the happiness of others ; and for this many have been willing to sacrifice every thing, even life itself.

After this brief survey of human nature, in one light, or in one point of view, which may be called its capacity, it will be necessary to return back, and take a survey of the way, in which we become acquainted with the objects about which we are to be conversant, or upon which the above faculties are to be exercised.

On this it is proper to observe in general, that there are but two ways in which we come to the knowledge of things, viz. 1st, Sensation, 2d, Reflection.

The first of these must be divided again into two parts, external and internal.

External arises from the immediate impression of objects from without. The external senses in number are five ; seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling.

In these are observable the impression itself, or the sensation we feel, and the supposition inseparable from it, that it is produced by an external object. That our senses are to be trusted in the information they give us, seems to me a first principle, because they are the foundation of all our after reasonings. The few exceptions of accidental irregularity in the senses, can found no just objection to this, as there are so many plain and obvious ways of discovering and correcting it.

The reality of the material system I think, may be easily established, except upon such principles as are subversive of all certainty, and lead to universal scepticism ; and persons who would maintain such principles, do not deserve to be reasoned with, because they do not pretend to communicate knowledge, but to take all knowledge from us.



The Immaterialists say, that we are conscious of nothing but the impression or feeling of our own mind ; but they do not observe that the impression itself, implies and supposes something external that communicates it, and cannot be separated from that supposition. Sometimes such reasoners tell us, that we cannot shew the substance separate from its sensible qualities ; no more can any man shew me a sensible quality separate from a particular subject. If any man will shew me whiteness, without shewing me any thing that is white, or roundness without any thing that is round, I will shew him the substance without either color or shape.

Immaterialism takes away the distinction between truth and falsehood. I have an idea of a house or tree in a certain place, and I call this true, that is, I am of opinion, there is really a house or tree in that place. Again, I form an idea of a house or tree, as what may be in that place ; I ask what is the difference, if after all, you tell me, there is neither tree, house nor place any where existing. An advocate for that system says, that truth consists in the liveliness of the idea, than which nothing can be more manifestly false. I can form as distinct an idea of any thing that is not, as any thing that is, when it is absent from my sight. I have a much more lively idea of Jupiter and Juno, and many of their actions, from Homer and Virgil, though I do not believe that any of them ever existed, than I have of many things that I know happened within these few months.

The truth is, the immaterial system, is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning, which can hardly produce any thing but contempt in the generality of persons who hear it, and which I verily believe, never produced conviction even on the persons who pretend to espouse it. -

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### LECTURE III.

**I**NTERNAL sensation is what Mr. Hutchinson calls the finer powers of perception. It takes its rise from external objects, but by abstraction, considers something farther than merely the sensible qualities—

1. Thus with respect to many objects, there is a sense of beauty in the appearance, structure or composition, which is altogether distinct from mere color, shape and extension. How then is this beauty perceived? It enters by the eye, but it is perceived and relished by what may be well enough called an internal sense, quality or capacity of the mind.

2. There is a sense of pleasure in imitation, whence the arts of painting, sculpture, poetry, are often called the imitative arts. It is easy to see that the imitation itself gives the pleasure, for we receive much pleasure from a lively description of what would be painful to behold.

3. A sense of harmony.

4. A sense of order or proportion.

Perhaps after all, the whole of these senses may be considered as belonging to one class, and to be the particulars which either singly, or by the union of several of them, or of the whole, produce what is called the pleasures of the imagination. If so, we may extend these senses to every thing that enters into the principles of beauty and gracefulness.—Order, proportion, simplicity, intricacy, uniformity, variety—especially as these principles have any thing in common that is equally applicable to all the fine arts, painting, statuary, architecture, music, poetry, oratory.

The various theories upon the principles of beauty, or what it is that properly constitutes it, are of much importance on the subject of taste and criticism, but of very little in point of morals. Whether it be a simple perception that cannot be analysed, or a *Je ne sçai quoi*, as the French call it, that cannot be discovered, it is the same thing to our present purpose, since it cannot be denied,

that there is a perception of beauty, and that this is very different from the mere color or dimensions of the object. This beauty extends to the form and shape of visible, or to the grace and motion of living objects; indeed, to all works of art, and productions of genius.

These are called the reflex senses sometimes, and it is of moment to observe both that they really belong to our nature, and that they are very different from the grosser perceptions of external sense.

It must also be observed, that several distinguished writers have added as an internal sense, that of morality, a sense and perception of moral excellence, and our obligation to conform ourselves to it in our conduct.

Though there is no occasion to join Mr. Hutchinson or any other, in their opposition to such as make reason the principle of virtuous conduct, yet I think it must be admitted, that a sense of moral good and evil, is as really a principle of our nature, as either the gross external or reflex senses, and as truly distinct from both, as they are from each other.

This moral sense is precisely the same thing with what, in scripture and common language, we call conscience. It is the law which our Maker has written upon our hearts, and both intimates and enforces duty, previous to all reasoning. The opposers of innate ideas, and of the law of nature, are unwilling to admit the reality of a moral sense, yet their objections are wholly frivolous. The necessity of education and information to the production and exercise of the reflex senses or powers of the imagination, is every whit as great as to the application of the moral sense. If therefore any one should say, as is often done by Mr. Locke, if there are any innate principles what are they? enumerate them to me, if they are essential to man they must be in every man; let me take any article's clown and examine him, and see if he can tell me what they are.—I would say, if the principles of taste are natural they must be universal. Let me try the clown then, and see whether he will agree with us, either in discovering the beauty of a poem or picture, or being able to assign the reasons of his approbation.

There are two senses which are not easily reducible to any of the two kinds of internal senses, and yet certainly belong to our nature. They are allied to one another—A sense of ridicule, and a sense of honor and shame. A sense of the ridiculous is something peculiar ; for though it be admitted that every thing that is ridiculous is at the same time unreasonable and absurd ; yet it is as certain the terms are not convertible, for any thing that is absurd is not ridiculous. There are an hundred falsehoods in mathematics and other sciences, that do not tempt any body to laugh.

Shaftsbury has, through his whole writings, endeavored to establish this principle, that ridicule is the test of truth ; but the falsehood of that opinion appears from the above remark, for there is something really distinct from reasoning in ridicule. It seems to be putting imagination in the place of reason.—See Brown's *Essays on the Characteristics*.

A sense of honor and shame seems, in a certain view, to subject us to the opinions of others, as they depend upon the sentiments of our fellow-creatures. Yet, perhaps we may consider this sentiment as intended to be an assistant or guard to virtue, by making us apprehend reproach from others for what is in itself worthy of blame. This sense is very strong and powerful in its effects, whether it be guided by true or false principles.

After this survey of human nature, let us consider how we derive either the nature or obligation of duty from it.

One way is to consider what indications we have from our nature, of the way that leads to the truest happiness. This must be done by a careful attention to the several classes of perceptions and affections, to see which of them are most excellent, delightful, or desirable.

They will then soon appear to be of three great classes, as mentioned above, easily distinguishable from one another, and gradually rising above one another.

1. The gratification of the external senses. This affords some pleasure. We are led to desire what is pleasing, and to avoid what is disgusting to them.

2. The finer powers of perception give a delight which is evidently more excellent, and which we must necessarily pronounce more noble. Poetry, painting, music, &c. the exertion of genius, and exercise of the mental powers in general, give a pleasure, though not so tumultuous, much more refined, and which does not so soon satiate.

3. Superior to both these, is a sense of moral excellence, and a pleasure arising from doing what is dictated by the moral sense.

It must doubtless be admitted that this representation is agreeable to truth, and that to those who would calmly and fairly weigh the delight of moral action, it must appear superior to any other gratification, being most *noble*, *pure* and *durable*. Therefore we might conclude, that it is to be preferred before all other sources of pleasure—that they are to give way to it when opposite, and to be no otherwise embraced than in subserviency to it.

But though we cannot say there is any thing false in this theory, there are certainly very essential defects.—As for example, it wholly confounds, or leaves entirely undistinguished, acting virtuously from seeking happiness: so that promoting our own happiness will in that case be the essence or definition of virtue, and a view to our own interest will be the sole and complete obligation to virtue. Now there is good ground to believe not only that reason teaches us, but that the moral sense dictates to us, something more on both heads, viz. that there are disinterested affections that point directly at the good of others, and that these are so far from meriting to be excluded from the notion of virtue altogether, that they rather seem to claim a preference to the selfish affections. I know the friends of the scheme of self-interest have a way of coloring or solving this. They say, men only approve and delight in benevolent affections, as pleasing and delightful to themselves. But this is not satisfying, for it seems to weaken the force of public affection very much, to refer it all to self interest, and when nature seems to be carrying you out of yourself, by strong instinctive propensities or implanted affections, to turn the current and

direction of these into the stream of self-interest, in which experience tells us we are most apt to run to a vicious excess.

Besides it is affirmed, and I think with good reason, that the moral sense carries a good deal more in it than merely an approbation of a certain class of actions as beautiful, praise-worthy or delightful, and therefore finding our interest in them as the most noble gratification. The moral sense implies also a sense of obligation, that such and such things are right and others wrong; that we are bound in duty to do the one, and that our conduct is hateful, blameable, and deserving of punishment, if we do the contrary; and there is also in the moral sense or conscience, an apprehension or belief that reward and punishment will follow, according as we shall act in the one way, or in the other.

It is so far from being true, that there is no more in virtuous action than a superior degree of beauty, or a more noble pleasure, that indeed the beauty and sweetness of virtuous action arises from this very circumstance—that it is a compliance with duty or supposed obligation. Take away this, and the beauty vanishes as well as the pleasure. Why is it more pleasant to do a just or charitable action, than to satisfy my palate with delightful meat, or to walk in a beautiful garden, or read an exquisite poem? only because I feel myself under an obligation to do it, as a thing useful and important in itself. It is not duty because pleasing, but pleasing because duty.—The same thing may be said of beauty and approbation. I do not approve of the conduct of a plain, honest, industrious, pious man, because it is more beautiful than that of an idle profligate, but I say it is more beautiful and amiable, because he keeps within the bounds of duty. I see a higher species of beauty in moral action: but it arises from a sense of obligation. It may be said, that my interest and duty are the same, because they are inseparable, and the one arises from the other; but there is a real distinction and priority of order. A thing is not my duty, because it is my interest, but it is a wise appointment of nature, that I shall forfeit my interest, if I neglect my duty.

Several other remarks might be made to confirm this. When any person has by experience found that in seeking pleasure he embraced a less pleasing enjoyment, in place of one more delightful, he may be sensible of mistake or misfortune, but he has nothing at all of the feeling of blame or self-condemnation; but when he hath done an immoral action, he has an inward remorse, and feels that he has broken a law, and that he ought to have done otherwise.



#### LECTURE IV.

**T**HIS therefore lays us under the necessity of searching a little further for the principle of moral action. In order to do this with the greater accuracy, and give you a view of the chief controversies on this subject, observe, that there are really three questions upon it, which must be inquired into, and distinguished. I am sensible, they are so intimately connected, that they are sometimes necessarily intermixed; but at others, not distinguishing, leads into error. The questions relate to

1. The nature of virtue.
2. The foundation of virtue.
3. The obligation of virtue.

When we inquire into the nature of virtue, we do enough, when we point out what it is, or show how we may come to the knowledge of every particular duty, and be able to distinguish it from the opposite vice. When we speak of the foundation of virtue, we ask or answer the question, Why is it so? Why is this course of action preferable to the contrary? What is its excellence? When we speak of the obligation of virtue, we ask by what law we are bound, or from what principles we ought to be obedient to the precepts which it contains or prescribes.

After speaking something to each of these—to the controversies that have been raised upon them—and the propriety or importance of entering far into these controversies, or a particular decision of them, I shall proceed to



a detail of the moral laws or the several branches of duty according to the division first laid down.

1. As to the nature of virtue, or what it is; or, in other words, what is the rule by which I must try every disputed practice—that I may keep clear of the next question, you may observe, that upon all the systems they must have recourse to one or more of the following, viz. Conscience, reason, experience. All who found virtue upon affection, particularly Hutcheson, Shaftsbury and their followers, make the moral sense the rule of duty, and very often attempt to exclude the use of reason on this subject. These authors seem also to make benevolence and public affection the standard of virtue, in distinction from all private and selfish passions.

Doctor Clark and most English writers of the last age, make reason the standard of virtue, particularly as opposed to inward sentiment or affection. They have this to say particularly in support of their opinion, that reason does in fact often controul and alter sentiment; whereas sentiment cannot alter the clear decisions of reason. Suppose my heart dictates to me any thing to be my duty, as for example, to have compassion on a person detected in the commission of crimes; yet if, upon cool reflection, I perceive that suffering him to go unpunished will be hurtful to the community, I counteract the sentiment from the deductions of reason.

Again: Some take in the aid of experience, and chiefly act upon it. All particularly who are upon the selfish scheme, find it necessary to make experience the guide, to show them what things are really conducive to happiness and what not.

We shall proceed to consider the opinions upon the nature of virtue, the chief of which are as follow:

1. Some say that virtue consists in acting agreeably to the nature and reason of things. And that we are to abstract from all affection, public and private, in determining any question upon it. Clark.

2. Some say that benevolence or public affection is virtue, and that a regard to the good of the whole is the standard of virtue. What is most remarkable in this

scheme is, that it makes the sense of obligation in particular instances give way to a supposed greater good. Hutcheson.

3. One author (Wollston Rel. of Nat. delineated) makes truth the foundation of virtue, and he reduces the good or evil of any action to the truth or falsehood of a proposition. This opinion differs not in substance, but in words only from Dr. Clark's.

4. Others place virtue in self-love, and make a well regulated self-love the standard and foundation of it. This scheme is best defended by Dr. Campbell, of St. Andrews.

5. Some of late have made sympathy the standard of virtue, particularly Smith in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. He says we have a certain feeling, by which we sympathize, and as he calls it, go along with what appears to be right. This is but a new phraseology for the moral sense.

6. David Hume has a scheme of morals that is peculiar to himself. He makes every thing that is *agreeable* and *useful* virtuous, and vice versa, by which, he entirely annihilates the difference between natural and moral qualities, making health, strength, cleanliness, as really virtues as integrity and truth.

7. We have an opinion published in this country, that virtue consists in the love of being as such.

Several of these authors do easily and naturally incorporate piety with their system, particularly Clark, Hutcheson, Campbell and Edwards.

And there are some who begin by establishing natural religion, and then found virtue upon piety. This amounts to the same thing in substance; for reasoners upon the nature of virtue only mean to show what the Author of nature has pointed out as duty. And after natural religion is established on general proofs, it will remain to point out what are its laws, which, not taking in revelation, must bring us back to consider our own nature, and the rational deductions from it.

2. The opinions on the foundation of virtue may be summed up in the four following:

1. The will of God. 2. The reason and nature of things. 3. The public interest. 4. Private interest.

1. The will of God. By this is not meant what was mentioned above, that the intimations of the divine will point out what is our duty ; but that the reason of the difference between virtue and vice is to be sought no where else than in the good pleasure of God. That there is no intrinsic excellence in any thing but as he commands or forbids it. They pretend that if it were otherwise, there would be something above the Supreme Being, something in the nature of things that would lay him under the law of necessity or fate. But notwithstanding the difficulty of our forming clear conceptions on this subject, it seems very harsh and unreasonable to say that the difference between virtue and vice is no other than the divine will. This would be taking away the moral character even of God himself. It would not have any meaning then to say he is infinitely holy and infinitely perfect. But probably those who have asserted this, did not mean any more than that the divine will is so perfect and excellent, that all virtue is reduced to conformity to it——and that we ought not to judge of good and evil by any other rule. This is as true as that the divine conduct is the standard of wisdom.

2. Some found it in the reason and nature of things. This may be said to be true, but not sufficiently precise and explicit. Those who embrace this principle succeed best in their reasoning when endeavoring to show that there is an essential difference between virtue and vice. But when they attempt to show wherein this difference doth or can consist, other than public or private happiness, they speak with very little meaning.

3. Public happiness. This opinion is that the foundation of virtue, or that which makes the distinction between it and vice, is its tendency to promote the general good ; so that utility at bottom is the principle of virtue, even with the great patrons of disinterested affection.

4. Private happiness. Those who choose to place the foundation of virtue here, would have us to consider no

other excellence in it than what immediately conduces to our own gratification.

Upon these opinions I would observe, that there is something true in every one of them, but that they may be easily pushed to an error by excess.

The nature and will of God is so perfect as to be the true standard of all excellence, natural and moral : and if we are sure of what he is or commands, it would be presumption and, folly to reason against it, or put our views of fitness in the room of his pleasure ; but to say that God, by his will, might have made the same temper and conduct virtuous and excellent, which we now call vicious, seems to unhinge all our notions of the supreme excellence even of God himself.

Again, there seems to be in the nature of things an intrinsic excellence in moral worth, and an indelible impression of it upon the conscience, distinct from producing or receiving happiness, and yet we cannot easily illustrate its excellence but by comparing one kind of happiness with another.

Again, promoting the public or general good seems to be so nearly connected with virtue, that we must necessarily suppose that universal virtue could be of universal utility. Yet there are two excesses to which this has sometimes led.—One the fatalist and necessitarian schemes, to which there are so many objections, and the other, the making the general good the ultimate practical rule to every particular person so that he may violate particular obligations with a view to a more general benefit.

Once more, it is certain that virtue is as really connected with private as with public happiness, and yet to make the interest of the agent the only foundation of it, seems so to narrow the mind, and to be so destructive to the public and generous affections, as to produce the most hurtful effects.

If I were to lay down a few propositions on the foundation of virtue, as a philosopher, they should be the following ?

1. From reason, contemplation, sentiment and tradition, the Being and infinite perfection and excellence of God may be deduced; and therefore what he is, and commands, is virtue and duty. Whatever he has implanted in uncorrupted nature as a principle, is to be received as his will. \* Propensities resisted and contradicted by the inward principle of conscience, are to be considered as inherent or contracted vice.

2. True virtue certainly promotes the general good, and this may be made use of as an argument in doubtful cases, to determine whether a particular principle is right or wrong, but to make the good of the whole our immediate principle of action, is putting ourselves in God's place, and actually superseding the necessity and use of the particular principles of duty which he hath impressed upon the conscience. As to the whole, I believe the universe is faultless and perfect, but I am unwilling to say it is the *best* possible system, because I am not able to understand such an argument, and because it seems to me absurd that infinite perfection should exhaust or limit itself by a created production.

3. There is in the nature of things a difference between virtue and vice, and however much virtue and happiness are connected by the divine law, and in the event of things, we are made so as to feel towards them, and conceive of them, as distinct. We have the simple perceptions of duty and interest.

4. Private and public interest may be promoted by the same means, but they are distinct views; they should be made to assist, and not destroy each other.

The result of the whole is, that we ought to take the rule of duty from conscience enlightened by reason, experience, and every way by which we can be supposed to learn the will of our Maker, and his intention in creating us such as we are. And we ought to believe that it is as deeply founded as the nature of God himself, being a transcript of his moral excellence, and that it is productive of the greatest good.

\* In the text that I was considering a virtuous man, by the  
law of nature, that he had a propensity to do good, and  
that he had obtained from it, against the violation of his  
conscience; would it in him have been a crime, or

## LECTURE V.

3. **I**T remains only that we speak of the obligation of virtue, or what is the law that binds us to the performance, and from what motives or principles we ought to follow its dictates.

The sentiments upon this subject differ, as men have different views of the nature and foundation of virtue, yet they may be reduced within narrower bounds.

The obligation of virtue may be easily reduced to two general kinds, duty and interest. The first, if real, implies that we are under some law, or subject to some superior, to whom we are accountable. The other only implies that nature points it out to us as our own greatest happiness, and that there is no other reason why we ought to obey.

Now I think it is very plain that there is more in the obligation of virtue, than merely our greatest happiness. The moral sentiment itself implies that it is duty, independent of happiness. This produces remorse and disapprobation, as having done what is blameable and of ill desert. We have two ideas very distinct, when we see a man mistaking his own interest and not obtaining so much happiness as he might, and when we see him breaking through every moral obligation. In the first case we consider him as only accountable to himself, in the second we consider him as accountable to some superior, and to the public. This sense of duty is the primary notion of law and of rights, taken in their most extensive signification, as including every thing we think we are entitled to expect from others, and the neglect or violation of which we consider as wrong, unjust, vicious, and therefore blameable. It is also affirmed with great apparent reason by many, particularly Butler in his *Analogy* and his sermons, that we have a natural feeling of ill desert, and merited punishment in vice. The patrons of the selfish ideas alone, are those who confine the obligation of virtue to happiness.

But of those who are, or would be thought of the opposite sentiment, there are some who differ very considerably from others. Some who profess great opposition to the selfish scheme, declare also great aversion to founding the obligation of virtue in any degree on the will of a superior, or looking for any sanction of punishment, to corroborate the moral laws. This they especially treat with contempt, when it is supposed to be from the deity. Shaftsbury speaks with great bitterness against taking into view a future state of what he calls more extended self-interest. He says men should love virtue for its own sake, without regard to reward or punishment. In this he has been followed by many reasoners, as far as their regard to religion would permit them.

If however, we attend to the dictates of conscience, we shall find evidently, a sense of duty, of self-approbation and remorse, which plainly show us to be under a law, and that law to have a sanction: what else is the meaning of the fear and terror, and apprehension of guilty persons? *Quorum mentes si recludantur, &c.* says Cicero.

Nor is this all, but we have all certainly a natural sense of dependance. The belief of a divine being is certainly either innate and necessary, or has been handed down from the first man, and can now be well supported by the clearest reason. And our relation to him not only lays the foundation of many moral sentiments and duties, but completes the idea of morality and law, by subjecting us to him, and teaching us to conceive of him, not only as our Maker, preserver and benefactor, but as our righteous governor and supreme judge. As the being and perfections of God are irrefragably established, the obligation of duty must ultimately rest here.

It ought not to be forgotten that the belief or apprehension of a future state of rewards and punishments, has been as universal as the belief of a deity, and seems inseparable from it, and therefore must be considered as the sanction of the moral law. Shaftsbury inveighs severely against this, as making man virtuous from a mercenary view; but there are two ways in which we may consider



this matter, and in either light his objections have little force. (1.) We may consider the primary obligations of virtue as founded upon a sense of its own excellence, joined with a sense of duty and dependance on the Supreme being, and rewards and punishments as a secondary motive, which is found in fact, to be absolutely necessary to restrain or reclaim men from vice and impiety. Or (2.) We may consider that by the light of nature, as well as by revelation, the future reward of virtue is considered as a state of perfect virtue, and the happiness is represented as arising from this circumstance. Here there is nothing at all of a mercenary principle, but only an expectation that true goodness, which is here in a state of imperfection and liable to much opposition, shall then be improved to the highest degree, and put beyond any possibility of change.

We may add to these obligations the manifest tendency of a virtuous conduct to promote even our present happiness: this, in ordinary cases, it does, and when joined with the steady hope of futurity, does in all cases produce a happiness superior to what can be enjoyed in the practice of vice. Yet perhaps, the stoics of old, who denied pain to be any evil, and made the wise man superior to all the vicissitudes of fortune, carried things to a romantic and extravagant height. And so do some persons in modern times, who setting aside the consideration of a future state, teach that virtue is its own reward. There are many situations in which, if you deprive a good man of the hope of future happiness, his state seems very undesirable. On the contrary, sometimes the worst of men enjoy prosperity and success to a great degree, nor do they seem to have any such remorse, as to be an adequate punishment of their crimes. If any should insist, that a good man has always some comfort from within, and a bad man a self-disapprobation and inward disquiet, suited to their characters, I would say that this arises from the expectation of a future state, and a hope on the one side, and fear on the other, of their condition there.

Those who declaim so highly of virtue being its own reward in this life, take away one of the most considerable

arguments, which from the dawn of philosophy, has always been made use of, as a proof of a future state, viz. the unequal distribution of good and evil in this life. Besides they do not seem to view the state of bad men properly. When they talk of remorse of conscience, as a sufficient punishment, they forget that this is seldom to a high degree, but in the case of some gross crimes. Cruelty and murder, frequent acts of gross injustice, are sometimes followed with deep horror of conscience; and a course of intemperance or lust is often attended with such dismal effects upon the body, fame and fortune, that those who survive it a few years, are a melancholy spectacle, and a burden to themselves and others. But it would be very loose morality, to suppose none to be bad men, but those who were under the habitual condemnation of conscience. On the contrary, the far greater part are blinded in their understandings, as well as corrupt in their practice—They deceive themselves, and are at peace. Ignorance and inattention keep the multitude at peace. And false principles often produce self-justification and ill-founded peace, even in atrocious crimes. Even common robbers are sometimes found to justify themselves, and say—I must live—I have a right to my share of provision, as well as that proud fellow that rolls in his chariot.

The result of the whole is, that the obligation to virtue ought to take in all the following particulars: A sense of its own intrinsic excellence—of its happy consequences in the present life—a sense of duty and subjection to the Supreme Being—and a hope of future happiness, and fear of future misery from his decision.

Having considered the reasonings on the nature, foundation and obligation of virtue, I now proceed to a more particular detail of the moral laws, and shall take them under the three heads formerly mentioned, Ethics, Politics and Jurisprudence.

## LECTURE VI.

**A**S to the first we must begin with what is usually called the states of man, or the several lights or relations in which he may be considered, as laying a foundation for duty. These states may be divided into two kinds—(1.) Natural. (2.) Adventitious.

The natural states may be enumerated thus: (1.) His state with regard to God, or natural relation to him. (2.) To his fellow-creatures. (3.) Solitude or society. (4.) Peace or war. Perhaps we may add to these (5.) His outward provision, plenty or want.

These are called natural states, because they are necessary and universal. All men and at all times are related to God. They were made by him, and live by his providence. We must also necessarily know our fellow-creatures, and their state to be similar to ours in this respect and many others. A man must at all times be independent or connected with society—at peace with others, or at war—well provided, or in want.

The other states are called adventitious, because they are the effect of choice and the fruit of industry, as marriage—family—master and servant—particular voluntary societies—callings or professions—characters or abilities natural and acquired—offices in a constituted society—property, and many particular modifications of each of these.

In prosecuting the subject farther, and giving an analysis of the moral duties founded upon these states, I shall first take notice of our relation to God, with the proofs of his being and perfections, and then consider the moral laws under three heads; our duty to God, to our neighbor, and to ourselves.

1. Our duty to God. To this place I have reserved what was to be said upon the proof of the being of God, the great foundation of all natural religion; without which the moral sense would be weak and insufficient.

The proofs of the being of God are generally divided into two kinds. (1.) *A priori*. (2.) *A posteriori*. The first is, properly speaking, metaphysical reasoning downward from the first principles of science or truth, and inferring by just consequence the being and perfections of God. Clark's Demonstration, &c. (if there be any thing that should be called *a priori*, and if this is a conclusive method of reasoning) is as complete as any thing ever published, perhaps he has carried the principle as far as it will go.

This way of arguing begins by establishing our own existence from consciousness. That we are not necessarily existent, therefore must have a cause; that something must have existed from all eternity, or nothing ever could have existed; that this being must exist by an internal necessity of nature; that what exists necessarily must exist alike every where; must be perfect; act every where; be independent, omnipotent, omniscient, infinitely good, just, true—Because as all these are evidently perfections or excellencies, that which exists by a necessity of nature must be possessed of every perfection. And the contrary of these virtues implying weakness or insufficiency, cannot be found in the infinite being.

The other medium of proof, commonly called *a posteriori*, begins with contemplating the universe in all its parts; observing that it contains many irresistible proofs that it could not be eternal, could not be without a cause; that this cause must be intelligent; and from the astonishing greatness, the wonderful adjustment and complication of things, concludes that we can set no bounds to the perfection of the Maker, because we can never exhaust the power, intelligence and benignity that we see in his works. In this way of arguing we deduce the moral perfections of the deity from the faint resemblances of them that we see in ourselves. As we necessarily conceive justice, goodness, truth, &c. to be perfections or excellencies, we are warranted by the plainest reason to ascribe them to the divine being in an infinite degree.

There is perhaps at bottom no difference between these ways of reasoning, because they must in some degree,

rest upon a common principle, viz, that every thing that exists must have a cause. This is equally necessary to both the chains of reasoning, and must itself be taken for an original sentiment of nature, or an impression necessarily made upon us from all that we see and are conversant with. About this and some other ideas great stir has been made by some infidel writers, particularly David Hume, who seems to have industriously endeavored to shake the certainty of our belief upon cause and effect, upon personal identity and the idea of power. It is easy to raise metaphysical subtleties, and confound the understanding on such subjects. In opposition to this, some late writers have advanced with great apparent reason, that there are certain first principles or dictates of common sense, which are either simple perceptions, or seen with intuitive evidence. These are the foundation of all reasoning, and without them, to reason is a word without a meaning. They can no more be proved than you can prove an axiom in mathematical science. These authors of Scotland have lately produced and supported this opinion, to resolve at once all the refinements and metaphysical objections of some infidel writers.

There is a different sort of argument often made use of, or brought in aid of the others for the being of God, viz. the consent of all nations, and the universal prevalence of that belief. I know not whether we must say that this argument rest also upon the principle that nothing can exist without a cause, or upon the plan just now mentioned. If it is an universal dictate of our nature, we must take it as true immediately, without further examination.

An author I formerly mentioned has set this argument in a peculiar light (Dr. Wilson of Newcastle). He says that we receive all our knowledge, as philosophers admit, by sensation and reflection. Now, from all that we see, and all the reflection and abstraction upon it we are capable of, he affirms it is impossible we could ever form the idea of a spirit or a future state. They have, however, been early and universal, and therefore must have been communicated at first, and handed down by information

and instruction from age to age. So that unless upon the supposition of the existence of God and his imparting the knowledge of himself to men, it is impossible that any idea of him could ever have entered into the human mind. There is something ingenious and a good deal of probability in this way of reasoning.

As to the nature of God, the first thing to be observed is the unity of God. This is sufficiently established upon the reasonings both a priori and posteriori. If these reasonings are just for the being of God, they are strictly conclusive for the unity of God. There is a necessity for the existence of one supreme being, the first cause, but no necessity for more; nay, one supreme independent being does not admit any more. And when we view the harmony, order and unity of design in the created system, we must be led to the belief of the unity of God.

Perhaps it may be thought an objection to this (especially if we lay any stress on the universal sentiments of mankind,) that all nations have been so prone to the belief and worship of a plurality of gods. But this argument is rather specious than solid; as however prone men were to worship local inferior deities, they seem to have considered them only as intermediate divinities and intercessors between them and the supreme God.

The perfections of God may be divided into two kinds, *Natural* and *Moral*.

I. The natural perfections of God are spirituality, immensity, wisdom and power.

We call these natural perfections, because they can be easily distinguished, and in idea at least separated, from goodness of disposition. It is highly probable indeed that supreme excellence, natural and moral, must always reside in the same subject, and are truly inseparable; yet we distinguish them not only because the ideas are distinct, but because they are by no means in proportion to one another in inferior natures. Great powers of mind and perfection of body are often joined to malignity of disposition. It is not so however in God; for as his natural perfections are founded on reason, so his moral excellence

is evidently founded in the moral sense or conscience which he hath implanted in us.

Spirituality is what we may call the *very nature* of God. It must be admitted that we cannot at present form any complete or adequate idea of a spirit. And some, as you have heard formerly, insist that without revelation we could never have acquired the idea of it that we have. Yet there are many who have reasoned in a very strong and seemingly conclusive manner, to show that mind or intelligence must be a substance altogether distinct from matter. That all the known properties of matter are incapable of producing thought, as being wholly of a different kind—that matter as such and universally, is inert and divisible; thought or intelligence, active and uncompounded. See the best reasoning on this subject in Baxter's *Immateriality of the Soul*.

Immensity in the Divine Being is that by which he is every where, and equally present. Metaphysicians, however, differ greatly upon this subject. The Cartesians will not admit that place is at all applicable to spirits. They say it is an idea wholly arising from extension, which is one of the peculiar and essential qualities of matter. • The Newtonians, however, who make so much use of the idea of infinite space, consider place as essential to all substance, spirit as well as matter. The difficulties are great on both sides. It is hard to conceive of spirit at all, separating from it the qualities of matter, and after we have attempted to do so, it seems to be bringing them back to talk of place. And yet it seems not only hard but impossible to conceive of any real being without supposing it in some place, and particularly upon the immensity of the Deity, it seems to be putting created spirits too much on a level with the infinite spirit to deny his immensity. It is I think certain they are either confined to a place, or so limited in their operations as is no way so well expressed as by saying we are here and no where else. And in this sense both parties must admit the divine immensity—that his agency is equal, universal and irresistible.

Wisdom is another natural attribute of God, implying infinite knowledge—that all things in all their rela-



tions, all things existing, and all things possible, are the objects of the divine knowledge. Wisdom is usually considered as respecting some end to be attained, and it implies the clear discovery of the best and most effectual means of attaining it.

Power is the being able to do all things without limit or restraint. The omnipotence of God is always considered as an essential perfection, and seems to arise immediately from creation and providence. It is common to say that God can do all things except such as imply a contradiction—such as to make a thing to be and not to be at the same time; but this is unnecessary and foolish in the way of an exception, for such things are not the objects of power at all. They are mere absurdities in our conception, and indeed we may say, of our own creation. All things are possible with God—nothing can withstand his power.



## LECTURE VII.

2d. **T**HE moral perfections of God are holiness, justice, truth, goodness and mercy.

Holiness is sometimes taken in a general and comprehensive sense, as being the aggregate, implying the presence of all moral excellence; yet it is sometimes used and that both in the scripture revelation and by heathen writers as a peculiar attribute. In this limited sense it is extremely difficult to define or explain. Holiness is that character of God to which veneration, or the most profound reverence in us, is the correspondent affection. It is sometimes also expressed by purity, and when we go to form an idea of it, perhaps we can scarce say any thing better than that it is his being removed at an infinite distance from the grossness of material indulgence.

Justice is an invariable determination to render to all their due. Justice seems to be founded on the strong and unalterable perception we have of right and wrong, good and evil, and particularly that the one deserves reward,

and the other punishment. The internal sanction, or the external and providential sanction of natural laws, point out to us the Justice of God. The chief thing that merits attention upon this subject is the controversy about what is called the vindictive justice of God. That is to say, is there in God, or have we a natural sense of the propriety of, a disposition to inflict punishment, independently of the consequences, viz. the reformation of the offender, or the example of others. This loose moralists often declaim against. Yet it seems plain, that the sense in our minds of good and ill desert, makes guilt the proper object of punishment simply in itself. This may have a relation to general order and the good of the whole, which however is out of our reach.

The truth of God is one of his perfections, greatly insisted upon in Scripture, and an essential part of natural religion. It is inseparable from infinite perfection; for any departure from truth must be considered as arising from weakness or necessity. What end could be served to a self-sufficient and all sufficient being by falsehood or deception?

Goodness in God is a disposition to communicate happiness to others. This is easily understood. The creation is a proof of it—Natural and moral evil no just objection to it, because of the preponderancy of happiness.

Mercy, as distinguished from goodness or benignity, is his being of a placable nature—Ready to forgive the guilty, or to remit deserved punishment. It has been disputed how far mercy or placability is discoverable by reason. It is not mercy or forgiveness, unless it would have been just at the same time to have punished. There are but two ways by which men from reason may infer the attribute of mercy to belong to the Deity. (1) Because we ourselves are sensible of this disposition, and see in it a peculiar beauty. (2) From the forbearance of Providence, that sinners are not immediately overtaken with punishment, but have space given them to repent.—Yet as all the conclusions drawn from these principles must be vague and general, the expectations of the guilty founded upon them, must be very uncertain. We must con-

clude therefore, that however stable a foundation there is for the other attributes of God in nature and reason, the way in which, and the terms on which, he will shew mercy, can be learned from Revelation only.

Having considered the being and perfections of God, we proceed to our duty to him.

This may be considered in two views, as general and special. 1. By the first I understand our duty to obey him and submit to him in all things. This you see includes every branch of moral duty to our neighbor and ourselves, as well as to God, and so the particular parts of it will be considered afterwards. But in this place, considering every good action as an act of obedience to God, we will a little attend to the divine sovereignty and the foundation of it.

In speaking of the foundation of virtue, I took in a sense of dependance and subjection to God.—But as men are not to be deterred from bold inquiries, a further question is raised by some—what is properly the foundation of the divine dominion? (1) Some found it directly upon Omnipotence. It is impossible to resist his power. This seems to lay us under a necessity, rather than to convince us of duty. We ought however, to think and speak of this subject with reverence, and certainly Omnipotence seems to oblige us to actual, if it should not bring us to willing obedience. It is somewhat remarkable, that in the book of Job, composed on purpose to resolve some difficulties in providence, where God is brought in as speaking himself out of the whirlwind, he makes use of no other argument than his tremendous majesty and irresistible power. Yet to rest the matter wholly upon this, seems much the same as founding virtue on mere will;—therefore (2) some found the divine dominion on his infinite excellence, they say it is the law of reason that the wisest should rule, and therefore that infinite perfection is entitled to universal sway. Even this, taken separate and alone, does not seem wholly to satisfy the mind. If one person is wiser than another, it seems reasonable that the other should learn of him and imitate him; but it scarcely seems a sufficient reason that

the first should have absolute authority. But perhaps the weakness of the argument, taken in this view, may arise from the inconsiderable difference between man and man, when compared to the superiority of universal and unchangeable perfection. (3.) Some found it upon creation. They say, that God has an absolute property in all his creatures, he may therefore do what he will with his own. This no doubt, goes a good way, and carries considerable force with it to the mind, the rather that, as you will afterwards see, it is something similar to this in us, that lays the foundation of our most perfect rights, viz. That the product of our own industry is properly at our own disposal.

As upon the foundation of virtue I thought it necessary to unite the principles of different writers, so upon this subject, I think that all the three particulars mentioned, ought to be admitted, as the grounds of the divine dominion. Omnipotence, infinite excellence, and the original production and continual preservation of all creatures.

2. Our duty to God may be considered more specially, as it points out the duties we owe immediately to himself.

These may be divided into internal and external.—1st. The internal are all included under the three following, love, fear, and trust.

The love of God, which is the first and great duty both of natural and revealed religion, may be explained in a larger and more popular, or in a more precise and stricter way.

In the first, love may be resolved into the four following acts, (1) esteem, (2) gratitude, (3) benevolence, (4) desire.

These four will be found inseparable from true love; and it is pretty much in the same order, that the acts succeed one another. Love is founded on esteem, on the real or supposed good qualities of the object. You can no more love that which you despise, than that which you hate. Gratitude is also inseparable from it, to have a lively sense of favors received, and to esteem them for the sake of the person from whom they came. Benevo-

lence or rejoicing in the happiness and wishing well to the object. And lastly, a desire of a place in his esteem. Whatever we love, we desire to possess, as far as it is suited to our faculties.

The stricter, and more precise method of considering the love of God, is to divide it into two branches, benevolence and desire. And indeed our affections to God seem to be capable of the same division as our affection to our fellow-creatures, benevolent and selfish. I think it undeniable, that there is a disinterested love of God, which terminates directly upon himself, without any immediate view to our own happiness—as well as a discovery of our great interest in his favor.

The second great duty to God, is fear; but here we must carefully distinguish this affection from one which bears the name, and is different from it—at least in a moral view it is altogether opposite.—Dutiful fear is what may be otherwise called veneration, and hath for its object the infinity of the divine perfection in general, but particularly his majesty and greatness. The other is merely a fear of evil or punishment from him: these are called sometimes a filial and a servile fear. The first increases, as men improve in moral excellence, and the other is destroyed. Perfect love casteth out fear. Perhaps however opposite, as they have the same name, they may be said to be the same natural affection, only as it takes place in innocent or holy, and in guilty creatures. The same majesty of God, which produces veneration in the upright, produces horror and apprehension of punishment in the guilty.

The third great duty is trust. This is a continual dependance on God for every thing we need, together with an approbation of, and absolute resignation to his providence.

2. The external duties to God, I shall briefly pass over, being only, all proper and natural expressions of the internal sentiments.

It may be proper however, to take notice in general of the worship due to God, that whether we consider the nature of things, or the universal practice of mankind, in

all ages, worship, and that not only private, but public and social worship is a duty of natural religion.

Some of the enemies of revealed religion, have spoken with great virulence against this, as unreasonable, and even dishonorable to the Divine Being. The substance of what they say, is this, that as it would be no part of the character of an eminent and good man, to desire and take pleasure in others praising him and recounting his good qualities, so it is absurd to suppose, that the Supreme Being is pleased with incense, sacrifices and praises. But it ought to be observed, that he does not require these acts and exercises as any gratification to himself, but as in themselves just and necessary and suited to the relation we stand in to him, and useful for forming our temper and universal practice. We ought also to remember, that we must not immediately and without discrimination, reason from what would be praise and blame-worthy among men, to what would be just or unjust in God, because the circumstances are very different. Besides, though for any man to desire the applause of his fellow-creatures, or be pleased with adulation, would be a mean and contemptible character, because indeed there is such unspeakable imperfection in the best of men, yet when any duty or sentiment is fully and manifestly due from man to man, there is nothing improper or dishonorable in requiring or expecting it. Thus a parent requires respect and submission from his children, a master from his servants; and though the injury is merely personal, he thinks himself entitled to punish every expression of contempt or disregard. Again, every man who has bestowed signal favours upon another, expects to see evidence of a grateful and sensible mind, and severely condemns every sentiment or action that indicates a contrary disposition.

On the whole then, we see that if the worship of God be what is due from us to him, in consequence of the relation we stand in to him, it is proper and necessary that he should require it. To honor God is to honor supreme excellence; for him not to expect and demand it, would be to deny himself.

One other difficulty I shall touch upon a little. It respects the duty of prayer ; and the objections lie equally against it on the footing of natural religion and revealed. The objections are two. (1.) Why does God who perfectly knows all our wants, require and expect prayer before he will supply them ? To this I would answer that he supplies great multitudes of our wants without our asking it ; and as to his requiring the duty of prayer, I say the same thing as of worship in general ; it is reasonable and necessary to express, and to increase upon our minds, a sense of dependance, and thereby lay us under an obligation of properly improving what we receive. (2.) The other obligation is with regard to the force or efficacy of prayer. Why, it is said, should we pray, when the whole system of divine providence is fixed and unalterable ? Can we possibly suppose that God will change his purposes, from a regard to our cries or tears ? To this some answer no otherwise than as before, that without having any effect upon the event, it has only an effect upon our minds, in bringing us to a right temper. Dr. Leechman of Glasgow, in his discourse on prayer, makes no other answer to this difficulty. But I think to rest it here, and admit that it has no influence in the way of causality upon the event, would in a great measure break the force and fervency of prayer. I would therefore say further, that prayer has a real efficacy on the event, and just as much as any other second cause. The objection arises from going beyond our depth, and reasoning from the unchangeable purpose of God to human actions, which is always unjust and fallacious.—However unable we may be to explain it, notwithstanding the fixed plan of Providence, there is a real influence of second causes both natural and moral, and I apprehend the connexion between cause and effect is similar in both cases. If it is fixed from eternity that there shall be a plentiful crop upon a certain field, I know that nothing whatsoever can prevent it, if otherwise, the efforts of the whole creation cannot produce it ; yet I know as certainly that, hypothetically, if it is not ploughed and sown, there will be no grain upon it, and that if it be properly manured and dressed, it will probably be fruitful. Thus in moral mat-



ters, prayer has as real an influence in procuring the blessing, as ploughing and sowing has in procuring the crop ; and it is as consistent with the established order of nature and the certainty of events in the one case, as in the other : for this reason the stoical fate of old, was called the *ignava ratio* of the stoics, as they sometimes made use of the above fallacious reasoning.

## LECTURE VIII.

2. **W**E come now to our duty to man. This may be reduced to a short sum, by ascending to its principle. Love to others, sincere and active, is the sum of our duty.

Benevolence, I formerly observed, ought not to be considered as the whole of virtue, but it certainly is the principle and sum of that branch of duty which regards others.

We may distinguish between (1) particular kind affection, and (2) a calm and deliberate good-will to all.—The particular kind affections, as to family, friends, country, seem to be implanted by nature, to strengthen the general principle, for it is only or chiefly by doing good to those we are particularly related to, that we can promote the general happiness.

Particular kind affections should be restrained and directed by a calm good-will to all. Wherever our attachments to private persons prevents a greater good, they become irregular and excessive.

Some think that a calm and settled good will to others, is an improvement of the particular affections, and arises from the more narrow to the more extensive ; from family, friends, country, to all our fellow-creatures. But it seems more reasonable to say, that the general affection is a dictate of our conscience of a superior kind. If it were only an increase and extension of the private affection, it would grow more weak, as the distance from ourselves increased, whereas in fact the more enlarged affections are intended to be more powerful than the confined.

When we are speaking of kind affections, it will not be improper to observe that some unbelievers have objected against the gospel, that it does not recommend private friendship and the love of our country. But if fairly considered, as the Scripture, both by example and precept, recommends all particular affections, so it is to its honor that it sets the love of mankind above them every one, and by so much insisting on the forgiveness of injuries and the love of enemies, it has carried benevolence to its greatest perfection. The parable of the Samaritan in answer to the question, who is my neighbor? is one of the greatest beauties in moral painting any where to be seen.

The love of our country to be sure, is a noble and enlarged affection; and those who have sacrificed private ease and family relations to it, have become illustrious; yet the love of mankind is still greatly superior. Sometimes attachment to country appears in a littleness of mind, thinking all other nations inferior, and foolishly believing that knowledge, virtue and valor are all confined to themselves. As the Romans long ago made the *Punica fides* to mean deceit, so there are not wanting among us those who think that all the French are interested, treacherous and cowardly.

On the great law of love to others, I shall only say further that it ought to have for its object their greatest and best interest, and therefore implies wishing and doing them good in soul and body.

It is necessary now to descend to the application of this principle to particular duties, and to examine what are the rights or claims that one man has upon another. Rights and obligations are correlative terms. Whatever others have a just right or title to claim from me, that is my duty, or what I am obliged to do to them.

Right in general may be reduced, as to its source, to the supreme law of moral duty; for whatever men are in duty obliged to do, that they have a claim to, and other men are considered as under an obligation to permit them. Again, as our own happiness is a lawful object or end, we are supposed to have each a right to prosecute this;

but as our prosecutions may interfere, we limit each others rights, and a man is said to have a right or power to promote his own happiness only by those means which are not in themselves criminal or injurious to others.

Rights may be divided or classed in several different ways; an attention to all of which is of use on this subject. Rights may be (1) natural or acquired. Natural rights are such as are essential to man, and universal—acquired are those that are the fruits of industry, the effects of accident or conquest. A man has a natural right to act for his own preservation, and to defend himself from injury, but not a natural right to domineer, to riches (comparatively speaking) or to any particular office in a constituted state.

(2.) Rights are considered as perfect and imperfect. Those are called perfect rights which can be clearly ascertained in their circumstances, and which we may make use of force to obtain when they are denied us. Imperfect rights are such as we may demand, and others ought to give us, yet we have no title to compel them. Self-preservation is a perfect right, but to have a grateful return for a favor is not a perfect right.

All the duties of justice are founded on the perfect rights; those of mercy generally on the imperfect rights.

The violation of an imperfect right is often as great an act of immorality as that of a perfect right. It is often as immoral, or more so, to refuse to supply the necessities, or to do it too sparingly, as to commit a small injury against a man's person or fortune. Yet the last is the breach of a perfect right, and the other of an imperfect.

Human laws reach only, in ordinary cases, to the perfect rights. Sometimes imperfect rights by being carried far become perfect, as humanity and gentleness in a parent to a child may be so grossly violated as to warrant the interposition of human authority.

(3.) Rights are alienable and unalienable. The first we may, according to justice and prudence, surrender or give up by our own act; the others we may not. A man may give away his own goods, lands, money. There

are several things which he cannot give away, as a right over his own knowledge, thoughts, &c. Others, which he ought not, as a right to judge for himself in all matters of religion, his right to self-preservation, provision, &c. Some say that liberty is unalienable, and that those who have even given it away may lawfully resume it.

The distinction between rights as alienable and unalienable is very different from that of natural and acquired. Many of the rights which are strictly natural and universal, may be alienated in a state of society for the good of the whole, as well as of private persons; as for example, the right of self-defence; this is in a great measure given up in a state of civil government into the hands of the public—and the right of doing justice to ourselves or to others in matters of property, is wholly given up.

(4.) Rights may be considered as they differ with regard to their object. 1. Rights we have over our own persons and actions. This class is called liberty. 2. Rights over things or goods which belong to us. This is called property. 3. Rights over the persons and actions of other men. This is called authority. 4. Rights in the things which are the property of others, which are of several sorts.

When we come to the second great division of moral philosophy, politics, the above distinctions will be more fully explained—at present it is sufficient to point at them in order to show what are the great lines of duty from man to man.

Our duty to others, therefore, may be all comprehended in these two particulars, justice and mercy.

Justice consists in giving or permitting others to enjoy whatever they have a perfect right to—and making such an use of our own rights as not to encroach upon the rights of others. There is one writer, David Hume, who has derided the duty of justice, resolving it wholly into power and conveniency, and has affirmed that property is common, than which nothing can be more contrary to reason; for if there is any thing clear as a dictate of reason, it is, that there are many rights which men severally possess, which others ought not to violate. The

foundation of property in goods, I will afterwards show you, is plainly laid in the social state.

Another virtue which this author ridicules is chastity. This however will be found to be included in justice, and to be found in the sentiments of all nations, and to have the clearest foundation both in nature and public utility.

Mercy is the other great branch of our duty to man, and is the exercise of the benevolent principle in general, and of the several particular kind affections. Its acts, generally speaking, belong to the class of imperfect rights, which are strongly binding upon the conscience, and absolutely necessary to the subsistence of human society ; yet such as cannot be enforced with rigor and precision by human laws.

Mercy may be generally explained by a readiness to do all the good offices to others that they stand in need of, and are in our power, unless they are opposed to some perfect right, or an imperfect one of greater moment.



## LECTURE IX.

3. **T**HE third class of moral duties is what contains our duty to ourselves.

This branch of duty is as real and as much founded in the moral principle, as any of the former—Conscience as clearly testifies the evil of neglecting it—and vicious conduct in this respect does generally lead us directly not only to misery, but to shame.

We may, I think, divide our duties to ourselves into two heads, which will be both distinct and comprehensive, (1.) Self-government. (2.) Self-interest.

The first of these is to keep our thoughts, desires and affections, in due moderation. If it be asked what is due moderation, I answer it may be discovered three ways. (1.) When the indulgence interferes with our duty to God, (2.) To ourselves, and, (3.) to our neighbor.

When our thoughts or desires are such as to be contrary to the love, fear, or trust we owe to God, then they are to be restrained and brought into subjection—Thus are generated the virtues of *humility contentment, patience,* and such as are allied to them.

When our thoughts and inward temper are such as to be any way injurious to others, they must be governed and restrained; hence arises the obligation to guard against all the immoral passions, which will produce meekness and composure of spirit.

And when we have got but a little experience, we shall speedily find that an excessive indulgence of any passion, *love, hatred, anger, fear,* discomposes us exceedingly, and is an evil instead of a blessing. We shall therefore perceive the necessity of continence, self-denial, fortitude, restraint, and moderation in every thing how good soever. (2.) The other general branch of duty to ourselves may be called self-interest. This, taking in natural religion, includes our relation to the Divine Being, and attending particularly to that of procuring his favor. Therefore it is a prime part of our duty to ourselves, to guard against any thing that may be hurtful to our moral character, or religious hopes.

2. We ought to be active and diligent in acquiring every thing necessary for life and comfort. Most of our duties to ourselves, resemble the duties of justice and mercy to others. If there are certain offices due to them, and if they have rights and claims in consequence of their state and relations, the same is the case with ourselves. We are therefore to take all proper methods to preserve and acquire the goods both of mind and body. To acquire knowledge, to preserve health, reputation, possessions.

The whole must be kept within some limits; chiefly we must guard against interfering with the rights of others.

It will be proper before concluding this part of the subject, to take notice of the opinions of the ancients, particularly their enumeration of what are called the cardinal virtues.

Their cardinal virtues were *justice, temperance, prudence* and *fortitude*. Justice included the whole of our duty to our neighbor. Humanity or benevolence you see is kept out of view, though a virtue of the first class; but all its exercises are with them ranked under the heads of justice; temperance was by them considered as much more extensive than being moderate in the use of meats and drink, to which the English word is chiefly confined. The *Ēgkrateia* of the Greeks, signified not only abstinence in meats and drink, but continence or purity, and a moderation of all our desires of whatever kind, of fame and riches, as well as pleasures. Prudence, even in the way they generally explain it, seems scarcely to be a moral, or so much as a natural quality. Prudence they say is taking the wisest course to obtain some good end. The placing this among the cardinal virtues will show how matters stood among them. Great parts or talents were in high esteem. They did not very fully distinguish between a good man and a great man. Prudence seems rather an embellishment of an illustrious character, than a moral virtue. Another reason why Prudence seems to have held such a place among the ancients was, that their chief foundation for virtue was interest, or what will produce happiness. The inquiry upon this subject was, what is the *summum bonum*. Now to this, prudence is very necessary. Agreeably to all this, they commonly called the virtuous man, the *wise man*, and he was always an hero.

Fortitude is easily understood, and may be considered in two lights, as active and passive, which gives the two great virtues of patience and valor.

One of the most remarkable qualities in morals among the ancients, was the debate upon the Stoical position, that pain is no evil, nor pleasure any good. This arises from comparing external things with the temper of the mind, when it appears without doubt that the latter is of much more consequence to happiness than the former. They used to reason thus,—Outward possessions when bestowed upon a bad man, make him no better but worse, and finally more miserable. How then can these be



goods in themselves, which become good or evil, according to the state of him that uses them. They were therefore called the things indifferent. There was something strained and extravagant in some of their writings, and perhaps ostentatious, yet a great deal of true and just reasoning. The most beautiful piece of antiquity in the moral way, is the *Tablature of Cebes*.

Let us now recapitulate what we have gone through, and then add some observations or corollaries on the morality of actions. We have considered,

1. The nature of man.
2. The nature, foundation, and obligation of virtue.
3. Have given a sort of general analysis of the moral laws as pointing out our duty to God, to our neighbor, and ourselves.

We must now consider all morality in general as conformity to a law. We have seen above whence this law is collected, and derives its authority. Men may differ, not only as to the foundation but as to the import or meaning of the law in some particulars, but it is always supposed that the law exists.

The morality of actions may be considered in two different lights, but these very nearly related to each other. (1) As they are ranked and disposed of by the law itself. (2) in the conformity or opposition of the actions to the law.

Under the first view an action is either commanded, forbidden or permitted.

Commanded duties oblige absolutely, and as casuists used to say, *semper non vero ad semper*, that is to say, they are obligatory upon all persons, at the seasons that are proper for them, but not upon every person at every time; because then there could be but one moral duty, all men are obliged to worship God, but this only at certain times, other duties have also their place and season.

Prohibitions oblige *semper et ad semper*, all persons at all times.—We must not lie—this obliges every man at every moment, because no time or circumstances can make it lawful.

On permission we may observe several things.

1. There is (as some say,) a two-fold permission, the one full and absolute, which not only gives us a right to certain things with impunity, but implies a positive approbation of the legislator, and the other implies only that the action is left at large, being neither commanded nor forbidden.

2. Permission in natural laws always implies the approbation of the legislator, and whatever is done in consequence of it, is innocently done, for God and conscience do not permit or pass uncondemned, any bad action.

3. It is otherwise in human laws, if they leave any action open, it may be done with impunity, and yet by no means with approbation. I may have a right by human laws to say things in a covered or couched manner, which yet may carry in them the highest degree of malignity.

4. The truth is, when we consider the morality of action in a strict or proper manner, the whole class of permitted actions vanishes. They become by their intention and application either good or bad.

Considering actions in their conformity to the laws, a distinction arises similar to the former, into *good* or just, *bad* and indifferent.

A good action must be wholly conformable to the law in its substance, and in all its circumstances. It is not enough that it be materially good, the time must be proper, and the intention laudable.

A bad action is that which, either in substance or in any circumstance, is contrary to the law.

In consequence of this, strictly and properly speaking, all truly good or just actions are equally so, arising from a perfect conformity to the law, as all straight lines are equally straight, but all bad actions are not equally bad, as lines may be bent in a different degree from the straight direction.

Indifferent actions, if there are any truly such) are those that are permitted, and neither commanded nor forbidden by the law, but when we consider the spirit and

principles of true morality, we shall find no actions wholly indifferent, because we are under an obligation to promote the happiness of ourselves and others, to which every action may be applied immediately or remotely; and subjection to the Divine will may make a part of our design, in doing or forbearing any thing whatever.

In estimating the morality of actions several circumstances must be considered, (1) the good done (2) the principle from which it flows,—self-interest of the contracted kind, benevolence or hope of reward. (3) The hindrances or opposition that must be surmounted, as interest, inclination, difficulty. An objection seems to arise from this, not easily solved. If an action is the more virtuous, the more opposition, internal and external, that is overcome, then the longer a man has had the habit of virtue, and the more completely it is formed, the less merit in his actions. It seems also to take away all moral excellence from the Deity, who cannot be supposed to have the least opposition to encounter, either from within or without. This objection cannot be easily removed, but by saying, that the opposition is in no other respect an evidence of the good moral temper, but as it shows the strength of that inclination that overcomes it, and therefore, when a moral habit is so strong as to overcome and annihilate all opposition, it is so much the more excellent.

An action good in itself, may be made criminal by an evil intention.

But no action, in itself evil, can be made lawful or laudable by a good intention.

A man is obliged to follow the dictates of conscience; yet a mistaken conscience does not wholly absolve from guilt, because he ought to have been at more pains to obtain information.

An action is not virtuous in proportion to its opposite being vicious. It is no high degree of virtue to love our offspring or provide for a family; but to neglect either is exceedingly vicious.

One phenomenon in human nature, nearly connected with the moral feelings, has been particularly considered by some writers, viz. that there is such a disposition in the generality of men to crowd to see objects of distress, as an extraordinary public execution. What is the desire that prompts to it? Is the sight of misery a pleasant feeling? Some resolve it merely into curiosity, which they consider as a natural and original impression. But there seems to be something in it different from novelty. Others say it arises from benevolence, and is an exercise of compassion, and that we have a strong natural impulse to the affection of pity, and really feel a pleasure in indulging it. But though every well disposed mind is highly susceptible of pity, at least of all the benevolence and help that pity suggests when the object presents itself, we can scarcely say that the feeling is pleasant, or that we have a desire after such objects, in order to the gratification.

They who reason on the selfish scheme, as usual, resolve all into private interest; they say we delight to see objects of distress, because it gives us a secret satisfaction in reflecting upon our own different situation. I believe there is such a satisfaction in narrow and contracted minds; but to those tolerably disposed it has an opposite effect; it makes them rather consider the calamities which they themselves are subject to, than those from which they are free.

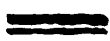
Perhaps it would be best to take more than one principle to account for this effect—curiosity must make a part, and probably humanity and compassion, also contribute to it. It seems to be thought some little alleviation to the sufferer's misery when others pity him—Yet prudent persons knowing how unavailing this pity is often choose to be absent.

Sympathy is a particular affection in aid of benevolence—Yet like all other private affections, when it is not moderated, it prevents its own effect—One deeply affected with the view of an object of distress, is often thereby incapacitated to assist him.

Another question is sometimes subjoined to the above, why men have pleasure in seeing Tragedy, which is a stri-

king representation of a melancholy catastrophe. As far as the subject differs from comedy, it may be accounted for on the same principles with the desire to see objects of distress—But one powerful principle leads both to Comedy and Tragedy—a pleasure in the imitative arts, an exact portrait of any object whatever, gives the highest pleasure, even though the object itself were originally terrible or disgusting.

We see plainly, that an indulgence of the pleasure given by a fine performance, is what crowds the theatre. Unhappily, to give greater pleasure to a corrupt mind, they often invent such scenes, and conduct the matter so, as to make the stage the greatest enemy to virtue and good morals.



## LECTURE X.

### OF POLITICS.

**P**OLITICS contain the principles of social union, and the rules of duty in a state of society.—This is but another and more complete view of the same things, drawn out more fully, and applied to particular cases. Political law is the authority of any society stamped upon moral duty.

The first thing to be considered, in order to see upon what principles society is formed, is the state immediately previous to the social state. This is called the state of nature—Violent and unnecessary controversies have been made on that subject. Some have denied that any such thing ever existed, that since there were men, they have always been in a social state. And to be sure, this is so far true, that in no example or fact, could it ever last long. Yet it is impossible to consider society as a voluntary union of particular persons, without supposing those persons in a state somewhat different, before this union took place—There are rights therefore belonging to a state of nature, different from those of a social state.

And distinct societies or states independent, are at this moment in a state of nature, or natural liberty, with regard to each other.

Another famous question has been, Is the state of nature a state of war or peace? Hobbes, an author of considerable note, but of very illiberal sentiments in politics, is a strenuous advocate for a state of nature being a state of war. Hutchinson and Shaftsbury plead strongly, that a state of nature is a state of society. However opposite and hostile their opinions seems to be with regard to each other, it seems no hard matter to reconcile them. That the principles of our nature lead to society—that our happiness and the improvement of our powers are only to be had in society, is of the most undoubted certainty—and that in our nature, as it is the work of God, there is a real good-will and benevolence to others: but on the other hand, that our nature as it is now, when free and independent, is prone to injury, and consequently to war, is equally manifest, and that in a state of natural liberty, there is no other way but force, for preserving security and repelling injury. The inconveniences of the natural state are very many.

One class of the above-mentioned writers say, that nature prompts to society, and the other, that necessity and interest obliges to it—both are equally true.

Supposing then the state of natural liberty antecedent to society to be a reality, let us consider the perfect and imperfect rights belonging to that state, that we may see more distinctly how, and why they differ in a social state.

The perfect rights in a state of natural liberty, are, (1.) a right to life. (2.) A right to employ his faculties and industry for his own use. (3.) A right to things that are common and necessary, as air, water, earth. (4.) A right to personal liberty. (5.) A power over his own life, not to throw it away unnecessarily, but for a good reason. (6.) A right of private judgment in matters of opinion. (7.) A right to associate, if he so incline, with any person or persons, whom he can persuade (not force)—Under this is contained the right to marriage. (8.) A right to character, that is to say, innocence (not fame)—It is easy

to perceive that all these rights belong to a state of natural liberty, and that it would be unjust and unequal for any individual to hinder or abridge another in any one of them, without consent, or unless it be in just retaliation for injury received.

The imperfect natural rights are very numerous, but they are nearly the same in a state of nature as in a state of society, as gratitude, compassion, mutual good offices—if they will be no injury to the person performing them—Indeed they must be the same in a natural and in a social state, because the very definition of an imperfect right is such as you cannot use force to obtain. Now, what you ought not to use force to obtain in a state of natural liberty, human laws in a well constituted state will not give you.

Society I would define to be an association or compact of any number of persons, to deliver up or abridge some part of their natural rights, in order to have the strength of the united body, to protect the remaining, and to bestow others.

Hobbes and some other writers of the former age, treat with great contempt, this which is generally called the social compact.—He insists that monarchy is the law of nature. Few are of his sentiments now, at least in Britain, yet it is proper to trace them to the foundation.

It is to be admitted, that society began first insensibly by families, and almost necessarily. Hence parental authority was the first law, and perhaps it extended for two or three generations in the early ages. Though the patrons of monarchy use this as an argument, it does not favor their scheme—This which they call the patriarchal government, could not extend far ; or supposing it could, there would be but one rightful king in all the earth, the lineal descendant of Adam's eldest son, not to mention that the very order of succession in hereditary right, has never been uniform, and is but of late, settled in the European nations.

The truth is, though man for wise reasons, afterwards to be noticed, continues longer in a family dependance, than other animals, yet in time he becomes sui juris, and when their numbers are increased, when they either con-



tinue together, or remove and form distinct societies, it is plain that there must be supposed an expressed or implied contract.

Some say there is no trace or record of any such contract in the beginning of any society. But this is no argument at all, for things inseparable from, and essential to any state, commonly take place so insensibly, that their beginning is not observed.

When persons believe themselves upon the whole, rather oppressed than protected in any society, they think they are at liberty, either to rebel against it, or fly from it; which plainly implies that their being subject to it, arose from a tacit consent.

Besides in migrations and planting of colonies, in all ages, we see evident traces of an original contract and consent taken to the principles of union.

From this view of society as a voluntary compact, results this principle, that men are originally and by nature equal, and consequently free.

Liberty either cannot, or ought not to be given up in the social state—The end of the union should be the protection of liberty, as far as it is a blessing. The definition of liberty in a constituted government, will be afterwards explained.

Some observe, that few nations or societies in the world have had their constitutions formed on the principles of liberty: perhaps not one twentieth of the states that have been established since the beginning of the world have been settled upon principles altogether favorable to liberty. This is no just argument against natural liberty and the rights of mankind; for it is certain, that the public good has always been the real aim of the people in general, in forming and entering into any society. It has also constantly been at least the professed aim of legislators. Therefore the principle seems to have been admitted, only they have failed or been disappointed in practice, by mistake or deceit. Though perhaps not one twentieth part of mankind have any tolerable skill in the fine arts, it does not follow that there are no such arts, or that the principles of them are not founded in nature.

Reason teaches natural liberty, and common utility recommends it. Some nations have seen this more clearly than others, or have more happily found the means of establishing it.

Here perhaps we should consider a little the question, whether it is lawful to make men or to keep them slaves, without their consent? This will fall afterwards to be considered more fully: in the mean time, observe that in every state there must be some superior and others inferior, and it is hard to fix the degree of subjection that may fall to the lot of particular persons. Men may become slaves, or their persons and labor be put wholly in the power of others by consent. They may also sometimes in a constituted state, be made slaves by force, as a punishment for the commission of crimes. But it is certainly unlawful to make inroads upon others, unprovoked, and take away their liberty by no better right than superior power.

It has sometimes been doubted, whether it is lawful to take away the liberty of others for life, even on account of crimes committed. There can be no strong reason given against this, except that which is supposed to operate in Great Britain against making malefactors slaves, that it would be unfavorable to rational liberty to see any rank of men in chains. But setting this aside, it seems plain that if men may forfeit their lives to the society, they may also forfeit their liberty, which is a less precious blessing. It seems also more agreeable both to equity and public utility to punish some sort of crimes, with hard labor, than death. Imprisonment for life, has been admitted and practised by all nations—Some have pleaded for making slaves of the barbarous nations, that they are actually brought into a more eligible state, and have more of the comforts of life, than they would have had in their own country. This argument may alleviate, but does not justify the practice. It cannot be called a more eligible state, if less agreeable to themselves.

Upon the whole, there are many unlawful ways of making slaves, but also some that are lawful—And the practice seems to be countenanced in the law of Moses, where rules are laid down for their treatment, and an estimation

of injuries done to them, different from that of free men. I do not think there lies any necessity on those who found men in a state of slavery, to make them free to their own ruin. But it is very doubtful whether any original cause of servitude can be defended, but legal punishment for the commission of crimes. Humanity in the manner of treating them is manifestly a dictate of reason and nature, and I think also of private and public utility, as much as of either.

The next step in opening the principles of the social state, is to consider the foundation, establishment and extent of *Property*. Some begin this by considering the property of man in general, in the inferior creatures. Has he any right to use the lower irrational animals for labour, or food, or both?

It is needless to refine too much upon this subject. To use them for labor seems evidently lawful, as they are inferior, with strength fitted for it, and strength which they could not employ for the improvement and cultivation of the earth without the direction of man. They seem to be to man, some how as the body to the mind. They help to produce food for themselves and so increase their number and receive much more sensual pleasure, sharing in all respects with their masters the fruit of their toil.

To use them for food is thus argued to be lawful.—If suffered all to live, they would become too numerous, and could not be sustained, so that death to many of them in a much worse way must be the certain consequence. Further, nature seems to dictate the use of them for food in the plainest manner, for they are food for one another in a regular gradation, the insect to the birds and fishes, many of them to the beasts, and the smaller to the greater, or the tamer to the more rapacious of every order.

If we take tradition or Revelation for our guide, the matter is plain, that God made man lord of the works of his hands, and put under him all the other creatures. Only it appears that the grant of animal food was made no earlier than to Noah after the flood.

Let us next consider the establishment of private property. Private property is every particular person's having a confessed and exclusive right to a certain portion of the goods which serve for the support and conveniency of life.

In a very imperfect state of society community of goods may subsist in a great degree, and indeed its subsisting is one of the surest signs of an imperfect state of society. Some attempts have been made in civilized states to introduce it, but without any considerable effect, except in Sparta, the constitution of which was very singular. In small voluntary societies, especially of the religious kind, it may be established, and will continue so long as the morals of the society are pure. But in civil society fully formed, especially if the state is at all extensive or intended to be so, private property is essentially necessary, and founded upon the reason of things and public utility. The reasons of it are (1) without private property no laws would be sufficient to compel universal industry. There never was such a purity of manners and zeal for the public, in the individuals of a great body, but that many would be idle and slothful, and maintain themselves upon the labor of others.

2. There is no reason to expect in the present state of human nature, that there would be a just and equal distribution to every one according to his necessity, nor any room for distinction according to merit.

3. There would be no place for the exercise of some of the noblest affections of the human mind, as charity, compassion, beneficence, &c.

4. Little or no incitement to the active virtues, labor, ingenuity, bravery, patience, &c.

Some have laid down schemes for making property common, as Sir Thomas Moore in his *Utopia*; but in general they are chimerical and impracticable. There is no instance in fact where any state that made a figure in the social life, had their goods wholly in common. Sparta had the most of it, but it was a very small state, and limited in its views; besides there was something so singular in the whole constitution of the Spartan government, that its sub-

sisting so long, remains a phenomenon for politicians and reasoners yet to account for.

Supposing private property to be essential, or at least useful in the social state, the next question is, how does this property take its rise, or by what ways is it acquired.

The original ways of acquiring property may be reduced to these two (1) Prior occupation (2) our own industry.

As to the first of these, it may be analysed thus. Of the things that lay in common for the use of man, I have a right to take what is convenient for me, and after I have taken it, no body can have a better right, nor consequently any title to take it from me.

But many questions difficult to be resolved arise from the application of this principle. How far does this right extend? Must I take only what is sufficient for the present moment, or may I provide for future necessities and enjoyment. In vacant lands must I take only what I and my present followers can sufficiently occupy, or may I touch a continent and call it mine, though I shall not be able to fill it in many ages. I answer common utility must be the rule in all these cases, and any thing more particular, must be reserved till we come to the law of nations.

Some say that the water in large bays and rivers, ought to be common to all, because it is inexhaustible, and one's using it cannot waste or spoil it for the use of others. But the security of societies will point out the measure of property that must be in all those things.

The extent or object of property contains three particulars (1) a right to the fullest use. Whatever is a person's property, he has a right to do with it as he pleases, with this single exception, if it may be called so, that he may not use it to the injury of others. Full property has no other exception, unless you call this an exception, that if any man would wantonly destroy the fruits of the earth, or his habitation; in that case though they were his own, people would hinder him, as supposing him to be mad, and deprive him not only of that liberty, but of all others.

2. Property implies a right of exclusion. We may hinder others from any way intermeddling with what is our property. This seems essential to the idea. Giving a full right to one, implies that others have none.

3. It implies a power to alienate. That is to say, a right of alteration, commutation, donation, during life, and disposal at death. Thus property is said to be perpetual.

There are certain things called by Civilians *Res nullius*, such as temples, public edifices, gates and walls of cities, &c. Temples used to be said to be given to God, and in the laws of civilized states, attention is paid to this circumstance. But as to the property or use, the case of them and of all the other things mentioned, is very clear. They are under the inspection of the magistrate, or such persons as represent the community, and are by them kept for common use.



## LECTURE XI.

**I**N the social life in general we may consider, (1) domestic, (2) civil society.

The first of these we must consider as implying and made up of several relations, the chief of which are (1) the relation of marriage, (2) That of parents and children, (3) that of master and servant.

In marriage we ought to observe that though all creatures may be said to be propagated in a way in a great degree similar, yet there is something peculiarly distinguished, dignified and solemn, in marriage among men. This distinction is necessary, and founded in reason and nature.

Human creatures at their birth are in a state weaker and more helpless than any other animals. They also arrive much more slowly at maturity, and need by far most assistance and cultivation. Therefore a particular union of the parents is absolutely necessary, and that upon such powerful principles as will secure their com-

mon care. Marriage is a relation expressly founded upon this necessity, and must be so conducted as to ascertain the property of the offspring, and to promise the most assiduous, prudent and extensive care.

This is the foundation of marriage drawn from the public good. But we ought also to observe that man is manifestly superior in dignity to the other animals, and it was intended that all his enjoyments, and even his indulgence of instinctive propensities, should be of a more exalted and rational kind than theirs. Therefore the propensity of the sexes to one another, is not only reined in by modesty, but is so ordered as to require that reason and friendship, and some of the noblest affections, should have place. And it is certain that they have, if not a more violent, at least a more lasting and uniform influence, in the married state, than sensual desire.

It is further observed by moral writers, that though beauty and personal attraction may be considered as the first motives, yet these are always supposed to be indications of something excellent in the temper within. So that even love of beauty, in man, is an attachment to moral excellence. Let a person attend with seriousness and he will find that the utmost perfection of form in an idiot, or one thoroughly known to be of a very bad temper, is really no object of desire. Though in those who are little known, it is apt to prejudice the ignorant and unwary to judge favorably of the person.

The particulars which reason and nature point out, relating to the marriage contract, are as follow :

1. That it be between one man and one woman. Polygamy is condemned by nature ; for it is found that the males born, are to the females as 13 to 12, or as some say, as 20 to 19, the overplus being to supply the greater waste of the male part of the species by war and dangerous occupations, hard labor, and travelling by land and sea.

2. The fundamental and essential part of the contract is fidelity and chastity. This must immediately appear to be essential to the purpose of the union. Some writers say that this is especially binding upon the woman, in order to ascertain the offspring ; but every body must see



the absurdity of any distinction, because the contract would neither be equal, nor likely to be steadily observed if it were not mutual. Besides, as a late author has well observed, if chastity be a female virtue, how can men be unchaste without infringing upon it?

3. The contract should be for life—otherwise it would be short, uncertain, and mutual love and industry greatly weakened.

4. If superiority and authority be given to the man, it should be used with so much gentleness and love as to make it a state of as great equality as possible. Hutchinson and some other writers say there should be no superiority, and that their property being common, should not be alienated by the one without the other. Others think that perfect equality of power in two persons is not consistent with order, and the common interest, and therefore give authority to the man, and the laws of most nations give the man the disposal of property, with the reservation of particular rights to the woman.

Some heathen writers gave the man power of life and death over the woman, a thing evidently barbarous and unjust.

5. Marriages are sometimes dissolved by divorces, which our law permits only on three accounts—adultery, wilful and obstinate desertion, and incapacity. The first two of these founded on the New Testament, and the last on reason, being not so properly a dissolution of a marriage, as a declaration that it was void from the beginning, and and never took place.

Some writers of moral philosophy add as causes of divorce, contrariety of temper, incurable diseases, and such as would infect the offspring. But none of them seem of sufficient moment. The first would be an evident temptation to causeless and wanton separations—and all the three may be guarded against by previous caution.

Hutchinson observes that in all nations, marrying in near degrees of consanguinity or affinity has been avoided and abhorred; and he adds, that the natural and general abhorrence of it has been greater than reason seems to

dictate. Hence it has been conjectured to have been early tradition or revelation—and men have exercised their invention in finding out the true reason or ground of the prohibition.

One reason assigned is, because if marriage were lawful to near relations, their frequent intercourse would be a strong temptation to uncleanness.

Another; that if permitted, it would frequently confound or invert the duties of relations, by setting some above others whom they formerly used to obey.

A third reason, and perhaps the best is, that abstaining from blood relations in this voluntary contract extends the social ties, and produces a greater number of family relations.

Whatever be the moral reasons, it seems to have a strong sanction in nature; for it is observed that marriage between near relations, especially if repeated, greatly weakens the human race.

As to the extent of this prohibition, it has been various in different nations, but the most prevailing has been to forbid all within three degrees. The degrees are reckoned by the steps of descent between the parties and the common parent. Parent and child is the first—child and child, the second—child and grand-child, the third—and two grand-children or first cousins the fourth—when it becomes lawful.

### *Relation of Parents and Children.*

The first thing to be observed is, that this relation is distinguished by the strongest instinct of parental affection. This seems necessary, as the education of children is a duty requiring so much time, care and expence, which nothing but the most rooted affection would submit to.

The rights of the parent may be summed up in these two: 1. Authority, which requires subjection in the children. 2. A right to a grateful return in due time from the children. The first is a perfect right, as far as it extends, but must be limited.

Some nations have given parents the power of life and death over their children, and Hobbes insists that children are the goods and absolute property of their parents, and that they may alienate them and sell them either for a time or for life. But both these seem ill founded, because they are contrary to the end of this right, viz. instruction and protection. Parental right seems in most cases to be limited by the advantage of the children.

Children are no doubt to judge for themselves in matters of religion when they come to years ; though the parents are under the strongest obligation to instruct them carefully to the best of their judgment. Those who insist, that to leave them their judgment free they ought not to be taught any principles, ought to consider that their scheme is impracticable and absurd. If the parents do not instruct them, they will imbibe prejudices and contract habits, perhaps of the worst kind, from others.

Children in most nations are considered as having a right exclusive of their parents, to property given them by others.

Many nations have given the parents a right to dispose of their children in marriage ; but this seems to be carrying parental authority too far, if it be made absolute, because it puts in the power of the parent to dispose of what is most essential to their happiness through the whole of their future life. Yet it seems very contrary to reason and nature, that children in early life should dispose of themselves in marriage without consulting their parents.

Since we have denied the power of life and death to parents, it will be asked what is the sanction of their authority ? I answer, moderate correction in early life, and as the very highest punishment, expulsion from their family, or a forfeiture of the privileges which they despise.

As to the right to a grateful return, it is an imperfect right, but of the strongest kind—sometimes the civil authority interposes, and obliges children to maintain their aged parents.

To the disgrace of human nature it is often observed, that parental affection is much stronger than filial duty. We must indeed acknowledge the wisdom of Providence

in making the instinctive impulse stronger in parents towards their children, than in children towards their parents; because the first is more necessary than the other to the public good; yet when we consider both as improved into a virtuous disposition, by reason and a sense of duty, there seems to be every whit as much baseness in filial ingratitude, as in want of natural affection.

### *Relation of Master and Servant.*

This relation is first generated by the difference which God hath permitted to take place between man and man. Some are superior to others in mental powers and intellectual improvement—some by the great increase of their property through their own, or their predecessors industry, and some make it their choice, finding they cannot live otherwise better, to let out their labor to others for hire.

Let us shortly consider (1.) How far this subjection extends. (2.) The duties on each side.

As to the first it seems to be only that the master has a right to the labors and ingenuity of the servant, for a limited time, or at most for life. He can have no right either to take away life, or to make it insupportable by excessive labor. The servant therefore retains all his other natural rights.

The practice of ancient nations, of making their prisoners of war slaves, was altogether unjust and barbarous; for though we could suppose that those who were the causes of an unjust war deserved to be made slaves; yet this could not be the case of all who fought on their side; besides, the doing so in one instance, would authorize the doing it in any other; and those who fought in defence of their country, when unjustly invaded, might be taken as well as others. The practice was also impolitic, as slaves never are so good or faithful servants, as those who become so for a limited time by consent.

## LECTURE XII.

### OF CIVIL SOCIETY.

**C**IVIL SOCIETY is distinguished from domestic, in the union of a number of families in one state, for their mutual benefit.

We have before affirmed, that society always supposes an expressed or implied contract or agreement. Let us now see what this agreement necessarily implies.

(1.) The consent of every individual to live in, and be a member of that society. (2.) A consent to some particular plan of government. (3.) A mutual agreement between the subjects and rulers; of subjection on the one hand, of protection on the other—These are all implied in the union of every society, and they compleat the whole.

Any objections that may be raised against this, are easily solved. Ex. Gr. Though every individual has not given an actual consent, yet his determination to live with any society implies it. Again, if it be asked how children come to be members of a society; it is answered, they receive the benefits and partake of the rights of the society during the whole time of their education, and as they come to the use of reason, they both claim the privilege, and acquiesce in the duty of citizens—And if they find any thing insupportable in their condition, they may alter it at their pleasure.

Have then all subjects a right when they see fit, to remove from the society in which they are? I answer that in all ordinary cases they ought to have, at least in time of peace. Perhaps it may be affirmed with justice, that they who have enjoyed the privileges of any society in time of peace, if war or danger to the public should arise, they may be hindered from emigrating at that time, and compelled to contribute their share in what is necessary to the common defence.

Whatever is the form of government in any society, the members may be divided into two classes, the *rulers* and the *ruled*, the magistrates and subjects.

The rights of rulers may be divided into essential and accidental: the essential, such as in general must be vested in rulers of every society; the accidental, such as may be given to the rulers in some societies, but not in others.

The essential rights of rulers, are what require most to be enumerated, and these again by some good writers are divided into greater and lesser essentials.

Of the first kind are, (1.) Legislation. (2.) Taxation for the public expence. (3.) Jurisdiction, or the administration of justice. (4.) Representation, or appearing and acting in name of the whole, in all transactions, with adjacent independent states, chiefly for the purposes of making war or peace.

The less essential rights of rulers are many, and they are called less essential, because they may be more varied than the others; such as, coining of money—possessing or managing public edifices—conferring honors on officers, &c.

The rights of subjects in a social state, cannot be enumerated, but they may be all summed up in *protection*, that is to say, those who have surrendered part of their natural rights, expect the strength of the public arm to defend and improve what remains.

It has been often said, that government is carried on by rewards and punishments; but it ought to be observed, that the only reward that a state can be supposed to bestow upon good subjects in general, is protection and defence. Some few who have distinguished themselves in the public service, may be distinguished by particular rewards; but to reward the whole is impossible, because the reward must be levied from those very persons to whom it is to be given.

After what has been said on the foundation of society, viz. consent, perhaps it may be necessary to mention two exceptions.

1. It is said by some with apparent reason, that a few persons if accidentally armed with power, may constrain

a large ignorant rabble to submit to laws which will be for their good. This I would admit in some cases, when there is an evident madness and disorder in the multitude, and when there is a moral certainty that they will afterwards be pleased with the violence done them. But in general it is but a bad maxim that we may force people for their good. All lovers of power will be disposed to think that even a violent use of it is for the public good.

2. Though people have actually consented to any form of government, if they have been essentially deceived in the nature and operation of the laws, if they are found to be pernicious and destructive of the ends of the union, they may certainly break up the society, recall their obligation, and settle the whole upon a better footing.

*Of the different forms of government.*

As soon as men began to consider and compare forms of government, they divided them into three general and simple kinds, (1) monarchy, (2) aristocracy, (3) democracy. These are called simple, because they are clearly distinguishable from each other in their nature and effects. The ancients generally divided the forms of government in this manner, because most of their governments were of one or other of these kinds with very little mixture.

Monarchy is when the supreme power is vested in a single person. Mr. Hutchinson says, monarchy may be either absolute or limited; but this is an inaccuracy, for limited monarchy is one of the mixed kinds of government.

But monarchy may be either temporary or for life. The Roman dictators were absolute for a time, and so long as they continued, the government was purely monarchical, all other powers being dormant.

Monarchy may also be either hereditary or elective.

Aristocracy is that form of government in which the supreme power is lodged with a small number of nobles. This is capable of the same variations as monarchy, and it may be either temporary or perpetual, hereditary or



elective, with this difference, that a temporary or elective aristocracy always puts some power in the hands of the people. The most complete aristocracy is when the ruling party have the power of cooptation within themselves, and can fill up as they please, the vacancies made by deaths or resignation.

Democracy is when the supreme power is left in the multitude. But as in large governments the people in a collective body cannot well meet together, nor could they transact business with any convenience if they did, they may meet by representatives chosen either by the whole, or by particular districts.

From those simple forms are generated many complex forms; two of them may be compounded together, either in equal or in different proportions, or all these may be united, as in the British government.

After pointing out the simple forms of government, it will be proper to make some general observations upon government, and apply them to the various forms, to show whether any of them is preferable to the other, and the advantages and defects of each in particular.

I. There are four things that seem to be requisite in a system of government, and every form is good in proportion as it possesses or attains them, (1) wisdom to plan proper measures for the public good. (2) Fidelity to have nothing but the public interest in view. (3) Secrecy, expedition, and dispatch in carrying measures into execution, and (4) Unity and concord, or that one branch of the government may not impede, or be a hindrance to another.

Monarchy has plainly the advantage in unity, secrecy, and expedition. Many cannot so easily nor so speedily agree upon proper measures, nor can they expect to keep their designs secret; therefore say some, if a man could be found wise enough, and just enough for the charge, monarchy would be the best form of government. Accordingly we find that in the command of a ship, fleet or army, one person is commonly intrusted with supreme power; but this does not apply to states, for many reasons. No man can be found who has either skill suffici-

ent, or if he had, could give attention to the whole departments of a great empire. Besides, in hereditary monarchies there is no security at all for either wisdom or goodness, and an elective monarchy, though it may seem to promise ability, has been always found in experience worse than the other, because there is no reason to expect that an elected monarch will have the public good at heart, he will probably mind only private or family interest.

Aristocracy has the advantage of all the others for *wisdom* in deliberations, that is to say, a number of persons of the first rank must be supposed by their consultations to be able to discover the public interest. But it has very little, or no prospect or fidelity or union. The most ambitious projects, and the most violent and implacable factions often prevail in such states.

Democracy has the advantage of both the others for fidelity ; the multitude collectively always are true in intention to the interest of the public, because it is their own. They are the public. But at the same time it has very little advantage for wisdom, or union, and none at all for secrecy, and expedition. Besides, the multitude are exceeding apt to be deceived by demagogues and ambitious persons. They are very apt to trust a man who serves them well, with such power as that he is able to make them serve him.

If the true notion of liberty is the prevalence of law and order, and the security of individuals, none of the simple forms are favorable to it.

Monarchy every one knows is but another name for tyranny, where the arbitrary will of one capricious man disposes of the lives and properties of all ranks.

Aristocracy always makes vassals of the inferior ranks, who have no hand in government, and the great commonly rule with greater severity than absolute monarchs. A monarch is at such a distance from most of his subjects, that he does them little injury ; but the lord of a petty feignory is a rigorous task-master to his unhappy dependants. The jealousy with which the members of an aristocratical state defend their own privileges is no security

at all for humanity and easy treatment to their inferiors. Example—the Spartans; their treatment of the Helots—and the barons in all the feudal governments, in their treatment of their vassals.

Pure democracy cannot subsist long, nor be carried far into the departments of state—it is very subject to caprice and the madness of popular rage. They are also very apt to chuse a favorite, and vest him with such power as overthrows their own liberty,—examples, Athens and Rome.

Hence it appears that every good form of government must be complex, so that the one principle may check the other. It is of consequence to have as much virtue among the particular members of a community as possible; but it is folly to expect that a state should be upheld by integrity in all who have a share in managing it. They must be so balanced, that when every one draws to his own interest or inclination, there may be an over poise upon the whole.

II. The second observation upon the forms of government is, that where there is a balance of different bodies, as in all mixed forms, there must be always some *nexus imperii*, something to make one of them necessary to the other. If this is not the case, they will not only draw different ways, but will often separate altogether from each other. In order to produce this *nexus*, some of the great essential rights of rulers must be divided and distributed among the different branches of the legislature. Example in the British government, the king has the power of making war and peace,—but the parliament have the levying and distribution of money, which is a sufficient restraint.

III. The third observation is that the ruling part of any state must always have considerable property, chiefly of lands. The reason is, property has such an invariable influence, that whoever possesses property must have power. Property in a state is also some security for fidelity, because interest then is concerned in the public welfare.

For this reason, did men in every state live entirely by agriculture, an agrarian law would be necessary to liberty, because if a vast proportion of property came into a few hands, they would soon take all power to themselves. But trade and commerce supersede the necessity of this, because the great and sudden fortunes accumulated by trade cause a rotation of property.

IV. In a well formed state the subjects should not be too numerous, nor too few. If very numerous, the principles of government cannot exert their force over the whole. The Roman empire fell by its own weight. If the subjects are too few, they are not sufficient to suppress internal insurrections, or repel attacks from without.

V. It is frequently observed, that in every government there is a supreme irresistible power lodged some where, in king, senate, or people. To this power is the final appeal in all questions. Beyond this we cannot go. How far does this authority extend? We answer as far as authority in a social state can extend, it is not accountable to any other tribunal, and it is supposed in the social compact that we have agreed to submit to its decision. There is however an exception, if the supreme power wherever lodged, come to be exercised in a manifestly tyrannical manner, the subjects may certainly if in their power, resist and overthrow it. But this is only when it becomes manifestly more advantageous to unsettle the government altogether, than to submit to tyranny. This resistance to the supreme power however, is subverting the society altogether, and is not to be attempted till the government is so corrupt as that anarchy and the uncertainty of a new settlement is preferable to the continuance as it is.

This doctrine of resistance even to the supreme power, is essentially connected with what has been said on the social contract, and the consent necessary to political union. If it be asked who must judge when the government may be resisted, I answer the subjects in general, every one for himself. This may seem to be making them both judge and party, but there is no remedy. It

would be denying the privilege altogether, to make the oppressive ruler the judge.

It is easy to see that the meaning of this is not, that any little mistake of the rulers of any society will justify resistance. We must obey and submit to them always, till the corruption becomes intolerable, for to say that we might resist legal authority every time we judged it to be wrong, would be inconsistent with a state of society, and to the very first idea of subjection.

The once famous controversy on passive obedience and non-resistance, seems now in our country to be pretty much over ; what the advocates for submission used to say was, that to teach the lawfulness of resisting a government in any instance, and to make the rebel the judge, is subversive of all order, and must subject a state to perpetual sedition ; to which I answer, to refuse this inherent right in every man, is to establish injustice and tyranny, and leave every good subject without help, as a tame prey to the ambition and rapacity of others. No doubt men may abuse the privilege, yet this does not make it void. Besides it is not till a whole people rise, that resistance has any effect, and it is not easy to suppose that a whole people would rise against their governors, unless when they have really received very great provocation. Whereas on the other hand, nothing is more natural than for rulers to grasp at power, and their situation enables them to do it successfully by slow and insensible encroachments. In experience there are many instances of rulers becoming tyrants, but comparatively, very few of causeless and premature rebellions. There are occasional and partial insurrections in every government. These are easily raised by interested persons, but the great majority continues to support order.

VI. Dominion, it is plain from all that has been said, can be acquired justly only one way, viz. by consent. There are two other ways commonly mentioned, both of which are defective, inheritance and conquest. Hereditary power which originally rose from consent, and is supposed to be founded upon the continuance of consent, (as that of the hereditary power in a limited monar-

chy) is as lawful as any, but when they pretend such a right from nature, is independent of the people, it is absurd.

That which is called the right of conquest ought to be exploded altogether. We shall see by and by what is the right of a conqueror in a just war. It was his right before, and he obtains possession of it by conquest. But to found any claim merely on conquest is not a right, but robbery.

Upon the whole, I will conclude with a few remarks upon the spirit and tendency of different forms of government.

1. Monarchical government has a tendency to politeness and elegance of manners, and generally to luxury. The submission and obsequiousness practised at the court of a monarch, diffuses itself through the whole state.

2. Aristocracy narrows the mind exceedingly, and indeed cannot long subsist in a large state. A small aristocracy, however, may subsist as a form of government, as long as any other method, or longer.

3. Democracy tends to plainness and freedom of speech, and sometimes to a savage and indecent ferocity. Democracy is the nurse of eloquence, because when the multitude have the power, persuasion is the only way to govern them.

Let us now ask this short question, what is the value and advantage of civil liberty?

Is it necessary to virtue? This cannot be supposed. A virtuous mind and virtuous conduct is possible, and perhaps equally possible, in every form of government.

Is it necessary to personal private happiness? It may seem so. We see the subjects of arbitrary governments however not only happy, but very often they have a greater attachment to their form of government than those of free states have to their's. And if contentment be necessary to happiness, there is commonly more impatience and discontent in a free state than in any other. The tyranny even of an absolute monarch does not affect with personal injury any of his subjects but a few, and chiefly those who make it their choice to be near him. Perhaps

in free governments the law and the mob do more mischief to private property, than is done in any absolute monarchy.

What then is the advantage of civil liberty? I suppose it chiefly consists in its tendency to put in motion all the human powers. Therefore it promotes industry, and in this respect happiness,—produces every latent quality, and improves the human mind.—Liberty is the nurse of riches, literature and heroism.



## LECTURE XIII.

### OF THE LAW OF NATURE AND NATIONS.

THE next thing in order, is to treat of what is called the law of *nature* and *nations*. It has been before observed, that separate and independent states are with regard to one another in a state of natural liberty, or as man to man before the commencement of civil society. On this several questions arise. (1) Is there any such law? (2) What is the law? (3) What is its sanction, or how is it to be enforced?

That there is such a law is plain from the reasons that show the obligation which one man lies under to another. If there are natural rights of men, there are natural rights of nations. Bodies politic in this view, do not differ in the least from individuals. Therefore as before, reason, conscience and common utility, show that there is a law of nature and nations.

The question what it is? Must be considered in the same manner. I am not able to recollect any perfect or imperfect right that can belong to one man, as distinguished from another, but what belongs to nations, save that there is usually less occasion for the imperfect rights. If we read over the perfect rights, in a state of natural liberty, (page 417) we shall see they all apply to nations.



It will also appear that the imperfect rights apply ; but the occasions of exerting them are much more rare. For example, it is more rare to see a nation in a state of general indigence, so as to require a supply. Yet this sometimes happens. It did so in the case of Portugal, at the time of the great earthquake at Lisbon. And the other nations of Europe lent them assistance. It is also from this principle that ships of different nations, meeting at sea, will do acts of humanity to one another. Sometimes also there are national favors that deserve national gratitude. But this is seldom merited, and I believe, still seldomer paid.

As to the sanction of the law of nature and nations, it is no other than a general sense of duty, and such a sense of common utility, as makes men fear that if they notoriously break these laws, reproach and infamy among all nations will be the effect, and probably resentment and indignation by common consent.

The violation of the natural rights of mankind being a transgression of the law of nature, and between nations as in a state of natural liberty, there being no method of redress but force, the law of nature and nations has as its chief or only object the manner of making *war* and *peace*.

In war it is proper to consider distinctly, (1) The causes for which a just war may be carried on. (2) The time of commencing. (3) The duration. (4) The means by which it may be carried on.

As to the first, the causes of commencing war are according to the principles above laid down, the violation of any perfect right—as taking away the property of the other state, or the lives of its subjects, or restraining them in their industry, or hindering them in the use of things common, &c. There is only one perfect right, the violation of which does not seem to be a cause of war ; I mean that by which we have a right to character. National calumny is scarcely a cause of war, because it cannot be frequent or of great effect. The violation of imperfect rights cannot usually be a cause of war between nations ; yet a case may be supposed, in which even these would be a just cause of war. Suppose a ship of any nation should go

into a port of another, in the greatest distress, and not only the people in general, but the governing part of the society should deny them all assistance—This would be an act of such notorious inhumanity, and of such evil example, that it may justify national resentment; and yet even here, I think there should first be a demand of justice upon the offending persons, before vengeance should be taken upon the state.

These are the just and legitimate causes of making war. Some add to them, that when a nation is seen to put itself in such a situation as to defence, or as to the means of annoying others, that it seems to threaten hostilities, then we are not obliged to wait till it hath committed actual injury, but may put it in a state of incapacity: but there is no other truth in this, but what is founded upon the other; for the preservation of our property implies, that if others take such measures as are not to be accounted for but upon the supposition of an intention of wronging me, it is often easier and safer to prevent and disarm the robber, than to suffer him to commit the violence, and then to strip him and rob him of his prey.

One thing more is to be added, that every nation has a right to join which it pleases of two contending parties, This is easily resolved into the general principles; for the injured party may be supposed to go to war in defence of some perfect right; and the cause being just, the imperfect right of humanity, as well as general and common utility, calls for assistance to the oppressed. So that if we have a right to associate with any nation, we may be entitled to protect their property and rights.

2. As to the time of commencing war, it seems to be no way contrary to natural law to say it is at any time the injured party pleases, after having received an injury; but accident or utility, or a desire in each party to manifest the equity of their cause, has introduced universally the custom of declaring war. This begun very early, and though not of absolute right, having been generally introduced, must be continued, though there is often more of form than of substance in it; for nations do often begin both attack and defence before declaration, as well as make

all the necessary preparations for striking the most effectual blow. The meaning of a declaration of war seems to be, to call upon the injured party to prevent it by reparation—Likewise to manifest to all other states, the justice of the cause.

3. The duration of a war should be according to natural equity, till the injury be completely redressed, and reasonable security given against future attacks: therefore the practice, too common, of continuing a war for the acquisition of empire, is to be condemned. Because one state has done some injury to another, it seems quite unreasonable that they should not only repair the injury, but subvert and ruin the offending state altogether—this would be unreasonable between man and man, if one had wronged another, not only to repair the wrong, but to take all the rest that he had, and reduce his family to beggary. It is even more unreasonable in states, because the offenders in states are not to be supposed to be the whole people, but only the rulers, or perhaps only some individuals.

Perhaps it may be asked what is *reasonable* security against future injury. I answer, between equal independent nations, solemn treaties ought to be considered as security, but if faith has been often broken, perhaps something more may be required. The mutual complaints of nations against each other for breach of faith, makes conquerors often demand such a degree of security, as puts the conquered altogether in their power.

4. As to the legitimate means of carrying on the war, in general, it may be said in one word, by force or open violence. It is admitted on all hands, that this force may be used against the person and goods, not only of the rulers, but of every member of the hostile state. This may seem hard, that innocent subjects of the state should suffer for the folly and indiscretion of the rulers, or of other members of the same state, but it is unavoidable. The whole individuals that compose a state, are considered but as one body; it would be impossible for an enemy to distinguish the guilty from the innocent; and when men submit to a government, they risk their own possessions on the same bottom with the whole in return for the benefits of society.

Open violence may be said to have no bounds, and therefore every method that can be invented, and the most deadly weapons of annoyance may seem to be permitted—But from what has been said above, and upon the principles of general equity, all acts of cruelty and inhumanity are to be blamed,—and all severity that has not an immediate effect in weakening the national strength of the enemy is certainly inhumanity—Such as killing prisoners whom you can keep safely—killing women and children—burning and destroying every thing that could be of use in life.

The use of poisoned weapons has been also generally condemned—the poisoning of springs or provisions.

To the honor of modern times, and very probably, I think, to the honor of christianity, there is much more humanity in the way of carrying on war than formerly.

To aim particularly at the life of a leader or person of chief note, seems to have nothing in it unjust or improper, because the more important the life, it does more toward the finishing of the war; but what many seem to admit, the bribing of his own people to assassinate him privately, I cannot think honorable or fair.

A question is often moved in morals, how far it is lawful to deceive an enemy, especially if we hold the general and universal obligation of truth. To this it may be answered, in the first place that we may certainly with great justice conceal our own designs from an enemy—as indeed we may generally from friends, by silence and guarding against every circumstance that may betray them. Neither do I think there is any thing at all blame-worthy in a general of an army using ambiguous signs, as feigned marches of a part or the whole, putting up lights or such things, because after a declaration of war he does not pretend to give information to his enemy of his motions, nay it is expected on both sides that they will do the best they can to over-reach one another in point of prudence. Yet I can scarce think it right to employ people to go to the enemy and professing to be sincere, tell direct falsehoods, and deceive them by that false intelligence.

It is the custom of all to send spies to discover the enemy's designs, and also to bribe some of the enemies themselves to discover the designs of their leaders—The last of which is, I think, at least of a doubtful nature, or rather unjust—Though sending spies is by all approved, yet (what may seem a little unaccountable) such spies are always punished with instant death by the opposite side when detected. The reason probably is, that pretending friendship they have a right to consider them as traitors—Or as they are in an act of hostility, they kill them, as they would do an enemy in battle when in their power.

These circumstances apply to all war in general : but there is a distinction of wars by civilians into two kinds, *solemn* and *civil*. The first includes all wars between states formerly independent, the other, internal insurrections of a part of one government against another.

There has generally been a great difference in the behavior of the opposite parties in these different wars. In solemn wars there is a presumption of integrity in the plurality on both sides, each believes his own cause to be just. On this account they are to be treated with the more humanity. In civil wars the insurgents are considered as making unjust resistance to the ruling part of the society, and therefore guilty of the greatest crimes against society. Therefore they are often treated with great rigor, and when taken in battle, reserved to solemn trial and public execution. There is some reason for this in many cases, when it is indeed an unreasonable or unprovoked insurrection of disorderly citizens ; but there are many cases in which the pretences on both sides are so plausible, that the war should be in all respects considered as solemn.

It should be observed, notwithstanding the hostile disposition, there are occasions, both in a treaty for peace and during the continuance of the war, when enemies are under the strongest obligations to sincerity in their behavior to each other.—When proposals are made for accommodating the differences, for a suspension of arms, for an exchange of prisoners, or any thing similar.

It is worth while to inquire, whether the greatest honor and candor in war, with a strict adherence to all the laws above laid down, would give any party a great advantage who should take the liberty of transgressing them—as for example, who should use poisoned weapons—should send people to tell false stories—should bribe subjects to assassinate a hostile prince—I answer, that they would have no advantage at all, but probably the contrary. There is something powerful in magnanimity, which subdues the hearts of enemies; nay, sometimes terrifies them, and particularly inspires a general's army with invincible courage. Besides these, sinister arts are not so terrible as may be imagined—telling false news is as easily discovered as any trick whatsoever.

Prudence and integrity have no need of any assistance from fraud—acts even of generosity, from enemy to enemy, are often as useful as any acts of hostility. There was something very handsome in the Roman general, who refused to avail himself of the treachery of a school-master, as well as whimsical in the way in which he punished the traitor.

### *Of Making Peace.*

As already hinted, all proposals tending to this purpose ought to be made with the utmost sincerity. Of all deceptions in war the most infamous is that of making a treaty, or seeking a conference, only to take advantage of the security of one party to destroy him—by assassination, or by breaking a truce to fight with advantage.

The terms of peace ought to be agreeable to the end of making war. Damages should be repaired, and security given against future injury.

We have often said that nation to nation is as man to man in a state of natural liberty; therefore treaties of peace between nations should in general proceed upon the same principles as private contracts between man and man. There is however an exception, that contracts between individuals are (at least by law) always void when they are the effect of constraint upon one side. Now this

must not hold in treaties between nations, because it would always furnish a pretext for breaking them. On the side of the conquered, a treaty is always in a great degree the effect of necessity.

It is generally, however, laid down in most authors as a principle, that the terms imposed and submitted to may be sometimes so rigorous and oppressive, as to justify the injured party in revolting when they are able. This seems to me to be very lax in point of morals. It would be better I think to say, that the people who made the treaty should not recede from it. Their posterity, however, at some distance, cannot be supposed bound to unjust servitude by the deeds of their fathers.

Let us conclude this subject by a few remarks on the situation of neutral states.

1. Every state has a right, when others are contending, to remain neuter. and assist neither party.

2. They have a right to all their former privileges with both the contending parties—may carry on their traffic with both, and may show all the usual marks of friendship to both—only it has been generally agreed upon that they are not to trade with any of them in certain articles supposed to be of consequence in carrying on war, particularly provisions and arms.

3. Neutral powers should keep their harbours alike open to both for common refreshment, and as an asylum to fly to. And it is held necessary that the contending powers must not carry on their quarrel, nor exercise any hostilities, within the territories of a neutral state.

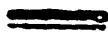
4. Neutral states may purchase moveable goods from any of the contending parties, which have been taken from the other. But not so with respect to lands or forts, because if the other party are able, they will re-take their possessions.

5. Deeds of a violent possessor are held to be valid, that is to say, if a conqueror prevails for a time, and levies tribute from any country, and afterwards the rightful possessor prevails, it would be unjust to demand the tribute again, because the true owner was not able to give protection to the subjects, and what was paid was lost through



his weakness. The same thing may be said of a dependant state ; if it owes any money and service to a supreme state, and an enemy exact it by force, the proper creditor cannot justly demand it again.

On the whole, those things that have been generally received as the law of nature and nations, are founded on the principles of equity, and when well observed, do greatly promote general utility.



## LECTURE XIV.

### JURISPRUDENCE.

**J**URISPRUDENCE is the method of enacting and administering civil laws in any constitution.

We cannot propose to go through a system of civil laws, and therefore what I have in view is to make some preliminary remarks, and then to point out the *object* of civil laws, and the manner of their operation.

1. The first preliminary remark is, that a constitution is excellent when the spirit of the civil laws is such as to have a tendency to prevent offences and make men good, as much as to punish them when they do evil.

This is necessary in some measure ; for when the general disposition of a people is against the laws, they cannot long subsist, even by a strict and rigorous execution on the part of the rulers. There is however more of this in some constitutions than in others. Solon and Xenophon, as well as Lycurgus, seem to have formed their plan very much with this view, to direct the manners of the people in the first place, which will always make the observation of particular laws easy.

But how shall the magistrate manage this matter, or what can be done by law to make the people of any state virtuous ? If, as we have seen above, virtue and piety are inseparably connected, then to promote true religion is the best and most effectual way of making a virtuous and regular people. Love to God, and love to man, is the

substance of religion ; when these prevail, civil laws will have little to do.

But this leads to a very important disquisition, how far the magistrate ought to interfere in matters of religion. Religious sentiments are very various—and we have given it as one of the perfect rights in natural liberty, and which ought not to be alienated even in society, that every one should judge for himself in matters of religion.

What the magistrate may do on this subject seems to be confined to the three following particulars.

(1.) The magistrate (or ruling part of any society) ought to encourage piety by his own example, and by endeavoring to make it an object of public esteem. Whenever the general opinion is in favor of any thing, it will have many followers. Magistrates may promote and encourage men of piety and virtue, and they may discountenance those whom it would be improper to punish.

(2.) The magistrate ought to defend the rights of conscience, and tolerate all in their religious sentiments that are not injurious to their neighbors. In the ancient heathen states there was less occasion for this, because in the system of polytheism the different gods and rites were not supposed to be opposite, but co-ordinate and consistent ; but when there is believed to be but one God, the sentiments about his nature and worship will often be considered as essentially repugnant one to another.

The pretence of infidels, that persecution only belongs to the Christian religion, is absurd ; for the Christian was the first religion that was persecuted, and it was the necessary consequence of saying, that the gods of the heathens were no gods.

At present as things are situated, one of the most important duties of the magistracy is to protect the rights of conscience.

It is commonly said, however, that in case any sect holds tenets subversive of society and inconsistent with the rights of others, that they ought not to be tolerated. On this footing Popery is not tolerated in Great Britain ; because they profess entire subjection to a foreign power, the see of Rome ; and therefore must be in opposition to

the proper interest of their own state; and because violence or persecution for religion is a part of their religion, which makes their prosperity threaten ruin to others—as well as the principle imputed to them, which they deny, that faith is not to be kept with heretics. . But however just this may be in a way of reasoning, we ought in general to guard against persecution on a religious account as much as possible, because such as hold absurd tenets are seldom dangerous. Perhaps they are never dangerous, but when they are oppressed. Papists are tolerated in Holland without danger to liberty. And though not properly tolerated, they are now connived at in Britain.

In ancient times, in great states the censorial power was found necessary to their continuance, which inspected the manners of men. It seems probable, that supporting the religious sects in modern times answers this end, for the particular discipline of each sect, is intended for the correction of manners.

(3.) The magistrate may enact laws for the punishment of acts of profanity and impiety. The different sentiments of men in religion, ought not by any means to encourage or give a sanction to such acts as any of them count profane.

Many are of opinion that besides all this, the magistrate ought to make public provision for the worship of God, in such manner as is agreeable to the great body of the society; though at the same time all who dissent from it, are fully tolerated. And indeed there seems to be a good deal of reason for it, that so instruction may be provided for the bulk of common people, who would, many of them, neither support nor employ teachers, unless they were obliged. The magistrate's right in this case, seems to be something like that of the parent, they have a right to instruct, but not to constrain.

2. The second preliminary remark is, that laws should be so framed as to promote such principles in general, as are favorable to good government, and particularly that principle, if there be one, that gave rise to the constitution, and is congenial to it.

Such a principle as I have in view, is generally the point of honor in a country, and this lawgivers and administrators of law should endeavor to preserve in its full vigor, for whenever it is undermined, the constitution goes to ruin.

Of these principles, sobriety, industry, and public spirit are the chief. Some states are formed to subsist by sobriety and parsimony, as the Lacedemonians.

Industry is the prevailing principle in others, as in Holland. Public spirit in others, as in Greece, ancient Rome, and Britain. Only public spirit may be diversified, sometimes it is a passion for acquiring glory and dominion, as in Rome, and sometimes for preserving liberty, as in Greece and Britain.

When I say that in the management of a state, the utmost attention should be given to the principle of the constitution, to preserve it in its vigor, I mean that though all other crimes are bad, and in part tend to the ruin of a state, yet this is much more the case with crimes against that principle than any other. Any act of immorality was bad at Sparta, but to make poverty and parsimony reproachful, and to introduce fine houses and furniture, and delicate entertainments, would have been instant ruin.

Any act of immorality would be hurtful in Holland, but to make fraudulent bankruptcy less infamous than it is, would immediately destroy them.

Sobriety, industry, and public spirit are nearly allied, and have a reciprocal influence upon one another. Yet there may be a great degree of some of them, in the absence of the others. In Sparta there was much sobriety and public spirit, but little industry. In Athens, industry and public spirit, with very little parsimony.

In opposition to the whole of this, Mandeville wrote a book called *The fable of the Bees*, which seems to be levelled against sobriety, industry and public spirit, all at once; his position is, *that private vices are public benefits*, and that the waste and luxury of one man supplies the wants of another; but it is easy to overthrow his reasoning, for though sober and industrious persons spend

each less than a profuse person, yet sobriety and industry tend much more to population, and by that means they are mutually serviceable to each other. Luxury and vice only waste and destroy, they add nothing to the common stock of property or of happiness. Experience fully justifies this, for though from the luxury of one man another may reap some gain, the luxury of a nation always tends to the ruin of that nation.

3. A third preliminary remark is, that laws may be of two kinds, either written, or in the breasts of magistrates. In every constitution of note, there is something of each of these kinds. It is uncertain whether it is better to have many or few special laws. On the one hand it seems to be the very spirit of a free constitution, to have every thing as strictly defined as possible, and to leave little in the power of the judge. But on the other hand, a multiplicity of laws is so apt to lead to litigation and to end in ambiguity, that perhaps judges of equity, chosen by the district in which they live and are to act, and chosen but for a time, would be a more just and equitable method of ending differences. But the difficulty of settling a constitution so as always to secure the election of impartial judges, has made modern states where there is liberty, prefer a multiplicity of written laws.

4. The last preliminary remark is, that no human constitution can be so formed, but that there must be exceptions to every law. So that there may be in every nation oppression under form of law, according to the old maxim, *summum jus summa injuria*. This further shews the necessity of forming the manners of a people.

After having laid down these preliminaries, we may observe that the object of civil laws may be divided into the three following particulars.

1. To ratify the moral laws by the sanction of the society. The transgression of such laws are called *crimes*, as profanity, adultery, murder, calumny, &c. And they are prosecuted and punished by order of the public, according to the spirit of every constitution.

2. To lay down a plan for all contracts in the com-

merce or intercourse between man and man. To show when a contract is valid, and how to be proved. The transgressions of such laws are called *frauds*. They chiefly regard the acquisition, transmission, or alienation of property.

3. To limit and direct persons in the exercise of their own rights, and oblige them to show respect to the interfering rights of others. This contains the whole of what is called the police of a country.—And the transgression of such laws are called *trespasses*. A number of things in this view may become illegal which before were not immoral.

### *Of the Sanction of the Moral Laws.*

In all polished nations, there are punishments annexed to the transgression of the moral laws, whether against God, our neighbor, or ourselves; in the doing of which, the three following things are chiefly necessary.

(1.) To determine what crimes and what degree of the same crime, are to be inquired into by the civil magistrate. It is of necessity that in a free state crimes should be precisely defined, that men may not be ignorantly or rashly drawn into them. There are degrees of every crime—profanity, impurity, violence, slander, that are blameable in point of morals, nay, even such as may fall under the discipline of a religious society—that if they were made cognisable by the civil magistrate, would multiply laws and trials beyond measure.

(2.) To appoint the methods of ascertaining the commission of crimes. This is usually by testimony in which we are to consider the number and character of the witnesses. Generally through christendom, and indeed most other parts of the world, two witnesses have been esteemed necessary to fix crimes upon an accused person; not but that the positive evidence of one person of judgment and untainted character is, in many cases, sufficient to gain belief and often stronger than two of unknown or doubtful credit, but it was necessary to lay down some rule, and two are required to guard

against the danger of hired evidence, and to give an opportunity of trying how they agree together. To have required more would have made a proof difficult or impossible in many cases.

It seems to be a maxim in law, and founded on reason, that in the case of what are called occult crimes, such as murder, adultery, forgery, and some others, where the nature of the thing shows that there must be a penury of evidence, they sometimes content themselves with fewer witnesses, if there are corroborating circumstances to strengthen their testimony.

It seems to be a matter not easily decided, whether it be agreeable to reason and justice, in the case of very atrocious crimes, that on account of the *atrociousness*, less evidence should be sufficient for conviction, or that *more* should be required. On the one hand, the more atrocious the crime, the greater the hurt to society, and the more need of public vengeance. On the other hand, the more atrocious the crime, and the heavier the punishment, it seems agreeable to justice that the conviction should be upon the more unquestioned evidence. Lawyers are seen to take their common places, sometimes the one way, sometimes the other. It is often thought that in practice, less evidence is sufficient to convict a man of murder, forgery, rape, and other crimes of a deep dye. But I am persuaded that the appearance is owing to the greater and more general eagerness to discover the perpetrators of such crimes. Others are suffered to escape more easily, not that more evidence is necessary, but that it is more difficult to get at the evidence.

Evidence may be distinguished into two kinds, *direct* and *circumstantial*. Direct evidence is when the witnesses swear to their sight or knowledge of the accused committing the crime. Circumstantial, when they only swear to certain facts which cannot be supposed to have existed unless the crime had been committed. As a man found dead—another found near the place—with a weapon bloody,—or clothes bloody, &c. Some have affirmed that circumstantial evidence is stronger than direct, but it must be taken with very great caution and judgment.



(3.) The law is to proportion and appoint the punishment due to every crime when proven.

Punishment in all regular states, is taken wholly out of the hands of the injured persons, and committed to the magistrate, though in many or most cases the injured party is suffered to join the magistrate in the prosecution, and to have a certain claim, by way of reparation, as far as that is practicable.

Therefore the punishment in general must consist of two parts, (1) reparation to the sufferer, (2) the *vindicta publica*, which has sometimes two ends in view, to be an example to others, and to reclaim and reform the offender, as in corporal punishment less than death. Sometimes but one, the good of others in the example, as in capital punishments, and banishment.

The kind of punishment and the degree, is left wholly to different lawgivers, and the spirit of different constitutions. Public utility is the rule. Punishment is not always proportioned to the atrociousness of the crime in point of morals, but to the frequency of it, and the danger of its prevailing.

Some nations require, and some will bear greater severity in punishments than others.

The same or similar conduct often produces opposite effects. Severe laws and severe punishments, sometimes banish crimes, but very often the contrary. When laws are very sanguinary, it often makes the subjects hate the law more than they fear it, and the transition is very easy, from hating the law to hating those who are entrusted with the execution of it. Such a state of things threatens insurrections and convulsions, if not the dissolution of a government.

Another usual effect of excessive severity in laws is, that they are not put in execution. The public is not willing to lend its aid to the discovery and conviction of offenders; so that in time the law itself becomes a mere *brutum fulmen*, and loses its authority.

I may make one particular remark, that though many things are copied from the law of Moses into the laws of the modern nations, yet so far as I know, none of them

have introduced the *lex talionis* in the case of injuries, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, &c. and yet perhaps there are many instances in which it would be very proper. The equity of the punishment would be quite manifest, and probably it would be as effectual a restraint from the commission of injury, as any that could be chosen.

The concluding remark shall be, that it is but seldom that very severe and sanguinary laws are of service to the good order of a state ; but after laws have been fixed with as much equity and moderation as possible, the execution of them should be strict and rigorous. Let the laws be *just* and the magistrate *inflexible*.



## LECTURE XV.

**T**HE second object of civil laws being to regulate the making of contracts, and the whole intercourse between man and man relating to the acquisition, possession and alienation of property, we must consider carefully the nature of

### *Contracts.*

A contract is a stipulation between two parties, before at liberty, to make some alteration of property, or to bind one or both parties to the performance of some service.

Contracts are absolutely necessary in social life. Every transaction almost may be considered as a contract, either more or less explicit.

The principle thing which constitutes a contract is, *consent*. But in some kinds of contracts, viz. the gratuitous, the consent of the receiver is presumed. In the transmission of estates by donation or testament this is presumed—and those who are incapable of giving their consent through infancy, may notwithstanding acquire property and rights. When a man comes into a settled country and purchases property, he is supposed, besides every other part of the bargain, to purchase it under such

conditions, and subject himself to such laws as are in force in that country.

Contracts are said to be of three degrees in point of fulness and precision—(1.) A simple affirmation of a design as to futurity—as when I say to any one that I shall go to such a place to-morrow: this is not properly binding, and it is supposed that many things may occur to make me alter my resolution—yet a frequent alteration of professed purposes gives the character of levity; therefore a prudent man will be cautious of declaring his purposes till he is well determined. (2.) A gratuitous promise of doing some favor to me. This is not made binding in law, nor does it usually convey a perfect right, because it supposes that the person who was the object of good-will, may, by altering his behaviour, forfeit his title to it, or that the person promising may find it much more inconvenient, costly or hurtful to himself, than he supposed; or, lastly, that what was intended as a service if performed, appears plainly to be an injury. In the last case every one must see, that it cannot be binding; but in the two former, I apprehend that in all ordinary cases a distant promise is binding in conscience, though it may not be necessary to make it binding in law. I say all ordinary cases, because it is easy to figure a case in which I may make a promise to another, and such circumstances may afterwards occur as I am quite confident, if the person knew, he would not hold me to my promise.

3. The third degree is a complete contract, with consent on both sides, and obligation upon one or both.

The essentials of a contract which render it valid, and any of which being wanting, it is void, are as follow:

That it be, (1.) Free. (2.) Mutual. (3.) Possible. (4.) Careful. (5.) With a capable person. (6.) Formal.

First. It must be free. Contracts made by unjust force are void always in law, and sometimes in conscience. It must however be unjust force, because in treaties of peace between nations, as we have seen before, force does not void the contract; and even in private life sometimes men are forced to enter into contracts by the order of a

magistrate, sometimes by the threatening of legal prosecution, which does not make them void.

2. They must be mutual, that is, the consent of the one as well as that of the other must be had. Contracts in this view become void either by fraud on one side, or by essential error. If any man contrives a contract so as to bind the other party, and keep himself free, this fraud certainly nullifies the agreement—or if there is an essential error in the person or the thing, as if a person should oblige himself to one man, supposing him to be another.

3. Contracts should be of things evidently possible, and probably in our power. Contracts by which men oblige themselves to do things impossible, are no doubt void from the beginning; but if the impossibility was known to the contracting party, it must have been either absurd or fraudulent. When things engaged for become impossible by the operation of Providence, without a man's own fault, the contract is void, and he is guiltless—as if a man should covenant to deliver at a certain place and time a number of cattle, and when he is almost at the place of destination they should be killed by thunder, or any other accident, out of his power.

4. Contracts must be of things lawful. All engagements to do things unlawful, are from the beginning void; but by unlawful must be understood the violation of perfect rights. If a man oblige himself for a reward to commit murder, or any kind of fraud, the engagement is void; but it was criminal in the transacting, and the reward ought to be returned, or given to public uses. There are many contracts, however, which are very blameable in making, that must, notwithstanding, be kept, and must not be made void in law—as rash and foolish bargains, where there was no fraud on the other side. If such were to be voided, great confusion would be introduced. The cases of this kind are numerous, and may be greatly diversified.

5. Contracts must be made with a capable person, that is to say, of age, understanding, at liberty, &c. It is part of the civil law, or rather municipal law, of every country, to fix the time of life when persons are supposed capable

of transacting their own affairs. Some time must be fixed, otherwise it would occasion numberless disputes, difficult to be decided. A man at the age of fourteen, and a woman at twelve, may choose guardians, who can alienate their property, and at the age of twenty-one they have their estates wholly in their own hand.

6. Contracts must be formal.

The laws of every country limit a great many circumstances of the nature, obligation, extent and duration of contracts

Having pointed out something of the essential characters of all lawful contracts; I observe they may be divided two different ways, (1) contracts are either absolute or conditional. The absolute are such as are suspended upon no condition, but such as are essential to every contract, which have been mentioned above. Such as when a person makes a settlement upon another, without reserve, then whether he behave well or ill, whether it be convenient or inconvenient, it must be fulfilled. Conditional contracts are those that are suspended on any uncertain future contingency, or some performance by the opposite party. Of this last sort are almost all transactions in the way of commerce,—which leads to the (2) way of dividing contracts, into beneficent and onerous. The first is when one freely brings himself under an obligation to bestow any favor or do any service, as donations or legacies, and undertaking the office of guardian of another person's estate.

The onerous contract is when an equal value is supposed to be given on both sides, as is the case for the most part in the alienation of property—and the transactions between man and man, and between society and society.

To this place belongs the question about the lawfulness of lending money upon interest. If we consider money as an instrument of commerce and giving an opportunity of making profit, there seems plainly to be nothing unjust, that the lender should share in the advantage arising from his own property.

The chief thing necessary is, that the state or governing part of the society, should settle the rate of interest, and not suffer it to depend upon the necessity of the poor or the covetousness of the rich. If it is not settled by law, usury will be the certain consequence.

The law of Moses does not seem to have admitted the taking of interest at all from an Israelite. It is thought however, that the main reason of this must have been drawn from something in their constitution as a state that rendered it improper, for if it had been in itself immoral, they would not have been permitted to take it of strangers.

### *Of the Marks or Signs of Contracts.*

All known and intelligent marks of consent, are the signs and means of completing contracts. The chief of these however are words and writing, as being found the most easy and useful. Words are of all others the most natural and proper for giving immediate consent, and writing to perpetuate the memory of the transaction. There are however many other signs that may be made use of, and wherever there is a real purpose of signifying our intention by which others are brought to depend upon it, the engagement is real, and we are bound in conscience, though the law in every country must of necessity be more limited. The whole rests ultimately on the obligation to sincerity in the social life.

This obligation arises from the testimony of conscience, and from the manifest utility and even necessity of sincerity to social intercourse.

Signs are divided into *natural*, *instituted* and *customary*. Natural signs are those which have either a real likeness to the thing signified, or such a known and universal relation to it, that all men must naturally be led from the one to the other—As a picture is a natural sign, because a representation of the thing painted. An inflamed swollen countenance and fiery eyes, are natural signs of anger, because they are the universal effects of that Passion.

Instituted signs, are those that have no other connexion with the thing signified, than what has been made by agreement, as if two persons shall agree between themselves, that if the one wants to signify to the other at a distance, that he wishes him to come to his assistance, he will kindle a fire upon a certain hill, or hang out a flag upon a certain pinnacle of his house, or some part of his ship. Words and writing are properly instituted signs, for they have no relation to the thing signified but what original agreement and long custom has given them.

Customary signs are no other than instituted signs which have long prevailed, and whose institution has either been accidental or has been forgotten. It is also usual to apply the word customary to such signs as depend upon the mode and fashion of particular countries. There are some signs and postures, which though they may seem perfectly arbitrary, have obtained very generally, perhaps universally, as bending down the body, or prostration, as a sign of respect and reverence; kneeling and lifting up the hands, as a sign of submission and supplication.—Perhaps both these are natural, as they put the person into the situation least capable of resistance.

Sometimes there is a mixture of natural and instituted signs, as if a man sends a pair of wings, or the figure of them, to a friend, to intimate his danger and the necessity of flying.

In the use of signs, the great rule of sincerity is, that wherever we are bound, and wherever we profess to communicate our intention, we ought to use the signs in the least ambiguous manner possible. When we have no intention, and are under no obligation to communicate any thing to others, it is of small moment what appearances are; it is their business not to make any unnecessary or uncertain inferences. A light in a house, in the middle of the night, will perhaps suggest most probably, to a traveller accidentally passing, that there is somebody sick in that house; yet perhaps it is extraordinary study or business that keeps some person awake.

Nay when there is no obligation to give, nor any reason for the party to expect true information it is held



generally no crime at all, to use such signs as we have reason to suppose will be mistaken; as when one who does not desire to be disturbed, keeps his chamber close shut, that people may conclude he is not there. When a general of an army puts a fire in the camp, to conceal his march or retreat. And probably none would think it faulty when there was an apprehension of thieves, to keep a light burning in a chamber, to lead them to suppose the whole family is not at rest.

There are some who place in the same rank, evasive phrases, when there is an apparent intention to speak our mind, but no right in the other to obtain it. Such expressions may be strictly true, and yet there is all probability that the hearer will misunderstand them. As if one should ask if a person was in any house, and should receive for answer, he went away yesterday morning; when perhaps he returned the same evening. I look upon these evasions, however, as very doubtful, and indeed, rather not to be chosen, because they seem to contain a profession of telling our real mind.

Some mention ironical speech as an exception to the obligation to sincerity. But it is properly no objection at all, because there is no deception. Truth lies not in the words themselves, but in the use of them as signs. Therefore if a man speak his words in such a tone and manner as the hearer immediately conceives they are to be taken in an opposite sense, and does really take them in the sense the speaker means them, there is no falsehood at all.

Mr. Hutchinson and some others, allow a voluntary intended departure from truth, on occasion of some great necessity for a good end. This I apprehend is wrong, for we cannot but consider deception as in itself base and unworthy, and therefore a good end cannot justify it. Besides, to suppose it were in men's power on a sufficient occasion to violate truth, would greatly destroy its force in general, and its use in the social life.

There are two sorts of falsehood, which because no doubt they are less aggravated than malicious interested lies, many admit of; but I think without sufficient reason.

(1) Jocular lies, when there is a real deception intended, but not in any thing material, nor intended to continue long. However harmless these may seem, I reckon they are to be blamed, because it is using too much freedom with so sacred a thing as truth. And very often such persons, as a righteous punishment in Providence, are left to proceed further, and either to carry their folly to such excess, as to become contemptible, or to go beyond folly into malice.

(2) Officious lies, telling falsehoods to children or sick persons, for their good. These very seldom answer the end that is proposed. They lessen the reverence for truth; and particularly with regard to children, are exceedingly pernicious, for as they must soon be discovered, they lose their force, and teach them to deceive. Truth and authority are methods infinitely preferable, in dealing with children, as well as with persons of riper years.

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## LECTURE XVI.

### OF OATHS AND VOWS.

**A**MONG the signs and appendages of contracts, are oaths and vows.

An oath is an appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, for the truth of what we say, and always expresses or supposes an imprecation of his judgment upon us, if we prevaricate.

An oath therefore implies a belief in God, and his Providence, and indeed is an act of worship, and so accounted in Scripture, as in that expression, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt swear by his name*. Its use in human affairs is very great, when managed with judgment. It may be applied, and indeed has been commonly used (1) in the contracts of independent states, who have no common earthly superior. In ancient times it was usual always to close national treaties by mutual

oaths. This form is not so common in modern times, yet the substance remains; for an appeal is always supposed to be made to God, against the breach of public faith.

(2.) It has been adopted by all nations, in their administration of justice, in order to discover truth. The most common and universal application of it has been to add greater solemnity to the testimony of witnesses. It is also sometimes made use of with the parties themselves, for conviction or purgation. The laws of every country point out the cases in which oaths are required or admitted in public judgment. It is, however, lawful and in common practice, for private persons, voluntarily, on solemn occasions, to confirm what they say, by oath. Persons entering on public offices, are also often obliged to make oath, that they will faithfully execute their trust.

Oaths are commonly divided into two kinds, *assertory* and *promissory*—Those called *purgatory* fall under the first of these divisions. There is perhaps little necessity for a division of oaths, for they do not properly stand by themselves; they are confirmations and appendages of contracts, and intended as an additional security for sincerity, in the commerce between man and man.

Therefore oaths are subject to all the same regulations as contracts; or rather oaths are only lawful, when they are in aid or confirmation of a lawful contract. What therefore voids the one, will void the other, and nothing else. A contract otherwise unlawful, cannot be made binding by an oath: but there must be a very great caution used not to make any unlawful contract, much less to confirm it by an oath.

It is easy to see the extreme absurdity of our being obliged to fulfil a criminal engagement by oath, for it would imply, that out of reverence to God we ought to break his commands; but nothing can be more abominable, than the principle of those who think they may safely take an unlawful oath, because it is not binding: this is aggravating gross injustice by deliberate profanity.

I have said that oaths are appendages to all lawful contracts; but in assertory oaths which are only confirmations of our general obligation to sincerity, it is necessary

not only that what we say be true, but that the occasion be of sufficient moment to require or justify a solemn appeal to God. Swearing on common occasions is unnecessary, rash, profane, and destructive of the solemnity of an oath and its real use.

From the general rule laid down, that oaths are lawful when applied to lawful contracts, it will follow that they become unlawful only when the fulfilling of them would be violating a perfect right ; but perhaps an additional observation is necessary here. Contracts must be fulfilled, when they violate an imperfect right ; whereas some oaths may be found criminal and void, though they are only contrary to imperfect rights : as for example, some persons bind themselves rashly by oath, that they will never speak to or forgive their children, who have offended them. This is so evidently criminal, that nobody will plead for its being obligatory, and yet it is but the violation of an imperfect right. The same persons however, might in many ways alienate their property to the prejudice of their children, by contracts which the law would oblige them to fulfil.

In vows there is no party but God and the person himself who makes the vow : for this reason, Mr. Hutchinson relaxes their obligation very much—Supposing any person had solemnly vowed to give a certain part of his substance to public or pious uses, he says if he finds it a great inconvenience to himself or family, he is not bound ; this I apprehend is too lax. Men ought to be cautious in making such engagements ; but I apprehend that when made, if not directly criminal, they ought to be kept.

### *Of the use of Symbols in Contracts.*

Besides promises and oaths, there is sometimes in contracts a use of other visible signs called symbols ; the most common among us are signing and sealing a written deed. There is also, in some places, the delivery of earth and stone in making over land—and sundry others. In ancient times it was usual to have solemn symbols in all trea-

ties—mutual gifts—sacrifices—feasts—setting up pillars—The intention of all such things, whenever and wherever they have been practised, is the same. It is to ascertain and keep up the memory of the transaction. They were more frequent and solemn in ancient times than now, because before the invention of writing they were more necessary.

### *Of the Value of Property.*

Before we finish the subject of contracts, it may be proper to say a little of the nature and value of property, which is the subject of them. Nothing has any real value unless it be of some use in human life, or perhaps we may say, unless it is supposed to be of use, and so becomes the object of human desire—because at particular times, and in particular places, things of very little real importance acquire a value, which is commonly temporary and changeable. Shells and baubles are of great value in some places; perhaps there are some more baubles highly valued in every place.

But though it is their use in life that gives things their value in general, it does not follow that those things that are of most use and necessity, are therefore of greatest value as property, or in commerce. Air and water, perhaps we may add fire, are of the greatest use and necessity; but they are also in greatest plenty, and therefore are of little value as a possession or property. Value is in proportion to the plenty of any commodity, and the demand for it. The one taken in the inverse, and the other in the direct proportion.

Hence it follows that money is of no real value. It is not wealth properly, but the sign of it, and in a fixed state of society the certain means of procuring it. In early times, traffic was carried on by exchange of goods—but being large, not easily divided or transported, they became very troublesome. Therefore it soon became necessary to fix upon some sign of wealth, to be a standard by which to rate different commodities.

Any thing that is fit to answer the purpose of a common sign of wealth, must have the following properties: It must be (1.) valuable, that is, have an intrinsic commercial value, and rare, otherwise it could have no comparative value at all. (2.) Durable, otherwise it could not pass from hand to hand. (3.) Divisible, so that it might be in larger or smaller quantities as are required. (4.) Portable, it must not be of great size, otherwise it would be extremely inconvenient.

Gold and silver were soon found to have all these properties, and therefore are fixed upon as the sign of wealth. But besides being the sign of the value of other commodities, they themselves are also matters of commerce, and therefore increase or decrease in their value by their plenty or scarceness.

It may seem to belong to the ruling part of any society to fix the value of gold and silver, as signs of the value of commodities—and no doubt they do fix it nominally in their dominions. But in this they are obliged to be strictly attentive to the value of these metals as a commodity from their plenty or scarceness, otherwise their regulations will be of little force—other nations will pay no regard to the nominal value of any particular country, and even in internal commerce, the subject would fix a value upon the signs according to their plenty.

It is as prejudicial to commerce to make the nominal value of the coin of any country too small as too great.

We shall close this part of the subject by speaking a little of the

### *Rights of Necessity, and common Rights.*

These are certain powers assumed both by private persons and communities, which are supposed to be authorised by the necessity of the case, and supported by the great law of reason.

There will remain a great number of cases in which those rights of necessity are to be used, even in the best regulated civil society, and after the most mature delibera-

tion and foresight of probable events, and provision for them by specific laws.

Were a man perishing with hunger, and denied food by a person who could easily afford it him, here the right of necessity would justify him in taking it by violence. Were a city on fire, and the blowing up of an house would save the far greater part, though the owner was unwilling, men would think themselves justified in doing it whether he would or not. Much more would men, in cases of urgent necessity, make free with the property of others without asking their consent, but presuming upon it.

In our own government, where, by the love of liberty general among the people, and the nature of the constitutions, as many particulars have been determined by special laws as in any government in the world—yet instances of the rights of necessity occur every day. If I see one man rob another upon the highway, or am informed of it, if I have courage and ability I pursue the robber, and apprehend him without any warrant, and carry him before a magistrate, to get a warrant for what I have already done. Nothing is more common in Britain than to force people to sell their inheritance or a part of it, to make a road or street straight or commodious. In this instance it is not so much necessity as great utility.

The question of the greatest moment here is, whether the establishing these rights of necessity does not derogate from the perfection and immutability of the moral laws. If it be true, that we may break in upon the laws of justice for the sake of utility, is not this admitting the exploded maxim, that we may do evil that good may come. I answer, that these rights of necessity have in general property as their object, or at most the life of particular persons—and it seems to be inseparable from the establishment of property in the social state, that our property is to be held only in such manner, and to such a degree, as to be both consistent with, and subservient to, the good of others. And therefore these extraordinary cases are agreeable to the tacit or implied conditions of the social contract.



In rights of necessity we are to consider not only the present good or evil, but for all time to come, and particularly the safety or danger of the example. Where the repetition of the thing in similar circumstances would have a fatal effect, it ought not to be done. If a city were under all the miseries of famine, and a ship or two should arrive with grain, the owner of which would not sell it but at a most exorbitant price, perhaps equity might admit that they should be compelled; but if any such thing were done, it would prevent others from going near that place again.

It would be of no consequence to determine these rights of necessity by law. If the law described circumstantially what might be done, it would be no longer a right of necessity, but a legal right. To forbid them by law would be either ineffectual or it would abolish them altogether, and deprive the society of the benefit of them when the cases should occur. Things done by the rights of necessity are by supposition illegal, and if the necessity does not excuse, the person who pretends them may be punished. If I am aiding in pulling down a man's house on pretence of stopping a fire, if he afterwards makes it appear that there was not the least occasion for it, or that I, being his enemy, took the opportunity of this pretence to injure him, he will obtain reparation.

As property, or at most life, is concerned in the rights of necessity—still the moral laws continue in force. Whatever expresses an evil disposition of mind does not fall under the rule, because it can never be necessary to the doing of any good. The pretence of its being necessary in some cases is generally chimerical, and even were it real, the necessity could not justify the crime—as suppose a robber very profane should threaten a man with death unless he would blaspheme God or curse his parents, &c.

There are certain things called common rights, which the public is supposed to have over every member: the chief of them are (1) diligence. As a man must eat, the community have a right to compel him to be useful—and have a right to make laws against suicide. (2.) They have a right to the discovery of useful inventions, pro-

vided an adequate price be paid to the discoverer. (3) They have a right to insist upon such things as belong to the dignity of human nature. Thus all nations pay respect to dead bodies, though there is no other reason for it but that we cannot help associating with the body, even dead, the ideas which arise from it, and belonged to the whole person when alive.

3. The third and last object of civil laws is, limiting citizens in the exercise of their rights, so that they may not be injurious to one another, but that the public good may be promoted.

This includes the giving directions in what way arts and commerce may be carried on, and in some states extends as far as the possessions of private persons.

It includes the whole of what is called the police of a community—the manner of travelling, building, marketing, time and manner of holding all sorts of assemblies—In arts and commerce, particularly, the police shows its power.

It will only be necessary here to make a few remarks on the nature and spirit of those laws.

1. Those things in themselves are arbitrary, and mutable, for there is no morality in them but what arises from common utility. We may sometimes do things in a way better than that appointed by law, and yet it is not allowed.

2. Men in general have but a very light sense of the malignity of transgressing these laws, such as running of goods, breaking over a fence, &c.

3. In the best constitutions some sanctions are appointed for the breach of these laws. Wherever a state is founded upon the principles of liberty, such laws are made with severity and executed with strictness.

Finally, a man of real probity and virtue adopts these laws as a part of his duty to God and the society, and is subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

## RECAPITULATION.

Having gone through the three general divisions of this subject, Ethics, Politics, and Jurisprudence, I shall conclude with a few remarks upon the whole, and mention to you the chief writers who have distinguished themselves in this branch of science.

1. You may plainly perceive both how extensive and how important moral philosophy is. As to extent, each of the divisions we have gone through, might have been treated at far greater length. Nor would it be unprofitable to enter into a fuller disquisition of many points; but this must be left to every scholar's inclination and opportunities in future life. Its importance is manifest from this circumstance, that it not only points out personal duty, but is related to the whole business of active life. The languages, and even mathematical and natural knowledge, are but hard words to this superior science.

2. The evidence which attends moral disquisitions is of a different kind from that which attends mathematics and natural philosophy; but it remains as a point to be discussed, whether it is more uncertain or not. At first sight it appears that authors differ much more, and more essentially, on the principles of moral than natural philosophy. Yet perhaps a time may come when men, treating moral philosophy as Newton and his successors have done natural, may arrive at greater precision. It is always safer in our reasonings to trace facts upwards, than to reason downwards upon metaphysical principles. An attempt has been lately made by Beatty, in his *Essay on Truth*, to establish certain impressions of common sense, as axioms and first principles of all our reasonings on moral subjects.

3. The differences about the nature of virtue are not in fact so great as they appear: they amount to nearly the same thing in the issue, when the particulars of a virtuous life come to be enumerated.

4. The different foundations of virtue are many of them, not opposite or repugnant to each other, but parts

of one great plan—as benevolence and self-love, &c. They all conspire to found real virtue: the authority of God—the dictates of conscience—public happiness and private interest, all coincide.

5. There is nothing certain or valuable in moral philosophy, but what is perfectly coincident with the scripture, where the glory of God is the first principle of action, arising from the subjection of the creature—where the good of others is the great object of duty, and our own interest the necessary consequence.

In the first dawn of philosophy, men began to write and dispute about virtue. The great inquiry among the ancients was, what was the *summum bonum*? by which it seems they took it for granted, that virtue and happiness were the same thing. The chief combatants here, were the stoics and epicureans. The first insisted that virtue was the *summum bonum*, that pleasure was no good, and pain no evil: the other said that the *summum bonum* consisted in pleasure, or rather that pleasure was virtue: the academics and Platonists went a middle way between these.

I am not sensible that there is any thing among the ancients, that wholly corresponds with the modern dispute upon the foundation of virtue.

Since the disputes arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of the most considerable authors, chiefly British are, Leibnitz, his *Theodicee* and his letters. Clark's demonstration and his letters. Hutchinson's inquiries into the ideas of beauty and virtue, and his system. Wollaston's religion of nature delineated. Collins on human liberty. Nettleton on virtue and happiness. David Hume's essays. Lord Kaimes's essays. Smith's theory of moral sentiments. Reed's inquiry. Balfour's delineation of morality. Butler's analogy and sermons. Balguy's tracts. Theory of agreeable sensations from the French. Beatty on Truth. Essay on virtue and harmony.

To these may be added the whole deistical writers, and the answers written to each of them in particular, a brief account of which may be seen in Leland's view of the deistical writers.

Some of the chief writers upon government and politics, are, Grotius, Puffendorf, Barberac, Cumberland, Selden, Burlamaqui, Hobbes, Machiavel, Harrington, Locke, Sydney, and some late books, Montèsquieu's spirit of laws ; Ferguson's history of civil society ; Lord Kaimes's political essays ; Grandeur and decay of the Roman empire ; Montague's rise and fall of ancient republics ; Gouguet's rise and progress of laws, arts and sciences.

LECTURES

ON

ELOQUENCE.



# LECTURES

## ON

# ELOQUENCE:

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GENTLEMEN,

**W**E are now to enter on the study of eloquence, or as perhaps it ought to be called, from the manner in which you will find it treated, Composition, Taste and Criticism.

Eloquence is undoubtedly a very noble art, and when possessed in a high degree, has been, I think, in all ages, one of the most admired and envied talents. It has not only been admired in all ages, but, if I am not mistaken, among all ranks. Its power is universally felt, and therefore probably the talent more universally esteemed, than either genius or improvement in several other kinds of human excellence. Military skill and political wisdom, have their admirers, but far inferior in number to those who admire, envy, or would wish to imitate, him that has the power of persuasion.

Plato in his republic, or idea of a well regulated state, has banished orators, under pretence that their power over the minds of men is dangerous and liable to abuse. Some moderns have adopted the same sentiments.

Sir Thomas More in his Utopia, I believe, (though I am not certain) has embraced it. But this is a manner



of thinking and reasoning altogether superficial. It would militate equally against all cultivation of the mind, and indeed against every human excellence, natural and acquired. They are, and have been, and may be abused, by men of vicious dispositions. But how shall this be prevented? It is impossible. How shall it be counteracted? Only by assisting the good in the cultivation of their powers, and then the same weapons will be used in defence of truth and virtue, with much greater advantage, than they can be in support of falshood and vice. Learning in general, possessed by a bad man, is unspeakably pernicious, and that very thing has sometimes made weak people speak against learning; but it is just as absurd as if in the confines of a country exposed to hostile inroads, the inhabitants should say, we will build no forts for protection, because if the enemy get into possession of them they will become the means of annoyance; we will use no arms for defence, for if the enemy take them from us, they will be turned against us.

Perhaps it may be proper to take notice of what the apostle Paul says, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, in several places, particularly from the beginning of the 2d chapter, "and I brethren," &c. and in the 4th chap. 11 verse, "And my speech, and my preaching was not," &c. I have mentioned this to prevent any of you mistaking or being prejudiced against the subject, and shall observe upon it, that the meaning of the apostle in this and other similar passages, is fully comprehended in one or more of the following particulars (1) That he came not to the Corinthians with an artful delusive eloquence, such as the sophists of these days made use of to varnish over their foolish sentiments. (2) That he came not to show his skill in speaking for and against any thing, as many of them did, not to discover or communicate truth, but to display their own talents. (3) That the truths he had to communicate needed no ornaments to set them off, and were not by any means adapted to the proud spirit of the world: and, (4) that he would use the greatest self-denial, and not by any means attempt to recommend himself as a man of ability and

learning, but content himself with the humble and simple doctrine of the cross. And the truth is, after the highest improvement in the art of speaking, there must be the greatest reserve and self denial in the use of it, otherwise it will defeat its own purpose. Rhetoricians do usually give it among the very precepts of the art, to appear to be in earnest, and to have the subject or the interest of the audience at heart, and not their own fame ; and this can never be attained to so great perfection as when there is the humility of a true disciple, and the disinterested zeal of a faithful minister of Christ. That this is not contrary to the most diligent application for the improvement of our powers is manifest in itself, and appears from the many exhortations of the same apostle to his young disciples, Timothy and Titus, 1 Tim. iv. 13. "till I come, give attendance," &c. and v. 15. "meditate," &c.

I know not whether any apology is necessary for my undertaking to speak on this subject, or the manner of treating it. Some may expect that discourses on eloquence should be distinguished examples of the art of which they treat. Such may just be pleased to observe, that a cool, plain, and simple manner of speaking, is necessary in teaching this, as well as every other art. No doubt, a justness and precision of expression, will be of great benefit in these discourses, but there will be no need of that high and complete polish, that might be expected in what is prepared for publication. Nor would the same brevity and conciseness be any advantage to discourses once delivered, that would be reckoned a beauty in what is in every body's hands, and therefore may be often read.

Before entering on the strict and methodical discussion of the subject, I have commonly begun the course by two or three preliminary discourses, containing such general observations as may be most intelligible, and may serve to prepare the way for what shall be afterwards introduced.

The subject of the first preliminary discourse shall be the following question ; whether does art or nature, contribute most to the production of a complete orator ?

This is a question often asked, and many things have been said upon it ; yet to discuss it as a matter of controversy, and adduce the arguments on each side, in order to a decision in favor of the one, and prejudice of the other, I take to be of very little consequence, or rather improper and absurd. It seems to be just as if one should propose an inquiry, whether the soil, the climate, or the culture, contributes most to the production of the crop? Therefore, instead of treating the question as if one side of it were true, and the other false, I shall make a few observations on the mutual influence of nature and art, in order to your forming just apprehensions of the subject, and to direct you in your future conduct and studies.

1. Some degree of natural capacity is evidently necessary to the instruction or study of this art, in order to produce any effect. A skilful laborer may subdue a very stubborn, or meliorate a very poor soil ; but when there is no soil at all, as on a bare and solid rock, his labor would be impossible or fruitless. There must therefore doubtless be some capacity, in general, and even some turn for this very branch of knowledge. In this sense it is true of every other art, as well as oratory, a man must be born to it.

There are some so destitute of oratorical powers, that nothing can possibly be made of them. It will be strange however, if this is not easily discovered by themselves, and if it does not make the study as unpleasant as it is difficult, so that they will speedily give it over. I have known some examples, but very few, of ministers, whose principal defect was mere barrenness of invention. This is exceedingly rare, because the far greatest number of bad speakers have enough to say, such as it is, and generally the more absurd and incoherent, the greater the abundance.

When speaking on this observation, I must make one remark, that a total want of capacity for one branch of science, is not inconsistent even with a great capacity for another. We sometimes see great mathematicians who make miserable orators. Nay it is reckoned by some of

the best judges that this study is unfriendly to oratory. The definite precision of mathematical ideas, which may all be ultimately referred to mensuration, seems to be contrary to the freedom and boldness of imagination, in which the strength of oratory lies. There are, however, exceptions to this in fact. Dr. Clark and Dr. Barrow, two of the most eminent mathematicians of the last age, were also eminent orators, that is to say, the first was a very accurate writer, the other a very fervent preacher.

I have only further to observe, that many have thought academical teaching not to be favorable to oratory; that is to say, those who are accustomed to the cool dispassionate manner of speaking, usual and necessary in the instruction of youth, frequently lose a good deal of that fire and impetuosity which they might naturally possess, and which is of so much importance in speaking to a large and promiscuous assembly.

2. To make what is called a complete orator, very great natural powers are necessary, and great cultivation too. The truth is, when we speak of a complete orator, we generally form an idea of perfection superior to any thing that ever existed, by assembling together all the excellencies of every kind that have been seen in different persons, or that we are able from what we have seen to form an imagination of. We can easily enumerate many of these, for example, great penetration of mind—great literature and extensive knowledge—a strong and lively imagination reined in by a correctness of judgment, a rich invention, and retentive memory, tenderness and sensibility of affection, an acquaintance with the world, and a thorough knowledge of the human heart. To these we must add all external perfections, an open countenance, a graceful carriage, a clear articulate strong melodious voice. There is not one of these but is capable of great improvement by application and study, as well as by much practice. In all the great orators of whom we read, there appears to have been an union of natural talents and acquired skill, Pericles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Hortentius. To these you may add all the speakers mentioned by Cicero and Quintilian,

taking their talents and performances to have been as related by these authors.

3. Perhaps the most extraordinary appearances in this, as well as in other branches, have been from nature wholly, or but with little study. These spontaneous productions are as so many prodigies. It is commonly believed that the orators and sages at the first formation of society, were more powerful in their elocution than in more polished times. This, however, I am apt to think, is in some degree founded on a mistake. There might be more extraordinary effects of eloquence, because the ignorant or superstitious herd were then more easily moved, but this was as much owing to the state of the audience as the power of the speakers. The same fire that would burn a heap of dry brush, would not make any impression upon a heap of green logs. It might also be owing to another circumstance, which I shall have occasion afterwards to explain more fully, the narrowness of language and the use of figures, which have so great an effect upon the imagination.

But allowing very great force to uncultivated prodigies of genius in every kind, I am apt to think it is less powerful, comparatively speaking, in oratory than in poetry. It has been an old saying, *Poeta nascitur & non fit*. There are two reasons why the poetry of nature, without art, seems to be so much admired. 1. That in such a poet a strong unbounded fancy must be the prevailing character, and this is what chiefly captivates the mind. It must be a very strong inward impulse that induces a man to become a poet without example, and without instruction. 2. It is found in fact that the knowledge of the rules of art some how cramps and deters the mind, and restrains that boldness, or happy extravagance, that gives such general delight. It is an observation of an ingenious author, that in no polished nation after the rules of criticism were fully settled and generally understood, was there ever any great work of genius produced. This, however, must be understood chiefly of what are called the higher species of poetry, epic poetry and tragedy, and for the reasons just now given, it must be so in them. Ho-

mer is the great poet of nature, and it is generally thought that there is greater fire in him than in Virgil, just because he lived at a time when the rules of writing were unknown. The same thing is said of Shakespear, of our own country, and perhaps the late discovered poems of Ossian may be considered as another example. After all, perhaps the comparison made between the effects of nature and art, is at bottom wrong, and that they produce beauties of different kinds—A wild uncultivated forest, a vast precipice, or steep cataract or waterfall, is supposed to be an object more august and striking, than any ornaments produced by human skill. The order and symmetry however, of architecture and gardening are highly pleasing, and ought not properly to be compared with the other, as pleasing the imagination in a different degree, so much as in a different kind.

The effects of the poetry of nature, therefore in one view are very great, and continue to be so in all ages, because they touch the soul in one way, which continues to be universally felt : but I doubt much whether eloquence ever arrived at much excellence, without considerable study, or at least previous patterns, on which to form. The first great poets were before all criticism, and before even the polishing of human manners ; but the first great orators appeared in improved, civilized states, and were the consequence of the knowledge of mankind, and the study of the human heart.

4. When persons are meanly qualified in point of natural capacity for any art, it is not very proper to attempt to instruct them in it. It is not only difficult to instruct those who have a radical incapacity for any study, but sometimes they are much the worse for application, just as fine clothes and a courtly dress upon a clown, renders him unspeakably ridiculous. Some who are utterly void of taste for speaking, after long study, and sometimes even by great literature, become more obscure, more tedious, and more given to swelling and bombast than the most uncultivated person in the world. The want of a fund of good sense and genuine taste, makes ignorant persons fools, and scholars pedants. A plain man will tell you of

taking a purge or a dose of physic, and you neither mistake him nor laugh at him. A quack of a physician will tell you of a mucilaginous decoction, to smooth the acid particles, and carry off the acrimonious matter that corrodes and irritates the internal coats of the stomach.

5. In the middle regions of genius, there are often to be found those who reap the greatest benefit from education and study. They improve their powers by exercise, and it is surprising to think what advances are to be made by the force of resolution and application. I might give you many examples of this in the annals of literature; but the one most suited to our purpose is, that Demosthenes himself is said at first to have labored under almost insuperable difficulties: it is said he could not even pronounce at first, all the letters of the Greek alphabet, particularly the letter R, the first letter of his art, as the critics have called it.

Persons of the middle degrees of capacity, do also, perhaps generally, fill the most useful and important stations in human life. A very great genius, is often like a very fine flower, to be wondered at, but of little service either for food or medicine. A very great genius is also often accompanied with certain irregularities, so that we only consider with regret, what he might have been, if the lively sallies of his imagination had been reined in a little, and kept under the direction of sober judgment.

On the whole, you may plainly perceive what great encouragement there is for diligence in your studies, and be persuaded to attend to the instructions to be given you on this subject in particular, with assiduity and care.



## LECTURE II.

**I**N this, which as the former, I consider as a preliminary discourse, I will endeavor to give you some general rules, which as they belong equally to all sorts of writing, would not come in so properly under the divisions of the subject.



1. Study and imitate the greatest examples. Get the most approved authors for composition, read them often and with care. Imitation is what commonly give us our first ideas upon any subject. It is by example that ambition is kindled, and youth prompted to excel. It is by remarks upon actual productions, that criticism itself is formed. Men were not first taught by masters to speak, either in oratory or poesy ; but they first felt the impulse, and did as they could, and their reflection and observation, by making the comparison, found out what was best. And after the existence of precepts, it is by examples that precepts are made plain and intelligible. An acquaintance with authors, will also be the best mean of determining what is your own turn and capacity, for you will probably most relish those writers and that manner, that you are best able to imitate.

For this purpose, let the best authors be chosen, ancient and modern. A controversy has often risen among critics and men of letters, upon the preference being due to ancient or modern writers. This question was debated *ex professo*, in the last age, and some very great men engaged in it. The famous M. Fenelon, arch-bishop of Cambray, has written a treatise upon it, called the Wars of the Poets ; and Dean Swift wrote his account of the battle of the books in St. James's library, on the same subject. I reckon it is wrong to be opinionative in such a controversy, and very easy to push it to excess on both sides. No doubt the few remains of remote antiquity, have survived the wrecks of time, in a great measure by their excellence itself, and therefore will always be considered as standards. And as they are chiefly works of imagination that have been so preserved, and true taste is the same in all ages, they must deserve real esteem, and this will be somewhat augmented, by the veneration felt for their antiquity itself. Homer is the first and great pattern of writing, to whom the highest commendations have been given in every age. Horace says, *Vos exemplaria Greca* (meaning chiefly Homer) *nocturna versate manu, versate diurna* ; and Mr. Pope says,

“ Be Homer’s works your study and delight,  
“ Read him by day, and meditate by night.”

Now the beauties of Homer we are easily capable of perceiving, though perhaps not his faults. The beauty of a description, the force of a similitude, we can plainly see ; but whether he always adhered to truth and nature, we cannot tell, because, we have no other way of knowing the manners and customs of his times but from what he has written.

The powers of mankind, however, are certainly the same in all ages, but change of circumstances may create diversity in the appearance and productions of genius. These circumstances tend to produce excellence of different kinds. The boldness, and almost excessive flights of imagination in uncultivated times, give way to beauties of a different nature, to order, judgment and precision. A masterly judgment will endeavor to understand the reasons on both sides. It is certain, however, that there are great and excellent patterns to form upon both ancient and modern. And it is very proper for young persons to read authors, after they have heard criticisms and remarks made upon them. These criticisms you may take at first either from books or conversation. Try if you can observe the genius, or peculiar and characteristic turn of an author, not only his excellencies, but wherein they are peculiar to him, and different from those of others. Cicero is flowing, fervent, ornate—Somewhat vain and ostentatious, but masterly in his way. Demosthenes is simple, close, nervous, rapid and irresistible. Livy has a bewitching knack of telling a story, he is so expressive and descriptive, that one cannot help being pleased with it, even after several times reading.

Sallust excels in giving characters, which he strikes off in single epithets, or very concise remarks. Tacitus is chiefly remarkable for judicious and sagacious observations on human life ; and Xenophon is superior to almost every author in dignity, elegance, and sweetness in the narration.

Of modern authors in our own language, Mr. Addison is a noble pattern of elegance, dignity and simplicity. Swift in his political pieces, writes with great strength and force, and is perhaps a pattern of stile, which has scarcely been exceeded since his time. Hervey in his meditations has a great deal of very lively and animated description, but it is so highly ornamented, that it is somewhat dangerous in the imitation. Dr. Robertson in his history, has as just a mixture of strength and elegance, as any other author I know in the English language. I cannot help here cautioning you against one modern author of some eminence, Johnson, the author of the Rambler. He is so stiff and abstracted in his manner, and such a lover of hard words, that he is the worst pattern for young persons that can be named.

It has been given sometimes as a rule, to form one's self upon a particular author, who may be most agreeable to a student's taste, and perhaps congenial (if I may speak so) to his capacity. It is pretty common to fall into this without design, by a natural propensity. It is said that Demosthenes wrote over the history of Thucydides eight times, that he might the more effectually form himself to his style and manner. I cannot say I would recommend this, it seems to be too much honor to give to any one person. I would not be guilty of idolatry of any kind. A comprehensive knowledge of many authors, or at least a considerable number of the best, is certainly far preferable. If there be any advantage in particular imitation it is that it is the easiest way of coming to a fixed or formed style. One will soon run into an imitation of an author with whom he is much conversant, and of whom he is a great admirer, and in this view, to some persons of moderate capacity, it may not be an improper method. But persons of real and original genius, should be rather above such a practice, as it will certainly make them fall short of what they would otherwise attain.

To this we may add, that particular imitation is liable to several very great dangers. (1) It leads to servility of imitation. Such person often may be said to borrow the

piece, instead of imitating the pattern. When a servile imitation is perceived, which it always will be, it is certain to be despised. Even a manner ever so excellent, if merely a copy, brings no credit to a speaker. And if a writer retail the very sentiments and language of another, it is considered as an absurdity. (2) Servile imitation leads to copying defects. There neither is, nor ever was any speaker or writer free from defects or blemishes of some kind. Yet servile imitators never fail to copy the defects as well as beauties. I should suppose that any one who made Cicero his particular model, would very probably transfuse a proportion of his vanity and ostentation, and probably more of that than of his fire.

But of all sorts of imitation the most dangerous is the imitation of living speakers, and yet to this young scholars are most prone, sometimes by design, and sometimes quite insensibly. It is attended in the highest degree with the disadvantage of copying defects. In living speakers, there are not only peculiarities of style and blemishes in composition to copy, but in looks, tone and gesture. It is a matter of constant experience, that imitators catch the blemishes easiest, and retain them longest. And it is to be observed, that defects, when they are natural and undesigned, appear very inconsiderable; but when they are copied and adopted voluntarily, we cannot help despising the folly and absurdity of one that judges so ill. Further, when defects are occasional and undesigned, they are generally inconsiderable; but when they are copied, they are commonly aggravated and over-charged, and so appear quite monstrous. This must be so; for even the very best manner looks silly in the imitator, although just and graceful in the original.

2. An excellent general rule is to accustom yourselves early and much to composition, and exercise in pronunciation. Practice is necessary in order to learn any thing to perfection. There is something to be learned from practice, which no instruction can impart. It is so in every other art as well as this—mathematics, geometry and in navigation; after you have learned the theory in the most perfect manner, there is still a nameless something, which

nothing but experience can bestow. You must not wait till you are masters of the rules of art before you begin to put them in practice. Exercise must go hand in hand with instruction, that the one may give meaning, force and direction to the other. I do not mean that you should be fond of entering very soon upon real life, but that you should be assiduous in preparatory exercises. This is a rule given by Cicero in his book *De Oratore*, which he reckons of great importance—*Scriberdum quam plurimum*, and he declares it to have been his own practice.

Since we are upon private exercises of composition, it may perhaps give you a clearer view of the matter to mention some of the various ways in which it may be separately tried. It may be tried in translation, perhaps it may be best to try it first here. Translation will accustom you to attend to the various idioms of language, and to understand the genius of your own language: for when translating you will speedily find that to render out of any one language into another, *ad verbum*, would be very sorry composition. It may be tried also in narration. This I think should be the next step to translation, to learn to give a naked account of facts with simplicity and precision. This, also, though certainly in itself more obvious and easier than some other kinds, yet it is by no means so easy as some imagine. Imitation of a particular passage, or composition of some author, by writing upon something quite similar, may perhaps be the next in order. To understand what this is, you need only look into an admirable example of it in poetry, Mr. Pope's imitation of a satire in Horace, beginning *Quæ virtus & quanta*, &c. After this comes description, painting scenes, or drawing characters. Then argumentation: And, lastly, persuasion. I believe it would be a great improvement of the laudable practice in this college of daily orations, if they were chosen with more judgment, and better suited to the performers. Almost all the pieces we have delivered to us are of the last or highest kind, warm passionate declamations. It is no wonder that some should perform these ill, who have never tried the plainer manner of simple narration. Supposing a student to have tried all these

ways of composition for his own improvement, would he not be by that means sensible in what way he is most able to excel? as also having made trial of them separately, he is more able to vary his diction, and give compass to his discourse upon a general subject. These are like an analysis or simple division of composition; and as persons read best who have been first taught to resolve words into syllables, and syllables into letters, so the easiest and completest way of any to composition, is to begin it in this order.

In such exercises let me by all means recommend to you, early to acquire, and always to preserve a certain patience and resolution of mind, which will enable you to apply with vigor, not only for a time, but to review and correct your pieces, and bring them to some degree of perfection, and your taste to some degree of accuracy. To explain this a little, there are three things equally contrary to it, and perhaps equally prejudicial. (1.) Mere weakness and want of courage, which finding one attempt unsuccessful, will hardly be brought to make another. When a young person first goes to exercise himself in composition, he finds the thing so uncouth and difficult, that he is apt to consider it as altogether impossible. (2.) There is a fault contrary to this, a vanity of mind, which is so pleased with any thing it does, as neither to see its own faults, nor be willing to hear them. There are some who, from the beginning of life, think it a great pity that any of their productions should be blotted or erased. It is not to be supposed that they will make great progress in knowledge or taste. (3.) There is another sort, perhaps distinct from both, who are of a loose, desultory disposition, so unsteady that they cannot spend long enough time upon any thing to do it well, or sometimes even to bring it to a conclusion. They will begin an essay upon a subject, but are presently out of conceit with it, and therefore will do it very carelessly, or before it is finished, must away to another, which strikes their fancy more lately.

That steady application which I have recommended some of the ancients were very remarkable for. Some of them indeed seemed to carry it to an excess. They would

sometimes spend as much time in polishing an epigram, or little trifling panegyric, as might have been sufficient for the production of a work of extensive utility. However, this is not the most common error; running over a great deal in a superficial way is the bane of composition. Horace, with his usual elegance, ridicules this disposition, when he says, *Datur nobis locus*, &c. and somewhere else he brings in a vain-glorious poet, boasting how many verses he had made, or could make, while standing upon one foot.



### LECTURE III.

**I**N this discourse I intend to finish what I began in the last, viz. laying down some general rules to form the taste and direct the conduct of a student.

3. Be careful to acquaint yourselves well, and to be as perfect as possible in the branches that are subordinate to the study of eloquence. These, because they ought to be learned in the earliest stages, if they are then neglected, some are unwilling or ashamed to go back to them. What I have here in view chiefly, are the grammar, orthography, and punctuation of the English language. It is not uncommon to find orators of considerable name, both in the pulpit and at the bar, far from being accurate in point of grammar. This is evidently a very great blemish. Perhaps it may be occasioned in some measure by the English seldom or never being taught grammatically to children. But those who have learned the principles of grammar, in the Greek and Latin languages, should be more ready to attend to it. I am sensible that the grammar of every language is ultimately fixed by custom; with regard to which, Horace says, *Quem penes arbitrium est*, &c. But even here we must attend to the meaning of the sentiment. It is not the custom of the vulgar that establishes either the grammar or pronunciation of any language, but that which is received and established by the best writers. You



will say, how do these writers determine themselves? Are not they also guided by practice? They are in a great measure, and it is generally said, that the practice of the capital of a nation, or of the court in that capital, settles the grammar. This must in substance be agreed to, yet judgment and analogy will frequently suggest improvements, and introduce a good, or abolish an ill custom. You must not suppose, that all the phrases of the vulgar in London, are therefore agreeable to the grammar of the English, or even that at court, all the nobility, male and female, speak with perfect propriety. It is in the last resort, the men of literature, particularly the authors, who taking custom as a general rule, give it all the direction they can, by their reasoning and example.

To make you understand this by some instances, you see Mr. Addison, Dean Swift, and Mr. Pope, have endeavored to attend to the genius of the English language, to show where it was harsh and unpolished, and where improprieties might be corrected, and they have succeeded in a great measure. It was observed by all those great men, that the English, and all the northern languages are harsh, by the numbers of consonants meeting without intervening vowels, therefore, that it is a great barbarism to strike out the vowels that we have, as in these words, don't, can't, didn't, wouldn't, shouldn't, rebuk'd, drudg'd, fledg'd. Several of these words may yet be heard in some places, and I have even seen them in print in America; but no good speaker or tolerable writer would use them in Great Britain. I give another example when the sense and analogy of the word suggests the improvement. Averse and aversion, were often formerly used with *to* or *at*: he is very averse to it; he has a great aversion at it. But as averse properly signifies turned away, it seems an evident improvement, to say averse from. What I mean by this observation, is to turn your attention to such remarks, when you meet with them in reading or conversation.

I will make an observation or two more. It is of some importance to attend to the use of words, nearly related, or in some degree synonymous. It is not uncommon to hear people say a man is incident to such or such a thing—

The evil is incident to the person—the person liable to the evil, or subject to it: this may be seen by the original meaning of the word, of Latin derivation, and signifies to fall upon. The word *notify*, is often used wrong, particularly in America: they speak of notifying the public; that is to say, making known the public—Instead of this, we should say notify any thing, (or make it known) to the public. You advertise a person, or inform him of a thing—acquaint him with it. The verb *consist*, in English, has two distinct meanings, and two constructions: when it signifies to agree or correspond, it is joined to *with*. It consists *with* my knowledge. When it signifies to compose or make up a total, it is constructed either with *in* or *of*; as his estate consists *of*, or *in* houses, lands, &c. *This* and *that*, and *these* and *those*, when together in a sentence, are used with distinction; *this* and *these* for the nearest, and *that* and *those*, for the most remote antecedent; but otherwise, *these* and *those* are used indiscriminately, but *those* more frequently—as *those authors who are of different opinions*.

In all matters doubtful, you ought to observe how the current of good authors go. So far as I have been able to observe, collective words in English, are indifferently constructed either with a verb singular or plural, as number, multitude, part—a great number were present, or was present, though I should prefer the last.—

As to orthography, it is of the utmost moment, not but that a man may be supposed to speak, though he cannot spell; but because a public speaker must be always in some degree, conversant in public life, and then bad spelling is exceedingly reproachful. It is not only necessary to understand in all ordinary cases, the orthography of our own language, but a scholar and critic, I think, should be able to observe the variations that have been made in spelling from time to time. Between thirty and forty years ago, an attempt was made to alter the spelling of the English language very considerably, by bringing it nearer to the way of pronouncing, but it did not succeed, being opposed by some of the greatest eminence, as likely to destroy

or hide the etymology of words. There have some small alterations obtained a good deal in my remembrance, such as taking away the final k in public, ecclesiastic, &c. There is also just now, an attempt making to change the spelling of several words—I have seen an example of it in a very late edition of Middleton's life of Cicero; such as reveie, repete, explane—honor, favor, candor, &c. this seems upon the principle of bringing words nearer to their Latin derivation.

Punctuation is a thing that a scholar should strive to understand a little; though there are few gentlemen or scholars who use it much, either in letters or in their composition. The reason of this is, that it is looked upon as too formal, and unnecessary to use it in writing letters, except a full stop. It is always the best language that has least need of points to be understood. Points are, I believe, a modern invention, subsequent to the invention of printing; very useful however, in teaching young persons to read with proper pauses. Another reason why points are little used in private writing, is, that such papers as are sent to the press, (in Britain) do not need them, the printers themselves understanding that matter at least as well, if not better than any writer.

4. It is a good rule, to observe early, and study to guard against some of the most remarkable blemishes in writing and speaking, which are fallen into by design or accident, and continued by habit. It is not difficult for any person, as soon as he begins to observe and reflect, to discover these in others, and as he will perceive the absurdity clearly in them, let him be very careful to find out whether there is not something of the same kind in himself. That you may understand what I mean, I will mention some particulars.

I. *Peculiar phrases*.—Such as have nothing in them but what is just and decent and proper, when used once, or now and then; but when a speaker falls so into any of them, that the practice is known for his own, and he is known by it, they become unspeakably ridiculous. It is very difficult to avoid something of this kind; there are

few, if any, but in common discourse, use some phrases more than others. A cautious person, as soon as he perceives a habit of using any one coming upon him, will endeavor to alter or avoid it. Even the greatest men are not wholly free from this defect. It is observed of Cicero, that *esse videatur* occurs in almost every three or four sentences, be the subject what it will. I knew a preacher that used the word *sedate*, so very frequently, that he was called generally where he was known, by the name of the *sedate preacher*. I say the same thing of particular motions and gestures, which if they be in any degree out of the way, are a great blemish in a speaker: both the one and the other of these, are commonly at first, taken up as graces, and retained so long in that view, that they acquire an irresistible power from habit.

2. Another blemish of this kind, is using improper epithets. This is very common: some, especially young persons, are apt to think a discourse lean and poor, unless there be a great number of epithets; and as they will let no substantive go without an adjective, it is a great chance that some of them are improper: they cannot say the sky, without the azure sky, or the lofty sky, or the wide expanded sky; and though all these epithets may belong to the sky, they may not be equally proper in the place where they are introduced. A certain gentleman of no mean rank in Great Britain, in drawing an address from a borough to his majesty, on the peace, told him, that the terror of his arms had spread to the most distant parts of the *terraqueous* globe: now, though it be certainly true that the globe is terraqueous, it was exceedingly ridiculous to tell the king so; it looked as if his majesty were a boy, and the borough magistrates were teaching him; or they themselves were boys, who had just learned the first lesson in geography, that the globe consists of land and water, and therefore were desirous of letting it be known that they were so far advanced.

3. Another visible blemish is a multitude of unnecessary words of any kind, particularly the vain repetition of synonymous phrases. Some do not think their sentences full and round enough, without a number of these phrases. But

though it be true, that there is a fulness of a sentence and the clauses of a sentence which is necessary to please the ear, yet it is but an ill way to make up the shape with what is without sense or force. The most common of this kind are the double epithets, which men are led into by the introduction of words derived from the Latin or Greek into the English language. These words differing in sound, are often coupled together, as if different in meaning also—As happiness and felicity,—fruition and enjoyment,—greatness and magnificence,—ease and facility,—way and manner,—end and conclusion,—small and minute,—bountiful and liberal, &c. Sometimes from your lofty speakers, we hear a whole string of words, of so little difference in meaning, that it is almost impossible to perceive it. Thus I have lately heard, “This grand, capital, important, and fundamental truth.”—All proper epithets, and though any one of them would have made the discourse nervous, as well as just, by the addition of them all, it becomes swelled and silly.\*

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\* *List of synonymous terms frequently to be met with.*

Speakers and writers,  
 Motives and arguments,  
 Benefit and advantage,  
 Small and minute,  
 Bountiful and liberal,  
 Right and title,  
 Order and method,  
 Sharp and acute,  
 Pain and anguish,  
 Moment and importance,  
 Delight and satisfaction,  
 Joy and pleasure,  
 Profit and advantage,  
 Resolution and purpose,  
 Justice and equity,  
 Truth and sincerity,  
 Wealth and riches,  
 Penury and want,

Worth and value,  
 Lasting and abiding,  
 Command and order,  
 Order and appoint,  
 Sin and Guilt,  
 Cheerfulness and alacrity,  
 Greatness and magnificence,  
 Joy and delight,  
 Fruition and enjoyment,  
 Just and righteous,  
 End and design,  
 Open and explain,  
 Lasting and durable,  
 Clear and manifest,  
 Marks and signs,  
 Plain and perspicuous,  
 Ease and facility,  
 End and conclusion,

4. **Vulgarisms.** I have been surprised to see some persons of education and character, introduce the mere vulgarisms of discourse in the pulpit, or at the bar, such as *I an't I can't, I shan't*. An author who entitles his book *Lexiphanes*, and has very successfully exposed Johnson's long and hard words, let slip a vulgarism into his own discourse, for which he was severely handled by the reviewers. *Between you and I*. *I* there is a governed case, and if it were to be used, it should be, between you and me. But the truth is, the phrase is altogether a vulgarism, and therefore not to be used, except in particular circumstances, describing familiar chat. There are also certain cant phrases which come into repute or use in the course and the changes of fashion.

These have been sufficiently exposed by Swift and Addison, and therefore I shall say nothing at all further on them, at present, as an opportunity will afterwards occur of mentioning them to advantage.

5. The fifth and last general rule I shall just mention is, to follow nature. This is a rule often given, and greatly insisted on by the ancients. Every body has

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Odious and hateful  
 Poor and indigent,  
 Order and regularity  
 Rules and regulations,  
 Causes and reasons,  
 Useful and profitable,  
 Amiable and lovely  
 Wise and prudent,

A final issue,  
 Motives and reasons,  
 Diminished and lessened,  
 Excellence and perfection,  
 Benevolence and goodwill,  
 Demonstrate and prove,  
 Cover and conceal,  
 Foolish and unwise.

*Terms and Phrases to be noted for remarks.*

Happifying,—susceptive,—fellow-country-man—felicitos—to be found in the Monitor.

“Unsexed thy mind” in a poem,

“Sensibilities,” Aikin's Magazine, Oct. vol. 1. 468—9.

“These commendations will not I am persuaded make you vain and coxcomical.”

Knickknackkically, simplify, domesticate, pulpitically.

heard of it, nay, sometimes those who have not heard of it, will speak as if they had, and say, "This was quite natural. This was altogether unnatural." But it is somewhat difficult to understand. Nature seems in this rule to be opposed to art. Is following nature, then, to do as untaught persons generally do? Will the most ignorant persons make the most plain and the best connected discourse? Will they tell a story with the most genuine simplicity, and at the same time with perspicuity? We find it is quite otherwise. Perhaps it would be best to say it is following truth, or following that which is easiest and plainest, and probably would be followed by all, but for affectation.

On this subject I can think of nothing so good as to say, realize and suppose you saw the thing you would describe, and put yourself in the very state of him whose sentiments you would speak. Clear conceptions make distinct expressions, and reality is a great assistant to invention. If you were bid to study a subject abstractly, it would be with great difficulty that things proper and suitable to it would come into your mind. But if you, yourself were in the situation that is to be supposed, the sentiments pertinent to it would crowd upon you immediately. Let me try to make this familiar by an example, suppose I were to ask any of you just now, what are the circumstances that aggravate sin, or make it more heinous, and deserving of severe punishment: it is highly probable he would either be at a loss altogether, or at least would omit many of them. But if any of you had received an injury from another, in explaining of it, he would not fail to come over them every one. He would say it was unprovoked.—If he had done him service, he would not fail to upbraid him with it, and nothing would be forgotten between the two, that could aggravate the crime.

Supposing the reality of every thing, also, serves particularly to deliver a speaker from affected ornaments, and every thing in language or carriage that is improper. If you were pleading the cause of one accused of a capital crime, it would be best to suppose that you your-



self were the accused person, and that you were speaking for your own life. This would give an earnestness of spirit, and a justness and correctness to the manner, infinitely distant from that theatrical pomp, which is so properly said to be a departure from the simplicity of nature.

## LECTURE IV.

**H**AVING given you some preliminary discourses on such points as I thought would serve to prepare you for what might be afterwards said, I proceed to treat the subject more methodically and more fully. There are various ways of dividing the subject, which yet may each of them be said to take in the whole, in one way or other. Several of these must be combined together; as it is not sufficient to view a building only from one station. If you would understand it thoroughly, you must view it from different stations, and even take it in profile, and learn not only its outward appearance, but its inward structure. The method I have resolved to follow, and which seems to me as complete as any I could fall upon, is this—

I. To treat of language in general, its qualities, and powers—eloquent speech—and its history and practice as an art.

II. To consider oratory as divided into its three great kinds, the sublime—simple—and mixed,—their characters—their distinctions—their beauties—and their uses.

III. To consider it as divided into its constituent parts, invention, disposition, style, pronunciation and gesture.

IV. To consider it as its object is different information, demonstration, persuasion, entertainment.

V. As its subject is different. The pulpit, the bar, and the senate, or any deliberative assembly.

VI. To consider the structure and parts of a particular discourse, their order, connexion, proportion and ends.

VII. Recapitulation, and an inquiry into the principles of taste, or of beauty and gracefulness, as applicable not only to oratory, but to all the other (commonly called) the fine arts.

In the first place then, I am to treat of language in general, its qualities and powers—eloquent speech—and its history and practice as an art.

Language is what in a great measure distinguishes man from the inferior creatures. Not but that almost all animals have certain sounds by which they can communicate something to one another. But these sounds are evidently only simple, and sometimes single exertions, differing in one creature from another, according to the different conformation of their organs. Articulate speech has a far greater compass, and is able to express not only a vast multitude of complex, as well as simple ideas; perhaps we may even say that articulate speech is little less extensive than thought itself, there being hardly any idea that can be formed but it may be expressed, and by that means communicated. In this there is a wide and manifest distinction between the rational and irrational creatures.

Articulate language is intended to communicate our sentiments one to another. This may be considered as fully explained, by saying it includes information and persuasion. A conception in my mind, when spoken, its excellence consists in making another perceive what I perceive, and feel towards it as I feel. They may be afterwards amplified and extended; but these two particulars shew the true original purpose of speech. Eloquence is commonly called the art of persuasion, but the other must be taken in. We must inform before we can persuade, or if there be any such thing as persuasion without information, it is only a blind impulse.

Articulate speech is representing our ideas by arbitrary sounds. That is to say, there is no real or natural connexion between the sound and signification, but what is the effect of compact and use. In this articulate speech is distinguished from signs or natural sounds, as alphabetical writing (of which more afterwards) is distinguished from

hieroglyphical. Natural sounds may signify joy, fear, anger, but language in general has no such natural connexion with its meaning. The words *sun* and *moon* might have had different meanings, and served the same purpose. The word *beit* in Hebrew, *oikos* in Greek, *domus* in Latin, *maison* in French, and *house* in English, though all of them different, are equally proper for signifying the same thing, when once they are fixed by the custom of the several nations. Some have attempted to reduce the original words of a supposed original language and even the letters of the alphabet, to a natural resemblance of the things to be signified; but their attempts have been fruitless and ridiculous. It was in ancient times a pretty general imagination, that there was a certain language that was original and natural to man; that this was the first language in use; and that if men were not taught another language by example, they would all speak this language. But experience, after trial had been made by several curious persons, showed this imagination to be vain; for those who were brought up without any communication with men, were always dumb, and spoke none at all, except sometimes imitating the natural sounds of some beasts or birds which they might occasionally hear. Herodotus's story is either a fable, or it proves nothing, of a king of Egypt having two children nourished by goats, and pronouncing the word *Bec*, or *Beecos*, which they said signified bread in the Phrygian language. This was a thing merely accidental, if true; yet at any rate of very doubtful authority.

The words in articulate speech therefore are arbitrary, nor is there any possibility of their being otherwise; for words are only sounds, and though it is possible in some few particulars to fix upon words with a natural relation, as for example, perhaps the names of animals might sometimes be given them with some resemblance of sound to the natural sounds which these animals utter, yet even this with disadvantages, as any body may perceive, by trying to make a word that shall resemble the neighing of a horse, the lowing of a bull, &c. But as to all inanimate visible objects, it is impossible to represent them

by sound; light and sound, the eye and the ear, being totally different in kind. I can recollect nothing that makes any difficulty in this matter, unless that some may say, how then do you find place for that particular beauty of poetry and other descriptions, in making the sound an echo to the sense? But this is easily resolved. In some cases the passions give a modulation to sound, and in the quantity of the syllables, and ease or difficulty of pronouncing them, there may be a resemblance to slowness and labor, or their opposites or both. As in the famous passage of Homer *Ton men Tissipbon*; or in Mr. Pope, who exemplifies the rule in giving it.

“ ’Tis not enough, no harshness gives offence,” &c.

If words are arbitrary, it may be asked how language came first into use? in which the opinions are various, but the controversy is not of any great moment. Some think it was in the same way as other creatures exert their natural powers, that man by practice, gradually came to the use of speech, and settled the meaning of words by custom. Others think that this would either never have happened, or have taken a very long time, and suppose that their Maker taught them at least some degree of practice, which should open the way to a more extensive use of the faculty. And the consideration that sounds in language are arbitrary, in some degree favors this supposition, because it may be observed that as mankind are capable by instruction of the greatest and most multifarious improvement, so without instruction they are capable of doing least. A human infant when first brought forth, is more helpless and longer helpless than any other animal that we know. It does not seem to be of much importance to form a determinate opinion of this question. It occurs in the very same way again, and may be reasoned upon the same principles, whether alphabetical writing was an invention and discovery of man, or revealed by God. Those who hold the last opinion observe that hieroglyphic writing, or writing by signs or pictures, was before alphabetical, and that the improvement of hieroglyphics does not lead to, but from alphabetical writing. That the one consists of natural em-

blems, and visible signs of sentiments, and the other of arbitrary or artificial signs for simple sounds, so that the more complex you make the hieroglyphic, you differ the more from the alphabet. It seems probable that this, and indeed the radical principles of all great discoveries, were brought out by accident, that is to say, by Providence: therefore it is probable that God gave to our first parents who were found in a state of full growth, all the instruction necessary for proceeding upon, and exercising the faculty of speech, the length that was necessary for the purposes of human life. It is also probable from the analogy of Providence, that he left as much to the exercise of the human powers as experience and application could conveniently supply.

I will not enter much into the formation and construction of language in general. It is formed by a certain number of simple sounds which when variously combined, produce that variety of words which though certainly not strictly infinite, yet have been hitherto inexhausted by all the languages in the world. The letters are divided into vowels and consonants, the first having a sound of themselves, and the other giving only a sort of modification to that sound. Some great philologists are of opinion, that in the Hebrew and several other ancient languages, their whole letters are consonants, tending to mark the different configurations of the organs of sound at the beginning of pronunciation, and the vowels are the sounds themselves, which they say men were taught to adopt by habit, first in speaking, and then in writing, and afterwards were distinguished by marks or signs for the sake of readers. Hence the controversy about the Hebrew points, and indeed reading the dead languages in general, which is attended with great uncertainty, particularly from the following circumstances. Vowels have in general been but five or six in number, which should express all the simple sounds, and yet they do not, and perhaps there is not a language in which there is greater confusion in this matter, than our own, which makes the English so exceedingly difficult for a foreigner to attain. Several English vowels have three or four different sounds,

and as Sheridan says, some of them the length of five ; *I* has three in one word, viz. *infinite*. These things not being necessary to my main purpose, I only point at them without enlarging.

It is plain that in whatever manner languages were first formed, we can easily see that they came slowly and by degrees to perfection. An eminent French author, father Lamy, says the Hebrew language was perfect in its original ; but he advances no proof of this, but showing indeed by very just historical remarks and criticisms, that the Hebrew was anterior in point of time to the Greek, and that in writing, the letters were taken from the Hebrew and employed in the Greek. History says that Cadmus was a Phenician, and he has generally among the Greeks the honor of introducing letters. It is also observed that as the letters of the alphabet were used in expressing numbers, the Greeks after they had in process of time altered or left out the letter *vau* in Hebrew, which stands sixth in order, they put a new mark *s* for six, that the rest might retain their powers, which plainly shews that the Hebrew alphabet was older than the Greek, as it now stands.

But for my part, I do not understand the meaning of saying that the Hebrew language was perfect at first ; it might be fitted for all the purposes of them that used it first, and is probably at this day as good as any other language, so far as it goes, but it is plain that this and all the other languages of the first ages were narrow, short and simple. They must have been so from the nature of the thing, most probably they consisted chiefly of monosyllables representing simple ideas. What occasion had they for complex or compound words, when they had few if any complex or compounded ideas ? This appears very plainly from the state of the Hebrew language, some of the other orientals, and the language of all uncultivated people. It holds likewise in the case of the Chinese language, which though the people are not uncultivated properly speaking, is yet in an unimproved state, from their having had little intercourse with other nations. All such languages have few adjectives, and

when they do use words as adjectives, they are commonly figurative. There is an ingenious and probable deduction how a scanty narrow language might be first used in Shuckford's connexions. They might express qualities by the name of some animal remarkable for them—as a lion-man, for a valiant or fierce man. This is wholly agreeable to the genius of the Hebrew language. The Hebrews describe every thing that is very great, by adding the name of God to it, as the trees of God—the river of God. It follows that in all uncultivated languages the figures are frequent and very strong. The Indians in America have a language full of metaphors. They take up the hatchet, for going to war, and they brighten the chain, when they confirm a peace.

Hence it appears that in the earliest times, if they used figures, it was the effect of necessity rather than choice. But what men did at first out of necessity, orators afterwards returned to from choice, in order to increase the beauty or force of their diction, or both. In fact figures do make the greatest impression on men's minds. They are sensible, and therefore level to every person's capacity : for the same reason they make a strong impression on the imagination. They likewise leave a great deal of room for the creative power of fancy to make additions. A sign or symbol seen by a multitude, on a subject that is understood, carries the contagion of enthusiasm or rage exceedingly far. In the 19th of Judges you see the Levite took his concubine, and cut her into twelve parts, and sent them to all the tribes of Israel. The Roman also holding up the stump of his hand which he had lost in the service of the public, pleaded for his brother with a power vastly superior to any language whatever.



## LECTURE V.

**H**AVING given you a short view of language in general, if it were not too long, I would consider the structure of particular languages ; instead of which, take the few following short remarks.

i. The nature of things necessarily suggests many of the ways of speaking which constitute the grammar of a language, and in every language there is nearly the same number of parts of speech, as they are enumerated in the Latin grammar ; noun, pronoun, verb, participle, adverb, preposition, interjection, conjunction.

2. In the use of these, there is a very great variety. Nouns to be sure, are declined nearly the same way in all by cases and numbers, though the Greeks in this differ a little, using three numbers instead of two, having a particular inflection of the word, when there are but two persons meant ; and another for the plural or more : but in the verbs, there is a very great diversity ; in the active and passive signification they generally agree, but some express the persons by terminations, and some by pronouns and nominatives expressed. Some have moods which others have not. The Greeks have an optative mood ; the Latins have gerunds ; the Hebrews with fewer differences of moods, have conjugations that carry some variety of signification to the same word. In one word *maser*, he delivered, there is not only this and its passive, but another, he delivered diligently, and the passive ; another, he made to deliver ; another, he delivered himself. The Greeks, besides the active and passive, have a *media vox*, of which perhaps the use is not now fully understood ; since some of the best grammarians say it signifies doing a thing to one's self ; *Tupsomai* I shall strike myself. Most of the modern languages decline their verbs, not by inflection of the termination, as the Greek and Latin, but by auxiliary verbs, as the English and French. The Chinese language is perhaps the least improved of any language

that has subsisted for any time ; this probably is owing to their want of alphabetical writing : every word among them had a character peculiar to it, so that letters and words were the same in number in their language ; this rendered it of immense difficulty to understand their writing among themselves, and quite impossible to foreigners : but they were vastly surpris'd to find, that the Jesuits from Europe, that came among them, could easily write their language by our alphabet : and as they use the same word in different tones, for different meanings, these fathers also soon found a way of distinguishing these in writing by certain marks and accents placed over the word, differing as it was to be differently taken.

3. Some have amused themselves, with inventing a language, with such a regular grammar as might be easily understood, and having this language brought into general use. We have a remark of this kind, in Father Lami's *rhétorique*, in French, and he says the grammar of the Tartar language come nearest to it. We have also had some schemes and propositions of this kind in English, but it seems wholly chimerical. I shall only observe further, that some few have imagined that the Hebrew language itself was originally, and when compleat, a perfect language, and that we now have it only maimed, and but a small part of it. These suppose the language to be generated thus, by taking the letters of the alphabet, and first going through them regularly by two, and then by three, *ab, ag, ad, &c. aba, abb, &c.* All these schemes are idle, because no person can possibly lay down rules beforehand, for every thing that may hereafter be thought and spoken, and therefore, when they are brought out, they will be expressed as those to whom they first occur shall incline, and custom will finally fix them, and give them their authority.

Leaving these things therefore, as matters of more curiosity than use, I proceed to speak of eloquent speech, and its history as an art. It is plain, that in the progress of society and the commerce of human life, it would soon appear that some spoke with more grace and beauty, and so as more to incline the hearers to their sentiments, than others; neither is it hard to perceive that it would be early

in repute. In the first associations of mankind, they must have been chiefly governed by those who had the power of persuasion. In uncultivated societies, it is so still : In an Indian tribe, the sachem or wise man directs their councils. The progress of oratory towards perfection, must have been evidently in fact, like the progress of all other human arts, gradual, and in proportion to the encouragement given to its exercise. It prevailed, where the state of things and constitution of government favored it, but not otherwise.

It is to be observed here, that by the consent of all, and by the memorials of antiquity that are left, poetry was more ancient than oratory ; or perhaps we may rather say, that the first exertions of genius in eloquent expression were in poetry, not in prose. It has frequently been made matter of critical inquiry, why poetry was prior to oratory, and why sooner brought to perfection ? I do not perceive very clearly, what great advantage there is in determining this question, supposing we should hit upon the true reasons : one reason I take to be, that the circumstance in poetry that gives generally the highest pleasure, viz. a strong and vigorous fancy, is least indebted to application, instruction or time for its perfection : therefore poetical productions in general, and that species of them in particular which have most of that quality, must be as easily produced in uncultivated times, as any other ; and for some reasons given in a former discourse, must appear then with the greatest effect. Whereas, to success in oratory, some knowledge of the human heart, and even some experience in the ways of men, is necessary. Another difference is plain ; poetical productions having generally pleasure or immediate entertainment as their design, may produce that effect in any age ; whereas the circumstances that rendered the orator's discourse interesting, are all gone.

Perhaps to this we may add, that the incitements to poetry are more general. A poet pleases and obtains fame from every single person who reads or hears his productions ; but an assembly, business, and an occasion are necessary to the orator. This last is likewise limited in point

of place and situation. Oratory could not thrive in a state where arbitrary power prevails, because then there is nothing left for large assemblies and a diffusive public to determine ; whereas poetry is pleasing to persons under any form of government whatever.

Those who have given the history of oratory have rather given us the history of the teachers of that art than its progress and effects. It must be observed, however, that in this as well as in poetry, criticism is the child and not the father of genius. It is the fruit of experience and judgment, by reflection upon the spontaneous productions of genius. Criticism inquires what was the cause of things being agreeable, after the effect has been seen. Ward brings a citation from Cicero, to show that the orator's art was older than the Trojan war. The purport of this is, that Homer attributes force to Ulysses' speeches, and sweetness to Nestor's ; perhaps also he has characterised Menelaus' manner as simple, short and unadorned. There is not, however, any certainty in this art being much studied or explained in these early times from this citation ; for though Homer is an excellent poet, of inimitable fire and great strength of natural judgment, it is not certain that he kept so perfectly to propriety, as to describe only the manner and style of things at the time of the Trojan war, which was 250 years before his own. I should be more apt to conclude that he had described manners, characters and speakers as they were in his own time, with a little air of antiquity.

We are, however, told by Pausanias, that the first school of oratory in Greece was opened in the school of Theseus, the age preceding that war. If there be any certainty in this, its being taught in Greece has been very ancient indeed ; but these being fabulous times, it is scarcely to be depended upon. However, it is certain that oratory flourished early, and was improved greatly in Greece. Many circumstances concurred to produce this effect. The spirit and capacity of the people—the early introduction of letters—but chiefly their political situation—the freedom of their states—the frequency of public assemblies—and the importance of their decisions.

There is much said of the spirit and capacity of the Greeks for all the arts, and to be sure their climate, so serene and temperate, might have all the effect that a climate can have : but I reckon the two other causes much more considerable. The introduction of letters is necessary to the improvement and perfection of a language, and as they were early blessed with that advantage, they had the best opportunity of improving. However, the last cause of all is much more powerful than both the former, though perhaps literature is necessary to be joined with it to produce any great effect. As to some of the other arts, particularly painting and statuary, an eminent modern critic says, the Greeks could not but excel, because they, of all others, had the best images from nature to copy. He says that the games in Greece, in which the best formed bodies for agility and strength in the whole country were seen naked, and striving and exerting themselves to the very utmost, must have presented to persons of genius originals to draw from, such as in most other nations never are to be seen. If this remark is just in the other arts, the influence of eloquence in the public assemblies of these free states must have had a similar effect in the art of speaking.

The art of speaking in Greece, however, does not seem to have risen high till the time of Pericles, and he is said to have been so powerful an orator that he kept up his influence in the city as much by his eloquence as tyrants did by their power. There is a passage of Cicero, which seems to say that he was the first who prepared his discourses in writing, and some have been simple enough to believe that he read them ; but nothing can be a more manifest mistake, because action or pronunciation was by all the ancients considered as the great point in oratory. There were to be seen in Cicero and Quintilian's times, orations said to be of Pericles ; but both these great orators seem to be of opinion that they were not his, because they did not at all seem to come up to the great fame of his eloquence. Mr. Bayle, a very eminent critic, says justly, that these great men might be mistaken in that particular ; for a very indifferent composition may

be the work of a very great orator. The grace of elocution and the power of action might not only acquire a man fame in speaking, but keep up his influence in public assemblies. Of this we have two very great British examples, Mr. Whitefield in the pulpit, and Mr. Pitt in the senate.

After Pericles there were many great orators in Greece, and indeed all their statesmen were orators till the time of Demosthenes, when the Grecian eloquence seems to have attained its perfection. The praises of this great speaker are to be so generally met with, that I shall not insist upon them at all, further than reminding you, that though no doubt eminently qualified by nature, he needed and received great improvement from art.

The Roman eloquence was of much shorter duration. It is true that the Roman state being free, and the assemblies of the people having much in their power, it seems, according to the principles we have gone upon, that public speaking must have been in esteem; but there is something peculiar. The Romans were for many ages a plain, rough, unpolished people. Valor in war was their idol, and therefore though to be sure from the earliest times the assemblies must have been managed in their deliberations by their speakers, yet they were concise and undorned, and probably consisted more of telling them their story, and showing their wounds which was of frequent practice among them, than any artful or passionate harangues. The first speakers of any eminence we read of in the Roman history, were the Gracchi. Cicero I believe makes little mention even of them. Anthony and Crassus were the first celebrated orators among the Romans, and they were but in the age immediately before Cicero himself, and from his time it rather fell into decay.

I have said above that genius and excellence was before criticism. This is very plain; for though we read of schools and rhetoricians at different times and places, these are considered by the great masters as persons quite contemptible. Of this kind there is a remarkable passage in Cicero in his *Brutus*. At hunc (speaking of Pericles) non

declamator, &c. The first just and truly eminent critic in Greece was Aristotle, who flourished as late as the time of Demosthenes. And Cicero himself was the first eminent critic among the Romans. Aristotle has laid open the principles of eloquence and persuasion as a logician and philosopher, and Cicero has done it in a still more masterly manner, as a philosopher, scholar, orator and statesman; and I confess unless he has had many authors to consult that we know nothing of, his judgment and penetration are quite admirable, and his books de Oratore, &c. more finished in their kind, than any of his orations themselves.

As to the effects of oratory, they have been and are surely very great, but as things seen through a mist, or at a great distance, are apt to be mistaken in their size, I am apt to think many say things incredible, and make suppositions quite contrary to nature and reason, and therefore to probability. Some speak and write as if all the ancient orators had a genius more than human, and indeed by their whole strain seem rather to extinguish than excite an ardor to excel. Some also seem to me to go upon a supposition as if all the people in the ancient republics had been sages, as well as their statesmen orators.— There is a remark to be found in many critics upon a story of Theophrastus the philosopher, from which they infer the delicacy of the Athenians. That philosopher it seems went to buy something of an herb-woman, at a stall, and she in her answer to him it seems called him stranger. This they say shows that she knew him by his accent not to be a native of Athens, although he had lived there thirty years. But we are not even certain that her calling him stranger implied any more than that he was unknown to her. Besides, though it were true, that she discovered him not to be an Athenian born, this is no more than what happens in every populous country that there is something in the accent which will determine a man to be of one country or province, rather than another, and I am somewhat of opinion that this would be more discernible in Greece than any where



elic. The different dialects of the Greek tongue were not reckoned reproachful, as many local differences are in Britain, which therefore people will endeavor to rid themselves of as well as they can. In short I take it for granted, that an assembly of the vulgar in Athens was just like an assembly of common people among us, and a senate at Athens in understanding and taste was not superior to the senate of Great-Britain, and that some of them were but mere mobs ; and that they were very disorderly is plain from what we read of Plato being pulled down from the desk, when he went up to defend Socrates.

The most remarkable story of the effect of oratory is that told of Cicero's power over Cæsar in his oration for C. Ligarius. This is very pompously told by some critics, that Cæsar came to the judgment seat determined to condemn him, and even took the pen in his hand to sign his condemnation, but that he was interested by Cicero's eloquence, and at last so moved that he dropped the pen and granted the orator's request. But supposing the facts to have happened, I am very doubtful of the justness of the remark. Cæsar was a great politician, and as we know he did attempt to establish his authority by mercy, it is not unlikely both that he determined to pardon Ligarius, and to flatter Cicero's vanity by giving him the honor of obtaining it. In short, oratory has its chief power in promiscuous assemblies, and there it reigned of old, and reigns still, by its visible effect.



## LECTURE VI.

**W**E now proceed to consider eloquence as divided into its three great kinds—the sublime, the simple, and the mixed. This is very unhappily expressed by Ward, who divides style into the low, the middle, and the sublime. Low is a word which, in its first and literal sense, signifies situation, and when applied metaphorically, never is, in any instance, used in a good

sense, but always signifies what is either unhappy, or base and contemptible, as we say a man's or a state's finances are low. We say a man is in a low state of health. We say he is guilty of low, mean practices.—Has a low, mean, paltry style. It was therefore conveying a very wrong idea to make *low* one of the different kinds of style. You may observe that I have introduced this distinction in a manner somewhat different from him, and some other authors. They consider it as a division of style. I choose rather to say there are three different great kinds, into which eloquence and composition may be divided. The reason is I believe, the word *style*, which was used both by the Greeks and Romans, but especially the latter, has like many others gradually changed its meaning. At first it signified the manner of writing in general, and is even sometimes used so still, but more commonly now in English it is confined to the diction. Nothing is more common than to say sublimity in sentiments and style, so as to distinguish the one from the other. I am sensible that even in this confined sense there is a sublimity, simplicity, and mediocrity in language itself, which will naturally enough fall to be explained, but it is better upon the whole to consider them as different kinds of eloquence for several reasons.

Sublimity in writing consists with all styles, and particularly many of the highest and most admired examples of sublimity are in the utmost simplicity of style. Sometimes they are so far from losing by it, that they owe a great part of their beauty and their force to it. That remarkable example of sublimity in the Scripture, is wholly in the simple style. “Let there be light, and there was light. There are also many others in Scripture, “The gods of the Gentiles are vanity and lies,”—“I am that I am.”

Some of the other kinds also, even the simplest, do sometimes admit great force of expression, though more rarely, and there is a great danger in the simple manner of writing, by admitting lofty expressions to swell into bombast. The mixed kind frequently admits of sublimity of style, and indeed is called mixed, as consisting, as it were,

alternately of the one and the other, or being made up of a proportion of each.

The sublime kind of writing chiefly belongs to the following subjects: epic poetry, tragedy, orations on great subjects, and then particularly the peroration. Nothing can be too great for these subjects, and unless they are treated with sublimity, they are not treated suitably. The simple kind of writing belongs to scientific writing, epistolary writing, essay and dialogue, and to the whole inferior species of poetry, pastorals, epigrams, epitaphs, &c. The mixed kind belongs to history, system, and controversy. The first sort must be always sublime in sentiment or language, or both. The second may be often sublime in sentiment: sometimes, but very rarely, in language. The mixed admits of both sorts with full propriety, and may be often sublime both in sentiment and language.

Let us now consider these three great kinds of composition, separately, in the order in which I have named them.

1. Of the sublime manner of writing—This is very difficult to describe or treat of, in a critical manner. It is very remarkable, that all writers on this subject, not excepting those of the greatest judgment, accuracy and precision, when they come to explain it, have used nothing but metaphorical expressions. It is however certain in general, that metaphor should be kept as much as possible out of definition or explication. These all agreeing therefore in this circumstance, seems to show that sublimity is a single or simple idea, that cannot be resolved, divided or analysed, and that a taste for it, is in a good measure, a feeling of nature. The critics tell us, that sublimity is that which surprises, ravishes, transports: these are words frequently applied to its effects upon the hearers, and greatness, loftiness, majesty, are ascribed to the sentiments, to the character, to the person. An oration, or the sublime parts of a poem, have been compared to the voice of thunder, or penetration of lightning, to the impetuosity of a torrent; this last, is one of the best metaphorical expressions for sublimity in eloquence, because it carries

in it, not only the idea of great force, but of carrying away every thing with it that opposes or lies in its way. That may be said to be sublime, that has an irresistible influence on the hearers, and when examined, carries in it the idea of great power and abilities in the speaker: yet even this is not sufficient, it has the character of greatness, as distinct from that of beauty, sweetness or use. Burke, on the sublime, has endeavored to show that sublimity and beauty, though generally united in our apprehensions, are distinct qualities, and to be traced to a different source. Of sublimity in particular, he says it is always allied to such things as raise the passion of terror: but of this I will speak more fully upon a head I have reserved for that purpose; in which I propose to inquire into the first principles of taste or approbation, common to this and all other arts.

Longinus mentions no less than five different sources of the sublime. (1) Greatness or elevation of mind. (2) Pathos or passion. (3) Figure. (4) Nobleness of language. (5) Composition or arrangement of words. But though the last two of these are of considerable moment, and greatly contribute to augment the force as well as beauty of a discourse, I do not think they are of that nature, as to be considered upon the same footing with the other three. Therefore leaving what is to be said upon them to the next head, when it will properly occur, I shall consider the others in their order.

1. Greatness or elevation of mind—This is the first and radical source of sublimity indeed. It is quite impossible for a man to attain to sublimity of composition, unless his soul is great, and his conceptions noble: and on the other hand, he that possesses these, can hardly express himself meanly. Longinus gives it as an advice, that a man should accustom his mind to great thought. But if you ask me what are great thoughts, I confess myself unable to explain it, and unless the feeling is natural, I am afraid it is impossible to impart it; yet it seems to be pretty generally understood. It is common to say such a man has a great soul, or such another has a mean or little soul. A great soul aspires in its hopes; is not easily ter-

rified by enemies or discouraged by difficulties, It is worth while to consider a little the effect of a man's outward circumstances. The mind to be sure, cannot be wholly made by any circumstances. Sentiments and state are different things. Many a great mind has been in narrow circumstances, and many a little rascal has been a king; yet education and manner have a sensible effect upon men in general. I imagine I have observed, that when persons of great rank, have been at the same time, men of real genius, they have generally excelled in majesty and dignity of sentiments and language. This was an advantage generally enjoyed by the ancients whose writings remain to us; having but their own language to study, and being early introduced into public life, and even into the conduct of the greatest affairs, they were led into nobleness of sentiment. Xenophon, Demosthenes, Cicero, Cæsar, were all of them great statesmen, and two of them great generals, as well as writers. In modern times, there is a more compleat partition of employments, so that the statesman, general and scholar, are seldom found united in the same person; yet I think it appears in fact, that when statesmen are also scholars, they make upon the whole, greater orators and nobler writers, than those who are scholars merely, though of the greatest capacity. In every station however, this remark has place, that it is of importance to sublimity in writing, to endeavor to acquire a large and liberal manner of thinking. Whilst I am making use of this language, I would caution you against thinking that pride and vanity of mind, are at all allied to greatness, in this respect. There is a set of men called free-thinkers, who are pleased to arrogate to themselves, a large and liberal manner of thinking, and the generality of them, are as little creatures, as any on the face of the earth. Mr. Addison compares them to a fly, which lighting upon a great building, and perceiving the small interstices between the stones, cries out of vast chasms and irregularities, which is wholly owing to the extreme littleness of his sight, that is, not able to see the dignity and grandeur of the whole building.

When I am upon this subject of greatness and elevation of thought, as one source of the sublime, you will naturally expect that I should give some examples to illustrate it. I shall begin with some out of the scriptures, where indeed there is the greatest number, and these the noblest that can well be conceived. “I am God alone, and besides me there is no saviour—Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?—Who will set the briars and thorns against me in battle?” &c. See also two passages inimitably grand—Isa. 40. 12—and v. 21, and onwards.

To mention some of the sayings in heathen antiquity—Alexander’s saying to Parmenio is certainly of the great kind, yet perhaps with a considerable mixture of pride as well as greatness. Parmenio told him if he were Alexander he would act in a certain manner. Answer. So would I, if I were Parmenio. That of Porus, the Indian king, to Alexander however, was much greater. When he was Alexander’s prisoner, and was asked by that prince how he expected to be treated? He answered, like a king. Cæsar’s famous saying of *veni, vidi, vici*, has often been quoted as a concise and noble description of the rapidity of his conquests; yet I confess I think it very dubious; it has not only an air of improper vanity, but looks like an intended and silly play upon the words, and what we call alliteration. They are three words of the same length, the same tense, and the same beginning and ending. Cicero, in one of his orations, I believe in that for Marcellus, has a very noble compliment to Cæsar, when he says the gods had given nothing to men so great as a disposition to shew mercy. But of all great sayings on record, there is none that ever made such an impression upon me as that of Ayliffe to king James the III<sup>d</sup>. He had been detected in some of the plots, &c. The king said to him, Mr. Ayliffe, don’t you know ’tis in my power to pardon you? Yes (says he) I know it is in your power, but it is not in your nature!

It is necessary to put you in mind in reading books of criticism, that when examples of greatness of sentiment are produced from Homer and the other ancient writers,

that all circumstances must be taken in, in order to form a just opinion concerning them. We must remember his times, and the general belief of his countrymen with regard to theology, and many other subjects. There must be a probability to make a thing natural, otherwise it is not great or noble, but extravagant. Homer in describing the goddess Discord, says, her feet were upon the earth, and her head was covered with the clouds. He makes Pluto look up and affirm, that Neptune would open hell itself, and make the light to shine into that dark abode. There are some of these that appear to me suspicious even in Homer himself; such as when he makes Jupiter brag that if all the other gods were to hang at the bottom of a chain, and earth and sea, and all along with them, he would toss them all up as easily as a ball. However it was with regard to him, who was taught to believe in Jupiter sitting upon Mount Olympus, or quaffing Nectar in the council of the gods, modern and Christian writers and speakers should be careful to avoid any thing that is extravagant and ridiculous, or even such allusions to the heathen theology as could only be proper to those who believed in it.

There is the more reason to insist upon this, that as grandeur and sublimity is commonly a great object of ambition, particularly with young persons, they are very ready to degenerate into bombast. You ought always to remember that the language ought to be no higher than the subject, or the part of the subject that is then immediately handled. See an example of the different ways of a simple and a turgid writer, upon the very same sentiment, where the Roman empire was extended to the western coast of Spain, Sextus Rufus simply tells it thus—*Hispanias per Decimum Brutum obtinuimus et usque ad Gades et oceanum pervenimus*. Florus, taking a more lofty flight, says—*Decimus Brutus aliquanto totius, &c.*

I have only further to observe, that in sublime descriptions great care should be taken, that they be all of a piece, and nothing unsuitable brought into view. Longinus justly blamed the poet Hesiod, that after he had said every



thing he could, to render the goddess of darkness terrible, he adds, that a stinking humor ran from her nose—a circumstance highly disgusting, but no way terrible.



## LECTURE VII.

**I** COME now to the second source of the sublime, which is pathos, more commonly called in English the pathetic, that is, the power of moving the passions. This is a very important part of the subject: a power over the passions is of the utmost consequence to a poet, and it is all in all to an orator. This every one will perceive if he only recollects what influence passion or sentiment has upon reason, or, in other words, inclination upon the practical judgment. He that possesses this power in a high degree has the highest capacity of usefulness, and is likewise able to do the greatest mischief. Sublime sentiments and language may be formed upon any subject, and they touch the heart with a sense of sympathy or approbation; but to move the passions of others so as to incline their choice, or to alter their purpose, is particularly the design of eloquence.

The chief passions eloquence is intended to work upon are, rage, terror, pity, and perhaps desire in general, though occasionally he may have occasion to introduce every affection. In a heroic poem every affection may be said to take its turn; but the different species of oratory, or the different objects and subjects of it, may be said to divide the passions. A speaker in political or deliberative assemblies may be said to have it in view to excite the passion of rage: he may naturally desire to incense his hearers against their enemies, foreign and domestic, representing the first as terrible and dangerous, to excite aversion and hatred, and the other as weak or worthless, to excite contempt. An example of this you have in the great subject of Demosthenes's orations, Philip, king of Macedon—another in Cicero's discourses against Cataline and Anthony. Pity is the chief passion attempted to be raised at

the bar, unless in criminal cases, where indignation against villainy of every kind is the part of the accuser. Terror and its attendants belong very much to a speaker in the pulpit; rage he has nothing to do with but in an improper sense, to raise a strong and steady, but uniform indignation, against evil. But even this a speaker from the pulpit should endeavor to convert into compassion for the folly and wretchedness of the guilty person. Pity seems to be the single object in tragedy.

One talent of great moment towards raising the passions is a strong and clear imagination, and a descriptive manner of speaking, to paint scenes and objects strongly, and set them before the eyes of the hearers. To select such circumstances as will have the most powerful effect, and to dwell only upon these. We have not any where in English a finer example of the pathetic, and the choice and use of circumstances, than the speech which Shakspeare has made for Anthony in the tragedy of Cæsar. It appears from the history, that Anthony did successfully raise the fury of the Romans against those who killed Cæsar, and I think he could hardly select better images and language than those we have in the English poet.

But yesterday, &c.

1. To raising the passions with success, much penetration and knowledge of human nature is necessary. Without this every attempt must fail. In confirmation of this remark, though there are persons much better fitted for it by nature than others, the most powerful in raising the passions have generally been those who have had much acquaintance with mankind, and practice in life. Recluse students and professed scholars will be able to discover truth, and to defend it, or to write moral precepts with clearness and beauty; but they are seldom equal for the tender and pathetic, to those who have been much in what is called the *world*—by a well known use of that word though almost peculiar to the English language. There is perhaps a double reason for persons well versed in the ways of men having the greatest power upon the passions. They not only know others better, and therefore

how to touch them, but their own hearts, it is likely, have been agitated by more passions than those whose lives have been more calm and even.

2. To raising the passions of others, it is necessary the orator or writer should feel what he would communicate. This is so well known a rule, that I am almost ashamed to mention it, or the trite quotation commonly attending it; “*Si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.*” You may as well kindle a fire with a piece of ice, as raise the passions of others while your own are still. I suppose the reason of this, if we would critically examine it, is, that we believe the thing to be a pretence or imposition altogether, if we see that he who wishes us to be moved by what he says, is notwithstanding himself unmoved. The offence is even something more than barely negative in some cases. If we hear a man speaking with coldness and indifference, where we think he ought to be deeply interested, we feel a certain disappointment, and are filled with displeasure; as if an advocate was pleading for a person accused of a capital crime, if he should appear with an air of indifference and unconcern, let his language and composition be what they will, it is always faulty or disgusting: or let a minister when speaking on the weighty subject of eternity, show any levity in his carriage, it must weaken the force of the most moving truths; whereas, when we see the speaker wholly engaged and possessed by his subject, feeling every passion he wishes to communicate, we give ourselves up to him without reserve, and are formed after his very temper by receiving his instructions.

3. It is a direction nearly allied to this, that a man should never attempt to raise the passions of his hearers higher than the subject plainly merits it. There are some subjects, that if we are able, are of such moment as to deserve all the zeal and fire we can possibly bestow on them, of which we may say, as Dr. Young, “*Passion is reason, transport, temper here.*” A lawyer for his client, whom he believes to be innocent; a patriot for his country, which he believes to be in danger: but above all, a minister for his people’s everlasting welfare, may speak with as much

force and vehemence, as his temper and frame are susceptible of; but in many other cases it is easy to transcend the bounds of reason, and make the language more lofty than the theme. We meet often for example, with raised and laboured encomiums in dedication: a species of writing the most difficult to succeed in, of any almost, that can be named. The person honored by this mark of the author's esteem, is very seldom placed in the same rank by the public, that he is by him. Besides, though he were really meritorious, it seldom comes fairly up to the representation: the truth is, to correspond to the picture, he should be almost the only meritorious person of the age or place in which he lives. Now, considering how cold a compliment this is to all the rest, and particularly to those who read it, there is little wonder that such rhapsodies are treated with contempt. I have often thought the same thing of funeral panegyrics: when a man dies, whose name perhaps was hardly ever heard of before, we have a splendid character of him in the newpapers, where the prejudice of relations or the partiality of friendship do just what they please. I remember at the death of a person whom I shall not name, who was it must be confessed, not inconsiderable for literature, but otherwise had not much that was either great or amiable about him, an elegiac poem was published, which began with this line, "Whence this astonishment in every face?" Had the thing been really true, and the public had been deeply affected with the loss, the introduction had been not inelegant; but on such a pompous expression, when the reader recollected that he had seen no marks of public astonishment, it could not but tempt him to smile.

4. Another important remark to be made here, is, that a writer or speaker in attempting the pathetic, should consider his own natural turn, as well as the subject. Some are naturally of a less warm and glowing imagination, and in themselves susceptible of a less degree of passion than others; these should take care not to attempt a flight that they cannot finish, or enter upon such sentiments and language as they will probably sink as it were, and fall away from in a little time. Such should substitute gravity and

solemnity, instead of fire, and only attempt to make their discourse clear to the understanding, and convincing to the conscience: perhaps, this is in general the best way in serious discourses and moral writings: because, though it may not produce so strong or ardent emotions, it often leaves a deeper and more lasting impression.

### *Of Figurative Speech.*

It is common to meet with this expression; “The tropes and figures of rhetoric.” This expression is not just; the terms are neither synonymous, nor are they two distinct species of one genus—Figure is the general expression; a trope is one of the figures, but there are many more. Every trope is a figure, but every figure is not a trope: perhaps we may say a trope is an expedient to render language more extensive and copious, and may be used in tranquility; whereas, a figure is the effect of passion. This distinction however, cannot be universally maintained; for tropes are oftentimes the effect of passion as well as of the narrowness of language. Figures may be defined any departure from the plain direct manner of expression, and particularly such as are suggested by the passions, and differ on that account, from the way in which we would have spoken, if in a state of perfect tranquility. Tropes are a species of figures, in which a word or phrase is made use of in a sense different from its first and proper signification, as “The Lord is a sun and shield;” where the words “sun and shield,” are used tropically. There are several different tropes.

1. Metonymy—This is a very general kind of trope, comprehending under it several others; the meaning of it is a change of name, or one name for another: this may be done several ways: (1) The cause may be put for the effect, or the effect for the cause: as when we say, cold death; because death makes cold: Old age kept him behind, that is, made him weak, &c. (2) The author for his works. (3) The thing containing, for the thing contained: as drink the cup, that is, the liquor in the cup. (4) A part is taken for the whole, or the whole for a part;

as my roof for my house ; my house is on fire, when only a small part of it burns—This is called *synecdoche*. (5) A general term for a particular ; a hundred reasons may be given, that is, many reasons may be given. (6) A proper name for a characteristic name, as he is a Nero for a cruel man, or a Sardanapalus for a voluptuous monarch. All these and many more are *metonymies*.

2. *Metaphor*—this might as well have been the general term, as *trope* ; for it also signifies change of expression : it is a species of *trope*, by which any term is applied in a sense different from its natural import, as when we say a tide of pleasure, to express the impetuosity of pleasure : when the heavens are said to be over our heads as brass, and the earth under our feet as iron.

3. *Allegory*—This is continuing the metaphor, and extending it by a variety of expressions of the same kind, as the Lord is my shepherd, he maketh me to lie down in green pastures—he maketh me to feed beside the still waters.

4. *Irony*—In using words directly contrary to their meaning ; as, “ No doubt you are the people and wisdom shall die with you.”

5. *Hyperbole*—When things are carried beyond their truth, to express our sentiments more strongly, as “ Swift-er than the wind, whiter than snow.

6. *Catachresis*—is the first trope of all, when words are used in an opposite, and sometimes in an impossible sense, as when chains and shackles are called bracelets of iron.

### *Figures.*

Figures cannot be fully enumerated, because they are without number ; and each figure may be used several different ways. (1) *Exclamation*—This is nothing else than a way of expressing admiration or lamentation, as Oh ! Alas ! Heavens ! &c. used by persons much moved. (2) *Doubt*—This is frequently the expression of a doubtful mind, in suspense what to do. This is described by Virgil, in the distress of Dido, when Eneas left her ; “ Shall I go to the neighboring kings whom I have so of-

“ten despised?” Sometimes it is a beautiful figure, and obliges persons to take notice of it, and sometimes of what they would otherwise have omitted: “Who is this that cometh from Edom?” (3) Epanorthosis—This is a correction or improvement of what has been said: “You are not truly the son of a goddess, nay you must have sucked a tygers.” (4) Pleonasm—This is a redundancy, as “I have heard it with my ears, he spake it with his mouth.” (5) Similitude—This is comparing one thing with another, as “he shall be like a tree planted, &c. (6) Distribution—This consists of a particular enumeration of several correspondent images: “Their throat is an open sepulchre, their tongues have used deceit.” (7) Prosopopeia—When, persons dead or absent, or different from the speaker, are brought in speaking, as Cicero supposes his country or Italy, and all the public saying to him, “Marcus Tullius what are you doing?” (8) Apostrophe—When persons dead or absent, or any inanimate things are spoken to, as Cicero says, “O! vos, or hear O! Heavens, and give ear O earth!” (9) Communication—When a speaker calls upon his hearers to say what advice they would give, or what they would have done different from what he or the person whom he defends has done; What could you have done in this case? What should I do now? (10) Interrogation—Putting a thing home to the readers, as “What fruit had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed?”



## LECTURE VIII.

**I** HAVE now gone through the account given in the systems, of the tropes and figures of rhetoric, by which you will sufficiently understand the meaning of both. The proper applications however of them is a matter of much greater moment, and of much greater difficulty. I will make a few remarks before I close the subject, in addition to what hath been already interspersed through the different parts of it.



1. Perhaps it will not be improper to consider what is the purpose intended by figures. I have introduced them here as a means of giving sublimity to a discourse, but may there not be some little analysis and resolution of that purpose, may we not inquire what are the particular effects of figures? Are the effects of figures in general, and of all figures, the same? It is certain that figurative speech is very powerful in raising the passions. And probably different figures are proper to express or excite different passions; admiration, desire, pity, hatred, rage, or disdain. This appears from the explication of figures formerly given. But besides this, we may observe that there are some effects of figures that seem to be wholly unconnected with passion, of these I shall mention three; ornament, explication, conviction. Sometimes figure is made use of merely for ornament. Of this Rollin gives us an example in which an author says, “ The king, to  
 “ give an eternal mark of the esteem and friendship with  
 “ which he honored a great general, gave an illustrious  
 “ place to his glorious ashes amidst those masters of the  
 “ earth, who preserve on the magnificence of their tombs  
 “ an image of the lustre of their thrones.” Under this head may be reckoned all the examples of the use of figures, to raise things that are mean and low in themselves to some degree of dignity by the phraseology, or to give a greater dignity to any thing than the simple idea or the proper name would convey, as if one should say, looking round the scene and observing the bounteous gifts of Providence for the support of innumerable creatures, instead of the grass and corn every where growing in abundance. Perhaps also under the same head may be reckoned, the clothing in other terms any thing that might be supposed disagreeable or disgusting, as when Cicero confesses that the servants of Milo killed Clodius, he does not say *interfecerunt* but he says, “ They did that which every  
 “ good man would wish his servants to do in like circum-  
 “ stances.” I shall only observe, that the greatest delicacy and judgment imaginable is necessary in the use of figures with this view, because they are very apt to degenerate into bombast. Young persons in their first com-

positions, and especially when they have a good deal of ancient literature fresh in their heads, are very apt to be faulty in this particular. A common word or sentiment which any body might use, and every body would understand, they think mean and below them, and therefore they have recourse to unnecessary figures, and hard or learned phrases. Instead of walking about the fields they perambulate them, they do not discover a thing, but recognise it. Johnson the author of the Rambler is the most faulty this way, of any writer of character. A little play of wit, or a few strokes of raillery, he calls a *reciprocation of smartness*.

Another use of figures is for explication, to make a thing more clearly conceived. This in general may be said to be the use of the similitude, only I think when figures are used for illustration, it is as much to assist the imagination as the judgment, and to make the impression which was before real and just, very strong. For example when Solomon says, "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly," "If you bray a fool in a mortar, he will return to his folly." "The foolish man walketh by the way, and he saith to every one that he is a fool."

A third use of figures may be said, although improperly, to be for conviction, or to make us more readily or more fully yield to the truth, as when to support what we have said, that persons of sound judgment are reserved in speech, we add, deep waters move without noise—or that men in eminent stations are exposed to observation and censure. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." In all such cases therefore it is certain that a similitude is not an argument, yet the analogy of nature seems to carry in it a good deal of evidence, and adds to the impression made upon the mind.

2. A second remark is, that figures of every kind should come naturally, and never be sought for. The design of explaining the several kinds of figures is not to teach you to make them, but to correct them. Arguments and illustrations we must endeavor to invent, but

figures never. If they do not flow spontaneous, they are always forced. If a man having proceeded too far in a subject, bethinks himself, that he will here introduce a similitude, or an allegory, or a prosopopeia, &c. he will either miss of it altogether, or he will produce something vastly more jejune and insipid, than it is possible for any man to make without figures. It puts me in mind of the ridiculous chasms that some persons bring themselves to in conversation, when they offer to bring a similitude which has not yet occurred to them. They will say "He " raged, and raved, and roared just like—I don't know " what." Figures should be the native expression of passions or conceptions already felt, as they are the means of raising passions in those to whom you speak. They should therefore be posterior in point of time, to the feelings of the speaker, although prior to those of the hearers. The great purpose therefore of criticism on this part of the subject, is to prune the luxuriances of nature, and see that the figures be just and natural.

3. I have already in speaking upon the tropes, had occasion to give some rules as to the use of them, particularly as to the propriety and consistency of them. But there are some things to be observed further for explaining them. There are two characters frequently given to tropes, especially to metaphors, which deserve to be considered. The one is strength, the other is boldness. These are by no means the same. That is a strong metaphor or image, that gives us a very lively impression of the thing represented. As that of the wise man, " A " stone is heavy, and the sand is weighty, but a fool's " wrath is heavier than them both." A bold image or metaphor is that which upon the whole is just and strong, but is considerably removed from common observation, and would not easily or readily have occurred to another. It is also called a bold image when the resemblance is but in one single point. There is not any where to be seen a collection of bolder images, than in the book of Job, particularly in the description of the war-horse, among which in particular the following seems to excel, " Hast " thou clothed his neck with thunder." To liken the

mane of a horse to thunder, would not have occurred to every one; neither in idea does the resemblance hold but in one particular, that the flowing and waving of the mane is like the sheets and forked flakes of lightning.



## LECTURE IX.

**I** NOW come to consider the simple manner of writing. If I could explain this fully, so as to make every one clearly to understand it, and at the same time incline you to admire and study it, I should think a very difficult and important point was gained. It is exceedingly difficult to bring young persons especially, to a taste for the simple way of writing. They are apt to think it of little moment, not so much the object of ambition as an exercise of self denial, to say a thing plainly, when they might have said it nobly. I would observe therefore, in the very beginning, that it is a mistake to consider simplicity and sublimity as universally opposite, for on the contrary there is not only a great excellence in some performances, which we may call wholly of the simple kind; such as a story told, or an epistle written, with all the beauty of simplicity, but in the most sublime and animated compositions, some of the greatest sentiments derive their beauty from being clothed in simple language. Simplicity is even as necessary to some parts of an oration, as it is to the whole of some kinds of composition. Let the subject be ever so great and interesting, it is prudent, decent, necessary, to begin the discourse in a cool and dispassionate manner. That man who should begin an oration with the same boldness of figure and the same high pitch of voice that would be proper towards the close of it, would commit one of the greatest faults against propriety, and I think would wholly prevent its effect upon the hearers.

But how shall we explain the simple manner of writing? It is, say many authors, that which is likest to and

least removed from the language of common life. It must be therefore easy and obvious, few or no figures in the expression, nothing obscure in the sentiments, or involved in the method. Long sentences are contrary to it, words either difficult or uncommon are inconsistent with it. Cicero and Horace have both said, and all critics have said after them, it is that which when men hear, they think that they themselves could only have said the same, or that it is just a kind of expression of their own thoughts. They generally remark further, that it is what seems to be easy, but yet is not; as Horace says, *ut sibi quis speret idem*, &c. We may further observe, that what is truly simple always carries in it the idea of being easy in its production, as well as in imitation, and indeed the one of these seems necessarily to suppose the other. Whatever seems to be the effect of study and much invention, cannot be simple. It is finely exemplified in the introduction of Anthony's speech in Shakespeare: I am no orator as Brutus is, &c. Rollin has given us an admirable example of a story told with a beautiful simplicity, from Cicero's offices. There is an example also in Livy's account of the battle of the Horatii and Curiatii, only with a little more force of expression, as the importance and solemnity of the subject seemed to require it. But it requires a very masterly knowledge of the Latin language, to perceive the beauties fully, that are pointed at by Rollin in the first instance, or might easily be mentioned in the last. There is no author in our language who excels more in simplicity than Addison—The Spectator in general indeed, but especially the papers written by him, excel in this quality. Ease and elegance are happily joined in them, and nature itself, as it were, seems to speak in them. If some of the later periodical writers have equalled, or even excelled them in force or elegance, not one has ever come up to them in simplicity.

The subjects or the species of writing in which simplicity chiefly shines, are narration, dialogue, epistolary writing, essay writing, and all the lighter species of poetry, as odes, songs, epigrams, elegies and such like. The ancients were remarkable for a love and admiration of sim-

plicity, and some of them remain to us as eminent examples of its excellence. Xenophon in his institution of Cyrus, is particularly remarkable for a sweet and dignified simplicity. He uses neither language nor ideas that are difficult and far-fetched. In the smaller compositions of the ancients, as odes, epigrams, &c. they were at prodigious pains to polish them, and make them quite easy and natural. They placed their great glory in bestowing much art, and at the same time making it to appear quite easy and artless, according to the saying now grown into a proverb, *artis est celare artem*. The beauty of simplicity may not appear at first sight, or be at all perceived by persons of a vitiated taste, but all persons of good judgment immediately, and the bulk of mankind in time, are charmed with what is quite easy, and yet truly accurate and elegant.

It ought to be carefully observed that simplicity is quite a different thing from lowness and meanness, and the great art of a writer is to preserve the one without degenerating into the other. It is the easiest thing in the world to speak or write vulgarisms, but a person of true taste will carefully avoid every thing of that kind. For example, one who would write simply, and as near the language of plain people in ordinary discourse as possible, would yet avoid every absurdity or barbarism that obtains a place in common conversation, as to say, "This here table, and that there candle." It is also quite contrary to simplicity to adopt the quaint expressions or cant phrases that are the children of fashion, and obtain for a little, or in some particular places and not in others. The Spectator attacked with great spirit and propriety several of those that were introduced into conversation and writing in his time, such as *mob*, *rep*, *pos*, *bite*, *bamboosle*, and several others. Most of them he fairly defeated, but one or two of them got the better of him, and are now freely introduced into the language, such as *mob*. Johnson also has put bamboosle in his Dictionary, which he calls indeed a low word. Arbuthnot is his authority, but it was plainly used by him in the way of ridicule, and therefore it should either not have been in the Dictionary,

at all, or such an authority should not have been given for it.

It is exceedingly difficult, and requires an excellent judgment to be able to descend to great simplicity, and yet to keep out every low expression or idea. I do not think it is easy to be a thorough judge of pure diction in any language but our own, and not even in that without a good deal of the knowledge of human life, and a thorough acquaintance with the best authors. Writers and speakers of little judgment are apt at times to go into extremes, to swell too much on the one hand, and to fall into what is vulgar and offensive on the other.

When speaking on simplicity, - I observe that there is a simplicity in the taste and composition of a whole discourse, different from simplicity of sentiment and language in the particular parts. This will incline a man to avoid all unnecessary ornament, particularly the ornaments of fashion, and the peculiar dress or mode of the times. We say in architecture that a building is in a simple style, when it has not a great multiplicity of ornaments, or is not loaded with beauties, so to speak. It is very remarkable that books written in the same age will differ very much one from another in this respect; and those which have least of the ornaments then in vogue, continue in reputation when the others are grown ridiculous. I will give you an instance of this. A small religious treatise, Scougal's *Life of God in the soul of man*, which is written with great simplicity, and yet dignity, and may now be read with pleasure and approbation by persons of the best taste; while most of the other writers of his age and country, are ridiculous, or hardly intelligible.

Perhaps it may help us to form right notions of simplicity, to consider what are the opposites, or the greatest enemies to it. (1) One is abstraction of sentiment, or too great refinement of any kind: of this the greatest example in an author of merit, is the writer of the *Rambler*; almost every page of his writings, furnishes us with instances of departure from simplicity, partly in the sentiment, and partly in the diction.



(2) Another, is allegory, and especially far-fetched allusions, as in the example which the Spectator gives of a poet, who speaks of Bacchus' cast coat: this is little better than a riddle, and even those who discern it, will take a little time to reflect, that according to the heathen mythology, Bacchus was the God of wine; wine is kept in casks, and therefore an empty cask, or at least an useless one, may be called Bacchus' cast coat.

(3) A third enemy to simplicity, is an affectation of learning: This spoils simplicity many ways; it introduces terms of art, which cannot be understood, but by those who are adepts in a particular branch. Such persons have been long exposed to ridicule under the name of pedants. Sometimes indeed, the word pedantry has been in a manner confined to those addicted to classic literature, and who intermix every thing they say, with scraps taken from the learned languages; but this is quite improper, for lawyers, physicians, dunces, or schoolmasters are equally ridiculous, when they fill their discourse with words drawn from their particular art.

(4) The only other enemy to simplicity I shall mention, is an ambition to excel. This perhaps, should not have been so much divided from the rest, as made the great principle from which the rest proceed. Nothing more certainly renders a man ridiculous, than an over forwardness to display his excellence; he is not content with plain things, and particularly with such things as every body might say, because these would not distinguish him.

On the whole, as I observed on sublimity, that one of the best and surest ways to attain it was to think nobly, so the best way to write simply, is to think simply, to avoid all affectation, to attempt to form your manner of thinking to a noble self-denial. A man little solicitous about what people think of him, or rather having his attention fixed upon quite another purpose, viz. giving information, or producing conviction, will only attain to a simple manner of writing, and indeed he will write best in all respects.

As to the mixed style or manner of writing, as it consists of the mixture of the other two, I shall not need to say any thing by way of explaining it, but only make

a remark or two, of the use and application of it. The mixed kind of writing chiefly consists of history and controversy. The great quality necessary to execute it properly, is soundness of judgment, to determine on what subjects, and on what parts of subjects it is proper to write with simplicity, and on what with force—One would wish not to go beyond, but just to gratify a reader's inclination in this respect.

There are many cases in history, where the greatest sublimity both of sentiments and language, is both admitted and required, particularly all the beauty and all the force that can be admitted into description, is of importance in history. Those who will read in Robertson's history of Scotland, the account he gives of the astonishment, terror and indignation that appeared in the English court, when news was brought of the massacre at Paris, or in the same author, the account of the execution of Mary queen of Scots, will see the force and sublimity of description. The difference between sublimity of sentiment and language in an historian, and in a poet or orator, seems to me to resemble the difference between the fire of a managed horse, when reined in by the rider, and marching with a firm and stately pace, and the same when straining every nerve, in the eager contention in a race. We shall enter a little into this matter, if we consider the different images that are made use of in the different arts. In poetry we say a beautiful, striking, shining metaphor, fervent, glowing imagery. In oratory we say warm, animated, irresistible. In history we use the words force, nobleness, dignity and majesty, particularly those last attributes, of dignity and majesty. Herodotus has been often called the father of history, though I confess I apprehend he has obtained this title, chiefly because of his antiquity, and his being the first that ever gave any thing of a regular history; but though he has some things august enough, yet he has admitted so many incredible stories, and even peculiarities into his work, as very much detracts from its dignity; we must indeed impute a good deal of this to the age in which he lived, and the impossibility of their distinguishing truth from falsehood, so well

as those of later ages, who have had the advantage of all past experience.

History indeed, is not only of the mixed kind of writing, so as to admit sometimes sublimity, and sometimes simplicity, but those styles should be really blended together, in every part of it. The most noble and animated sentiments, characters or descriptions in history, should yet be clothed with such a gravity and decency of garb, so to speak, as to give an air of simplicity to the whole. It is an advantage to a poem, that the author says but little in his own person, but makes the characters speak and say all; and in an orator it is an advantage, when he can carry the hearers off from himself to his subject; but above all, an historian should not so much as wish to shine, but with the coolness of a philosopher, and the impartiality of a judge should set the actors and transactions before the reader.

Controversy is another subject of the mixed kind, which ought to be in general written with simplicity, yet will sometimes admit of the ornaments of eloquence: of this I shall speak a little more afterwards, and therefore shall now only add, that controversy, differs from history, in that it sometimes admits of passion and warmth, when there seems to be a sufficient foundation laid for it; a controversial writer will endeavor to interest his reader, and excite either contempt or indignation against his adversary.

After having given you this view of the three great kinds of writing, or as they are sometimes called, different styles, it may not be amiss to observe, that there are distinctions of style, which it is proper that an able writer should observe, that do not range themselves, at least not fully and properly, under these three heads, but may be said to run through all the kinds of eloquence.

Many eminent authors have said, that the climates have some effect upon the style; that in the warmer countries the style is more animated, and the figures more bold and glowing: and nothing is more common, than to ascribe a peculiarity of style, and that particularly elevated and full of metaphor, to the orientals, as if it belonged to that part of the globe; but if I am not mistaken, both this and other things, such as courage, that have been attributed

to the climate, belong either not to the climate at all, or in a small measure, and are rather owing to the state of society and manners of men. We have before had occasion to see that all narrow languages are figured. In a state, where there are few or no abstract ideas, how should there be abstract terms. If any body will read the poem of Fingal, which appears to have been composed on the bleak hills of the north of Scotland, he will find as many figures and as bold, as in any thing composed in Arabia or Persia. The state of society then, is what gives a particular color to the style, and by this the styles of different ages and countries are distinguished—that the climate does but little, may be seen just by comparing ancient and modern Italy; what difference between the strength and force of the ancient Latin tongue, and the present Italian language, in the expression of sentiments? it must therefore vary with sentiments and manners; and what difference between the stern and inflexible bravery of a free ancient Roman, and the effeminate softness of a modern Italian? yet they breathed the same air, and were nursed by the same soil. I will just go a little off from the subject to say, that a very late author, (Lord Kaimes) seems to think that the courage of mankind is governed by the climates; he says that the northern climates produce hardened constitutions, and bold and firm minds; that invasions have been made from north to south: but I apprehend, he may be mistaken here both in his facts, and the reasons of them—Invasions have not always been made from north to south: for the Roman arms penetrated very far to the north of their territory; the first great conquerors of the east in Egypt and Babylon, carried their arms to the north: and where the conquest ran the other way, it was owing to other circumstances; and Dean Swift says much nearer the truth, it was from poverty to plenty.

The design of this digression is to show, that not only the circumstances that appear in a language, but several others that have also been attributed to climate, owe very little to it, but to the state of mankind and the progress of society. The maxim of that great modern writer,

Montesquieu, which he applies to population, is also true of language—That natural causes are not by far so powerful as moral causes. Allowing, therefore, as some have affirmed that the northern climates may give a roughness and harshness to the accent and pronunciation, I believe it is all that we can expect from climate; the distinction of styles and composition must come from another original.



## LECTURE X.

**H**AVING in a great measure rejected the supposition of the style in writing being affected by the climate, and shown that it rather takes its colour from the state of society, and the sentiments and manners of men, it follows that all the great distinctions that take place in manners will have a correspondent effect upon language spoken or written. When the manners of a people are little polished, there is a plainness or a roughness in the style. Absolute monarchies, and the obsequious subjection introduced at the courts of princes, occasions a pompous swelling and compliment to be in request, different from the boldness and sometimes ferocity of republican states.

Seneca in remarking upon the Roman language, says, *Genus dicendi mutatur per publicos mores, &c.* This he exemplifies in the Roman language, which was short and dry in the earliest ages, afterwards become elegant and ornate, and at last loose and diffuse.

The style of an age also is sometimes formed by some one or more eminent persons, who, having obtained reputation, every thing peculiar to them is admired and copied, and carried much into excess. Seneca has remarked this also, that commonly one author obtains the palm, and becomes the model, and all copy him. *Hæc vitia unus aliquis inducit.* And he gives a very good example of it, of which we may now judge in Sallust. He also very properly observes, that all the faults that arise from ini-

tation become worse in the imitator than in the example. Thus reproving the fault just now mentioned in our ancestors.

It is remarkable that Seneca himself was another example of the same thing. His manner of writing, which is peculiar, came to be the standard of the age. His manner has been called by critics, point and antithesis. A short sentence containing a strong sentiment, or a beautiful one, as it were like a maxim by itself. For an example or two of this; to express the destruction of Lyons he says, *Lugdunum quod ostendebatur, &c.* That Lyons, which was formerly shown, is now sought. And on the same subject—*Una nox, &c.* There was but one night between a great city and none. *Quid est eques Romanus, &c.* What! is a Roman knight, a freed man or slave! names generated by ambition or oppression.

The fault of this sententious manner of writing does not lie in the particulars being blameable, but in the repetition and uniformity becoming tedious—when every paragraph is stuffed with sentences and bright sayings, generally having the same tune, it wearies the ear. The most remarkable book in the English language for putting continual smartness, sentence and antithesis for elegance, is the *Gentleman instructed*. I shall read you one paragraph—The misfortune of one breathes vigor into the others: They carry on manfully the attack—Their heads run round with the glasses. Their tongues ride post. Their wits are jaded. Their reason is distanced. Brutes could not talk better, nor men worse. Like skippers in a storm, they rather hallowed than spoke. Scarce one heard his neighbor, and not one understood him; so that noise stood for sense, and every one passed for a virtuoso, because all played the fool to extravagance.

I shall not enlarge much farther upon the difference of style arising from the character of an age, as in the ages before the reformation, called the times of chivalry, when military prowess was the great thing in request—their gallantry and heroism were to be seen in every writer.—At the time of the reformation and the revival of learning,

their citations of the ancient writers and allusions to the classic phrases distinguished every author. In the age of the civil wars in England, of which religion was so much the cause, allusions to singular expressions, and theological opinions, are every where to be met with, of which the great Milton is an example.

But there is another distinction of styles, which is chiefly personal, and will distinguish one author from another, in the same age, and perhaps of the same or nearly the same abilities. There are several different epithets given to style in our language, which I shall mention in a certain order, which I suppose will contribute something to explain the meaning of them. We call a style, simple or plain, smooth, sweet, concise, elegant, ornate, just, nervous, chaste, severe. These are all different epithets which will each of them convey to a nice critical ear, something different, though I confess it is not easy to define them clearly, or explain them fully. Plainness and simplicity is when the author does not seem to have had any thing in view, but to be understood, and that by persons of the weakest understanding. That ought to be in view in many writings, and indeed perspicuity will be found to be a character of many styles, when there are other great qualities, but we call that plain and simple, when there is no discovery of literature, and no attempt at the pathetic. Scougal's *Life of God in the soul of man*, and Dr. Evans's *Sermons*, are admirable patterns of this manner. (2) I would call that a smooth style, when the utmost care had been taken to measure the periods, and to consult the ear on the structure of the sentence; for this I know no author more remarkable than Hervey, in his *Meditations*. (3) Sweetness seems to me to differ from the former only in that the subjects and the images are generally of a pleasing or soothing nature, such as may particularly be seen in Mrs. Rowe's *Letters*; perhaps also in a more modern composition by a lady, Lady Mary W. Montague's *Letters*. And indeed when female authors have excelled, they generally do excel in sweetness. (4) The next is



conciseness. This is easily understood, it is just as much brevity as is consistent with perspicuity. It is a beauty in every writing when other qualities are not hurt by it. But it is peculiarly proper for critical or scientific writing, because there we do not so much expect or want to know the author's sentiments, but as soon as possible to learn the facts, to understand them fully, and range them methodically. There are many more authors who excel in this respect in the French, than in the English language. Not only the scientific writings, but even political and moral writings are drawn up by them with great conciseness. There cannot be greater conciseness than in Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*. Brown's *Estimate of the manners and principles of the times*, seems to be an imitation of that author in his manner. In essay writing, David Hume seems to have as happily joined conciseness and perspicuity as most of our English writers. Some pious writers have been as successful this way as most of our nation; such as *Mason's Sayings*, and *Mason on Self-knowledge*. (5) A style is called elegant when it is formed by the principles of true taste, and much pains is taken to use the best and purest expressions that the language will afford. It is very common to join together ease and elegance. The great patterns we have of these are Addison and Tillotson. Seed's *Sermons* too may be mentioned here, as very much excelling in both these qualities; so also does David Hume. The other Hume, author of the *Elements of Criticism*, though a very good judge of writing, seems in point of style to be very defective himself. If he has any talent, it is conciseness and plainness; but he is at the same time often abrupt and harsh. (6) An ornate style may be said to be something more than elegant, introducing into a composition all the beauties of language, where they can find a place with propriety. I mentioned before, that Hervey's style in his *Meditations*, was exceedingly smooth and flowing. I may add it has also the qualities of elegant and ornate. That style is elegant which is correct and free from faults; that is ornate which abounds with beauties. (7) The next character

of style is, that it is just. By this I understand, a particular attention to the truth and meaning of every expression. Justness is frequently joined with, or otherwise expressed by precision; so that (if I may speak so) together with a taste which will relish and produce an elegance of language, there is a judgment and accuracy which will abide the scrutiny of philosophy and criticism. Many well turned periods and showy expressions will be found defective here. This justness of style is scarcely ever found without clearness of understanding, so that it appears in accuracy of method, in the whole discourse, as well as in the style of particular parts. Dr. Samuel Clark was a great example of this. He was one of those few mathematicians who were good writers, and while he did not lose the life and fervor of the orator, preserved the precision of the natural philosopher. (8) Nervous or strong is the next character of style, and this implies that in which the author does not wholly neglect elegance and precision. But he is much more attentive to dignity and force. A style that is very strong and nervous, might often receive a little additional polish by a few more epithets or copulatives, but cannot descend to such minuteness. It is a fine expression of Richard Baxter, upon style, "May I speak plainly and pertinently, and somewhat nervously, I have my purpose." Baxter was a great example of a nervous style, with great neglect of elegance, and Dean Swift is an illustrious example of the same sort of diction, with a very considerable attention to elegance. Both the one and the other seem to write in the fullness of their hearts, and to me without scruple those terms are commonly best, that first present themselves to a fertile invention and warm imagination, without waiting to choose in their room those that might be more smooth or sonorous, but less emphatic. (9) Chastity of style I think stands particularly opposed to any embellishments that are not natural, and necessary. Nay, we generally mean by a very chaste writer, one who does not admit even all the ornaments that he might, and what ornaments he does admit are always of the most decent kind, and the most properly executed. (10) Severity of style has this

title only, by way of comparison. That is a severe style which has propriety, elegance and force, but seems rather to be above and to disdain the ornaments which every body else would approve, and the greatest part of readers would desire.



## LECTURE XI.

**W**E come now to the third general head, which was to speak of oratory as it is divided into the several parts which constitute the art. These have been generally the following, invention, disposition, style or composition, pronunciation, including gesture.

1. Invention. This is nothing else but finding out the sentiments by which a speaker or writer would explain what he has to propose, and the arguments by which he would enforce it. This subject is treated of very largely, in most of the books of oratory, in which I think they judge very wrong. In by far the greatest number of cases, there is no necessity of teaching it, and where it is necessary, I believe it exceeds the power of man to teach it with effect. The very first time indeed, that a young person begins to compose, the thing is so new to him, that it is apt to appear dark and difficult, and in a manner impossible. But as soon as he becomes a little accustomed to it, he finds much more difficulty in selecting what is proper, than in inventing something that seems to be tolerable. There are some persons I confess, whom their own stupidity, or that of their relations, forces to attempt public speaking, who are entirely barren, and not able to bring out any thing either good or bad; but this is exceedingly rare, and when it does happen, it will be so burdensome to the man himself, that he must speedily give over the attempt. There are infinitely more who have plenty of matter, such as it is, but neither very valuable in itself nor clothed in proper language. I think it happens very generally that those who are least concise and accurate, are most lengthy and voluminous,

I will therefore not spend much time upon invention, leaving it to the spontaneous production of capacity and experience; only observe that it is called a common place, from whence you draw your argument. That principle of law, nature, taste, experience, from which you fetch your topic, and apply it to your particular case, is a common place; as for example, if I want to prove that a strict discipline in a society is best, I say that discipline which will, in the most effectual manner restrain offences is certainly the best; this is the topic or common place.

It would be needless to point out the sources of invention, or show from whence arguments may be drawn, for they may be drawn from all the characters and qualities of an action or person, and from all the circumstances that accompany it. If I mean to aggravate a crime or injury, I say it was done deliberately, obstinately, repeatedly, without temptation, against many warnings, and much kindness, that its effects are very bad to a man's self, to others, to the character, the person, the estate, &c. If I want to speak in praise of a free government, I mention its happy effects in giving security and happiness, promoting industry, encouraging genius, producing value; and then I apply to experience, and show the happiness of free states, and the misery of those that have been kept in slavery: but I repeat the remark, that invention need not be taught, unless it be to one that never yet composed a sentence. There have been books of common places, published, containing arguments and topics for illustration and even similitudes—sayings of the ancients, &c. but they are of very little use, unless to a person that has no fund of his own, and then one that makes use of them is like a man walking on stilts; they make him look very big, but he walks very feebly.

2. The next division of the oratorical art, is disposition or distribution. This is a matter of the utmost moment, and upon which instruction is both necessary and useful. By disposition as a part of the oratorical art I mean order in general, in the whole of a discourse or any kind of composition, be it what it will. As to the parts of which a single speech or oration consists, they will be afterwards consider-

ed. Before I proceed to explain or point out the way to attain good order, I would just mention a few of its excellencies.

(1) Good order in a discourse gives light, and makes it easily understood. If things are thrown together without method, each of them will be less understood, and their joint influence in leading to a conclusion, will not be perceived. It is a noble expression of Horace, who calls it *lucidos ordo*, clear order. It is common to say, when we hear a confused discourse, "It had neither head nor tail, I could not understand what he would be at." (2) Order is necessary to force, as well as light; this indeed is a necessary consequence of the other, for we shall never be persuaded by what we do not understand. Very often the force of reasoning depends upon the united influence of several distinct propositions. If they are ranged in a just order, they will all have their effect, and support one another; if otherwise, it will be like a number of men attempting to raise a weight, and one pulling at one time, and another at another, which will do just nothing, but if all exert their power at once, it will be easily overcome.

(3) Order is also useful for assisting memory. Order is necessary even in a discourse that is to have a transient effect, but if any thing is intended to produce a lasting conviction, and to have a daily influence, it is still more necessary. When things are disposed in a proper order, the same concatenation that is in the discourse, takes place in the memory, so that when one thing is remembered, it immediately brings to remembrance what has an easy and obvious connexion with it. The association of ideas linked together by any tie is very remarkable in our constitution, and is supposed to take place from some impression made upon the brain. If we have seen two persons but once, and seen them both at the same time only, or at the same place only, the remembrance of the one can hardly be separated from the other. I may also illustrate the subject by another plain instance. Suppose I desire a person going to a city, to do three or four things for me that are wholly unconnected, as to deliver a letter to one person—to visit a friend of mine, and to bring me

notice how he is—to buy a certain book for me if he can find it—and to see whether any ship be to sail for Britain soon, it is very possible he may remember some of them, and forget the others; but if I desire him to buy me a dozen of silver spoons, to carry them to an engraver to put my name upon them, and get a case to put them in, if he remembers one article, it is likely he will remember all of them. It is one of the best evidences that a discourse has been composed with distinctness and accuracy, if after you go away you can remember a good deal of it; but there are sometimes discourses which are pompous and declamatory, and which you hear with pleasure, and some sort of approbation, but if you attempt to recollect the truths advanced, or the arguments in support of them, there is not a trace of them to be found.

(4) Order conduces also very much to beauty. Order is never omitted when men give ~~the~~ principles of beauty, and confusion is disgusting just on its own account, whatever the nature of the confused things may be. If you were to see a vast heap of fine furniture of different kinds, lying in confusion, you could neither perceive half so distinctly what was there, nor could it at all have such an effect, as if every thing was disposed in a just order, and placed where it ought to stand; nay, a much smaller quantity elegantly disposed, would exceed in grandeur of appearance a heap of the most costly things in nature.

(5) Order is also necessary to brevity. A confused discourse is almost never short, and is always filled with repetitions. It is with thought in this respect, as with things visible, for to return to the former similitude, A confused heap of goods or furniture fills much more room than when it is ranged and classed in its proper order, and every thing carried to its proper place.

Having shown the excellency of precision and method, let us next try to explain what it is, and that I may have some regard to method while I am speaking of the very subject, I shall take it in three lights, (1) There must be an attention to order in the disposition of the whole piece. Whatever the parts be in themselves, they have also a relation to one another, and to the whole body, (if I



may speak so) that they are to compose. Every work, be it what it will, history, epic poem, dramatic poem, oration, epistle, or essay, is to be considered as a whole, and a clearness of judgment in point of method, will decide the place and proportion of the several parts of which they are composed. The loosest essay, or where form is least professed or studied, ought yet to have some shape as a whole, and we may say of it, that it begins abruptly or ends abruptly, or some of the parts are misplaced. There are often to be seen pieces in which good things are said, and well said, and have only this fault that they are unseasonable and out of place. Horace says in his art of poetry, what is equally applicable to every sort of composition, “*Denique fit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum,*” and shortly after “*In felix operis summa, quia ponere totum nesciet.*”

This judgment in planning the whole, will particularly enable a person to determine both as to the place and proportion of the particular parts, whether they be not only good in themselves, but fit to be introduced in such a work, and it will also (If I may speak so) give a colour to the whole composition. The necessity of order in the whole structure of a piece, shows that the rule is good which is given by some, that an orator before he begin his discourse, should concentrate the subject as it were, and reduce it to one single proposition, either expressed or at least conceived in his mind. Every thing should grow out of this as its root, if it be in another principle to be explained, or refer to this as its end if it be a point to be gained by persuasion. Having thus stated the point clearly to be handled, it will afford a sort of criterion whether any thing adduced is proper or improper. It will suggest the topics that are just and suitable, as well as enable us to reject whatever is in substance improper, or in size disproportionate to the design. Agreeably to this principle, I think that not only the subject of a single discourse should be reduceable to one proposition, but the general divisions or principal heads should not be many in number. A great number of general heads both burdens the memory, and breaks the unity of the subject,



and carries the idea of several little discourses joined together, or to follow after one another.

2. Order is necessary in the subdivisions of a subject, or the way of stating and marshalling of the several portions of any general head. This is applicable to all kinds of composition, and all kinds of oratory, sermons, law pleadings, speeches. There is always a division of the parts, as well as of the whole, either expressed formally and numerically, or supposed, though suppressed. And it is as much here as any where, that the confusion of inaccurate writers and speakers appears. It is always necessary to have some notion of the whole of a piece, and the larger divisions being more bulky, to so speak, disposition in them is more easily perceived, but in the smaller, both their order and size is in danger of being less attended to. Observe, therefore, that to be accurate and just, the subdivisions of any composition, such I mean as are (for example) introduced in a numerical series, 1, 2, 3, &c. should have the following properties: (1.) They should be clear and plain. Every thing indeed should be clear as far as he can make it, but precision and distinctness should especially appear in the subdivisions, just as the bounding lines of countries in a map. For this reason the first part of a subdivision should be a like a short definition, and when it can be done, it is best expressed in a single term; for example, in giving the character of a man of learning, I may propose to speak of his genius, his erudition, his industry or application.

(2.) They should be truly distinct; that is, every body should perceive that they are really different from one another, not in phrase or word only, but in sentiment. If you praise a man first for his judgment, and then for his understanding; they are either altogether or so nearly the same, or so nearly allied, as not to require distinction. I have heard a minister on John xvii. 11. Holy Father, &c. In showing how God keeps his people, says, (1) He keeps their feet. He shall keep thy feet from falling. (2.) He keeps their way. Thou shalt keep him in all his ways. Now, it is plain that these are not two different things, but two metaphors for the same thing. This indeed was

faulty also in another respect; for a metaphor ought not to make a division at all.

(3.) Sub-divisions should be necessary; that is to say taking the word in the loose and popular sense, the subject should seem to demand them. To multiply divisions, even where they may be made really distinct, is tedious, and disgusting, unless where they are of use and importance to our clearly comprehending the meaning, or feeling the force of what is said. If a person in the map of a country should give a different colour to every three miles, though the equality of the proportion would make the division clear enough, yet it would appear disgustingly superfluous. In writing the history of an eminent person's life, to divide it into spaces of 10 years, perhaps would make the view of the whole more exact; but to divide it into single years or months, would be finical and disagreeable. The increase of divisions leads almost unavoidably into tediousness.

(4.) Sub-divisions should be co-ordinate; that is to say, those that go on in a series, 1, 2, 3, &c. should be as far as possible similar, or of the same kind. This rule is transgressed when either the things mentioned are wholly different in kind, or when they include one another. This will be well perceived if we consider how a man would describe a sensible subject, a country for example; New-Jersey contains (1) Middlesex. (2) Somerset county. (3) The townships of Princeton (4) Morris county. So, if one in describing the character of a real Christian, should say, faith, holiness, charity, justice, temperance, patience, this would not do, because holiness includes justice, &c. When, therefore, it seems necessary to mention different particulars that cannot be made co-ordinate, they should be made subordinate.

(5.) Sub-divisions should be complete, and exhaust the subject. This indeed is common to all divisions, but is of most importance here, where it is most neglected. It may be said, perhaps, how can we propose to exhaust any subject? By making the divisions suitable, particularly in point of comprehension, to the nature of the subject; as an example, and to make use of the image before introduce

of giving an account of a country—I may say, the province of New-Jersey consists of two parts, East and West Jersey. If I say it consists of the counties of Somerset, &c. I must continue till I have enumerated all the counties, otherwise the division is not complete. In the same manner in public speaking, or any other composition, whatever division is made, it is not legitimate if it does not include or exhaust the whole subject, which may be done, let it be ever so great. For example: true religion may be divided various ways, so as to include the whole, I may say, that it consists of our duty to God, our neighbour and ourselves—or I may make but two, our duty to God and man, and divide the last into two subordinate heads, our neighbour, and ourselves—or I may say, it consists of faith and practice—or that it consists of two parts, a right frame and temper of mind, and a good life and conversation.

(6.) Lastly, the sub-divisions of any subject should be connected, or should be taken in a series or order if they will possibly admit of it. In some moral and intellectual subjects it may not be easy to find any series or natural order, as in an enumeration of virtues, justice, temperance and fortitude. Patience perhaps might as well be enumerated in any other order; yet there is often an order that will appear natural, and the inversion of it unnatural—as we may say, injuries are done many ways to a man's person, character and possessions. Love to others includes the relation of family, kindred, citizens, countrymen, fellow-creatures.

(3.) In the last place there is also an order to be observed in the sentiments, which makes the illustration or amplification of the divisions of a discourse. This order is never expressed by numerical divisions, yet it is of great importance, and its beauty and force will be particularly felt. It is, if I may speak so, of a finer and more delicate nature than any of the others, more various, and harder to explain. I once have said, that all reasoning is of the nature of a syllogism, which lays down principles, makes comparisons, and draws the conclusion. But we must particularly guard against letting the uniformity

and formality of a syllogism appear. In general, whatever establishes any connection, so that it makes the sentiments give rise to one another, is the occasion of order—sometimes necessity and utility point out the order as a good measure—As in telling a story, grave or humorous, you must begin by describing the persons concerned, mentioning just as many circumstances of their character and situation as are necessary to make us understand the facts to be afterwards related. Sometimes the sensible ideas of time and place suggest an order, not only in historical narrations and in law pleadings, which relate to facts, but in drawing of characters, describing the progress and effects of virtue and vice, and even in other subjects, where the connexion between those ideas and the thing spoken of, is not very strong.—Sometimes, and indeed generally, there is an order which proceeds from things plain to things obscure. The beginning of a paragraph should be like the sharp point of a wedge, which gains admittance to the bulky part behind. It first affirms what every body feels or must confess, and proceeds to what follows as a necessary consequence: In fine, there is an order in persuasion to a particular choice, which may be taken two ways with equal advantage, proceeding from the weaker to the stronger, or from the stronger to the weaker. As in recommending a pious and virtuous life, we may first say it is amiable, honorable, pleasant, profitable, even in the present life; and, to crown all, makes death itself a friend, and leads to a glorious immortality; or, we may begin the other way, and say it is the one thing needful, that eternity is the great and decisive argument that should determine our choice, though every thing else were in favor of vice, and then add, that even in the present life, it is a great mistake to think that bad men are gainers, &c. This is called sometimes the ascending and descending climax. Each of them has its beauty and use. It must be left to the orator's judgment to determine which of the two is either fittest for the present purpose, or which he finds himself at that time able to execute to the greatest advantage.

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LECTURE XII.

**T**HE next branch of this division is style or composition. This, which is so great a part of the subject, has already been considered in one view, under the three great kinds of writing, and will again be mentioned under the two following heads, as well as the remarks at the close : yet I will drop a few things upon it in this place.

1. It is necessary that a writer or speaker should be well acquainted with the language in which he speaks, its characters, properties and defect, its idioms or peculiar terms and phrases, and likewise with as many other languages as possible, particularly such as are called the learned languages, the Latin and Greek—Our own language is the English. A thorough acquaintance with it, must be acquired by extensive reading in the best authors, giving great attention to the remarks made by critics of judgment and erudition, and trying it ourselves in practice. Our language, like most of the northern languages, is rough, with a frequent meeting of consonants, difficult of pronunciation ; it abounds in monosyllables. you may write a whole page, and scarce use one word that has more than one syllable ; this is a defect, and to be avoided when it can be done consistently with other properties, particularly simplicity and perspicuity. Our language is said to have an over proportion of the letter S, and therefore called a hissing language. This a writer of judgment will endeavor to avoid, wherever he can do it with propriety and elegance. A thorough acquaintance with the genius and idioms of our own language, can scarcely be attained without some acquaintance with others, because it is comparison of one with another which illustrates all. There are not only smaller differences between one language and another, but there are some general differences in the arrangement of words, in the ancient and modern languages : in the Greek and Latin, the governed words are pretty generally before the verb. It is a mistake for us to say

that the English order is the natural order, as some have done—It is certain that they are either both alike natural and equally obvious, when once custom has fixed them, or that the ancient order is the more natural of the two. There are two things, the action and the object, to be conjoined, and it is fully as proper to turn your attention first to the object, before you tell what you are to say of it, or what you would have done with it, as after. *Illud scalpellum quod in manu habes, commoda mihi paulisper, si placet:* and in longer and more involved sentences, the suspending the sentiment for some time till it be compleated, is both more pleasing and more forcible. Our own language admits of a little transposition, and becomes grander and more sonorous by it, both in poetry and prose.

2. We may attend to the arrangement of the clauses of a sentence, and their proportion and sound. Every sentence may be considered as having so many clauses or members, which have, each of them, some meaning, but which is not complete till it is closed. Every sentence is capable of receiving some degree of harmony, by a proper structure; this it receives when the most important ideas, and the most sonorous expressions occupy the chief places; but what, you will say, are the chief places? We naturally, says an eminent French author on this subject, love to present our most interesting ideas first; but this order which is dictated by self-love, is contrary to what we are directed to by the art of pleasing—The capital law of this art, is to prefer others to ourselves, and therefore the most striking and interesting ideas come with the greatest beauty as well as force, in the close. Where the difference does not lie in the ideas, the words or phrases that are most long and sonorous ought to be so distinguished; this rule however, will admit some exception, when we are to persuade or instruct, for we must never seem to have sweetness and cadence chiefly in view.

The rule of placing in a sentence the most important ideas and expressions last, was taken notice of by ancient writers. *In verbis observandum est, says one of them, ut a majoribus ad minus descendat oratio, melius enim dicetur, vir est optimus, quam vir optimus est.* Some-

times several monosyllables terminate a sentence well enough, because in pronunciation they run into one, and seem to the hearers little different from a single word. It is an observation, that the ear itself often directs to the rule upon this subject. Some French critics observe that some syllables in their language which are usually short, are produced in the end of a sentence, for instance, *Je suis votre serviteur monsieur, je suis le votre*; where *votre* is short in the first sentence, and long in the second; and I believe the same thing would happen in translating that sentence literally into English.

The harmony of sentences is preserved either by a measured proportion, or regular gradation of the clauses: Cicero says upon this subject, *Si membra, &c.* In every sentence consisting of two members only, every body's ear will make them sensible, that the last clause after the pause of the voice ought to be longest; as in Shakespear, *But yesterday, &c.* In longer sentences there must be a greater variety, and several causes must contribute to determine the length of the clauses; but it is plain, the last must be longer than the preceding; and sometimes a regular gradation of more than two clauses, has a very happy effect; such as these of Cicero, *Quorum quaestor fueram, &c.* Again he says in the same oration, *Habet honorem, &c.* There is another order in which there are two equal, and one unequal member, and in that case when the unequal member is shortest, it ought to be placed first; when it is longest, it ought to be placed last, as in the two following examples; *Tellis est Africa, &c.* and *Eripite nos ex miseris, &c.* There is another structure of the members of a sentence, in which this rule is departed from, and yet it pleases, because of a certain exact proportion, as that of Monsieur Fenelon, *Dans sa douleur, &c.* The first and last members are equal, and that which is in the middle is just double to each of them.

Perhaps it will be asked, Must an author then give attention to this precise measure? Must he take a pair of scales or compasses to measure every period he composes? By no means. Nothing would be more frigid and unsuccessful, but it was proper thus to analyse the subject, and



show in what manner the ear is pleased ; at the same time there is so great a variety and compass in the measures of prose, that it is easy to vary the structure and cadence, and make every thing appear quite simple and natural. This leads me to the third remark upon style.

3. That variety is to be particularly studied. If a writer thinks any particular structure necessary, and forces every thing he has to say just into that form, it will be highly disagreeable, or if he is much enamoured with one particular kind of ornament, and brings it in too frequently, it will immediately disgust. There is a mixture in the principles of taste, a desire of uniformity and variety, simplicity and intricacy, and it is by the happy union of all these, that delight is most effectually produced. What else is necessary upon style, will fall very properly under some of the following heads.

The last part of the oratorical art is pronunciation, including gesture. This is of the utmost, and indeed of universally confessed importance. The effects of the different manner of delivering the same thing are very great. It is a famous subject, largely treated of by all critical writers. It seems to have been nicely studied by the ancients, and if we may judge from some circumstances, their action has been often very violent. We are told of Cicero, that when he first went to the bar, the violence of his action, and what is called *contentio laterum*, was such as endangered his constitution, so that he took a journey for his health, and on his return took to a more cool and managed way of speaking. There is also somewhere in his writings, an expression to this purpose, *nec fuit etiam, quod minimum est, supplotio pedis*. As if stamping with the foot had been one of the least violent motions then in use. We cannot judge of this matter very well at such a distance. There is a difference in the turn of different nations upon this subject. The French and Italians have much more warmth and fire in their manner than the British. I remember once to have been told that no man could perceive the beauty of Raphael's picture of Paul preaching at Athens, unless he had seen a Frenchman or Italian in the pulpit.

Leaving you to read and digest all the criticisms and remarks upon this subject to be met with in different authors, I shall only give a few directions that I esteem most useful for avoiding improprieties and attaining some degree of excellence in this respect.

1. Study great sincerity ; try to forget every purpose but the very end of speaking, information and persuasion. Labor after that sort of presence of mind which arises from self-denial, rather than from courage. Nothing produces more awkwardness than confusion and embarrassment. Bring a clown into a magnificent palace, and let him have to appear in the presence of persons of high rank, and the fear and solicitude he has about his own carriage and discourse, makes both the one and the other much more absurd and awkward than it would have otherwise been.

2. Learn distinct articulation, and attend to all the common rules of reading, which are taught in the English grammars. Articulation is giving their full force and powers to the consonants as well as the vowels. The difference between a well articulated discourse and one defective in this respect, is, that the first you will hear distinctly as far as you can hear the voice ; the other you will hear sound enough, yet not understand almost any thing that is said. Practice in company is a good way to learn this and several other excellencies in discourse.

3. Another rule is to keep to the tone and key of dialogue, or common conversation, as much as possible. In common discourse where there is no affectation, men speak properly. At least, though even here there are differences from nature—some speaking with more sweetness and grace than others, yet there is none that falls into any of those unnatural rants or ridiculous gestures, that are sometimes to be seen in public speakers.

4. It is of considerable consequence to be accustomed to decency of manners in the best company. This gives an ease of carriage and a sense of delicacy, which is of great use in forming the deportment of an orator.

5. In the last place, every one should consider not only what is the manner, best in itself, or even best suited to

the subject, but what is also best suited to his own capacity. One of a quick animated spirit by nature, may allow himself a much greater violence of action, than one of a colder disposition. If this last works himself up to violence, or studies to express much passion, he will not probably be able to carry it through, but will relapse into his own natural manner, and by the sensible difference between one part of his discourse and another, render himself ridiculous. Solemnity of manner should be substituted by all such persons in the room of fire.

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### LECTURE XIII.

**W**E come now to the fourth general division of this subject, which is, that its object or end is different. The ends a writer or speaker may be said to aim at, are information, demonstration, persuasion and entertainment. I need scarce tell you that these are not so wholly distinct, but that they are frequently intermixed, and that more than one of them may be in view at the same time. Persuasion is also used in a sense that includes them all. The intention of all speech, or writing, which is but recorded speech, is to persuade, taking the word with latitude. Yet I think you will easily perceive that there are very different sorts of composition, in some of which one of the above mentioned purposes, and in others a different one, takes the lead, and gives the colour to the whole performance. Great benefit will arise from keeping a clear view of what is the end proposed. It will preserve the writer from a vitious and mistaken taste. The same thoughts, the same phraseology, the same spirit in general running through a writing, is highly proper in one case, and absurd in another. There is a beauty in every kind of writing when it is well done, and impropriety or bad taste will sometimes show themselves in pieces very inconsiderable—If it were but inditing a message card, penning an article in a news-paper, or drawing up an advertisement, persons accustomed to

each of these, will be able to keep to the common form, or beaten track; but if any thing different is to be said, good sense, and propriety, or their contraries, will soon show themselves.

The writings which have information as their chief purpose, are history, fable, epistolary writing, the common intercourse of business or friendship, and all the lower kinds. The properties which should reign in them, are the following, (1) Plainness. (2) Fulness, (3) Precision, and (4) Order. Plainness it is evident they ought to have; and indeed not barely perspicuity, so as to be intelligible, but an unaffected simplicity, so as not to seem to have any thing higher in view than to be understood. (2) When we say that fulness is a property of writings which have information as their purpose, it is not meant to recommend a long or diffuse narration, but to intimate that nothing should be omitted in giving an account of any thing, which is of importance to its being truly and completely understood. Let a writer be as large as he pleases in what he says, if he omits circumstances as essential as those he mentions, and which the reader would naturally desire to know, he is not full. Many are very tedious, and yet not full. The excellence of a narrative is to contain as many ideas as possible, provided they are interesting, and to convey them in as few words as possible, consistently with perspicuity. (3) Precision as a quality of narration belongs chiefly to language. Words should be chosen that are truly expressive of the thing in view, and all ambiguous as well as superfluous phrases carefully avoided. The reader is impatient to get to the end of a story, and therefore he must not be stopped by any thing but what you are sure he would be glad to know before he proceeds further. (4) The last particular is order, which is necessary in all writings, but especially in narration. There it lies chiefly in time and place, and a breach of order in these respects is more easily discerned and more universally offensive than in any other. Common hearers do not always know when you violate order in ranging the arguments on a moral subject; but if you bring in a story ab-

raptly, or tell it confusedly, either in a letter or a discourse, it will be instantly perceived, and those will laugh at you who could not tell it a whit better themselves.

Imagination is not to be much used in writings of the narrative kind. Its chief use in such writings is in description. A man of a warm fancy will paint strongly, and a man of a sentimental turn will interest the affections even by a mere recital of facts. But both the one and the other should be kept in great moderation; for a warm fancy is often joined to credulity, and the sentimental person is given to invention: so that he will turn a real history into half a romance. In history a certain cool and dispassionate dignity is the leading beauty. The writer should appear to have no interest in characters or events, but deliver them as he finds them. The character which an illustrious historian acquires from this self-denial, and being, as it were, superior to all the personages, how great soever, of whom he treats, has something awful and venerable in it. It is distinguished by this circumstance, from the applause given to the poet or orator.

Demonstration is the end in view in all scientific writings, whether essays, systems, or controversy. The excellencies of this kind of writing may be reduced to the three following: Perspicuity, order, and strength. The two first are necessary here as every where else, and the composition should be strong and nervous to produce a lasting conviction; more force of language is to be admitted, at least more generally in this kind than in the former; but a great deal less of imagination and fancy than even there. Whenever a scientific writer begins to paint and adorn, he is forgetting himself and disgusting his reader. This will be sensibly felt if you apply it to the mathematics. The mathematician is conversant only with sensible ideas, and therefore the more naked and unadorned every thing that he says is, so much the better. How would it look if a mathematician should say, do you see this beautiful, small, taper, acute angle? It always approaches to this absurdity, when in searching after abstract truth, writers introduce imagination and fancy. I am sensible that, having mentioned controversy as be-

longing to this class, many may be surprised that I have excluded imagination altogether, since commonly all controversial writers do, to the utmost of their ability, enlist imagination in the service of Reason. There is nothing they are so fond of as exposing the weakness of their adversaries by strokes of raillery and humor. This I did on purpose that I may state this matter to you clearly. Controversy should mean, and very generally such writers pretend to mean, weighing the arguments on each side of a contested question, in order to discover the truth. What strong professions of impartiality have we sometimes from the very champions of a party quarrel? while yet it is plain that searching after truth is what they never think of, but maintaining, by every art, the cause which they have already espoused.

I do not deny that there are sometimes good reasons for making use of satire and ridicule, in controversies of the political kind, and sometimes it is necessary in self-defence. If any writer in behalf of a party, attempts to expose his adversaries to public scorn, he ought not to be surprised if the measure he metes to others, is measured out to him again. What is unlawful in the aggressor, becomes justifiable, if not laudable, in the defender. Sometimes it is necessary to expose tyrants or persons in power, who do not reason, but punish, and sometimes it is necessary to bring down self-sufficient persons, with whom there is no dealing till their pride is levelled a little with this dismaying weapon. Dr. Brown has set this matter in a very clear light in his *Essays on the Characteristics*, where he says, that ridicule is not the test of truth, but it may be very useful to expose and disgrace known falsehood.

But when controversy is really an impartial search after truth, it is the farthest distant imaginable, either from passionate declamation on the one hand, or sallies of wit and humor on the other. There is one instance of a controversy carried on between Dr. Butler and Dr. Clark, upon the subject of space and personal identity, in which there did not seem to be any design upon either side, but to discover the truth. It ended in the entire conviction and satisfaction of one of them, which he readily and openly acknowledged: and I think in such an instance there is

much greater glory to be had in yielding, than in conquering. There is great honor in candidly acknowledging a mistake, but not much in obtaining a victory in support of truth. It is worth while just to mention, that this was far from being the case in another controversy before two, who were also very great men, Mr. Locke and Dr. Stillingfleet, upon innate ideas. They not only supported each his sentiments, with warmth and keenness, but descended to all the malice of personal reproach, and all the littleness of verbal criticism.

The next great end that may be in view is persuasion. This being the great and general subject of oratory, has had most said upon it in every age. That you may understand what I mean by distinguishing it from information, demonstration, and entertainment, observe, that persuasion is when we would bring the reader or hearer to a determinate choice, either immediately upon the spot for a particular decision, as in an assembly or court of justice, or in a more slow and lasting way, as in religious and moral writings. But particularly persuasion is understood to be in view, as the effect of a single discourse. When this is the purpose, there are opportunities for all the ways of speaking within the compass of the oratorical art. There are times when an orator must narrate simply—there are times when he must reason strongly—and there are times when he may wound satirically. It must be remembered, however, that too great an infusion of wit takes away both from the dignity and force of an oration. We shall see under the next head that it cannot be admitted in religious instruction, but when you are speaking against an adversary that is proud and conceited; or when you want to make your hearers despise any person or thing, as well as hate them, wit and satire may be of use. A minister of state is very often attacked in this way with propriety, and success. It is sometimes allowed to relieve the spirits of the audience when they begin to flag. In this view Cicero recommends the *urbanitas*, and practises it himself; but at the same time he intimates that it should be done sparingly, and with caution—*Quo tanquam sale conspergatur oratio*. Wit, there-



fore, is to be absolutely excluded from scientific writings, and very rarely to be used in serious persuasion.

The last end of speaking and writing I shall mention, is entertainment. This includes all such writings as have the amusement or entertainment of the hearers or readers as the only, the chief, or at least one great end of the composition. This is the case with all poetical compositions. They may pretend to write for the instruction of others, but to please them and obtain their favor is probably more their purpose. At any rate they must content themselves with taking in both, and say with Horace, *Et prodesse volunt & delectare poetæ*. Sweetness, tenderness, and elegance of style, ought to characterize these sorts of composition. Here is the greatest room for imagination and fancy. Here is the dominion of wit and humor. It is an observation of some, that the word *humor* is peculiar to the English language; that the *eutrapelia* in Greek; *sales & urbanitas*, in Latin, have all the same meaning with our general term *wit*; but that *humor* denotes a particular kind of wit consisting chiefly of irony. But if the word is peculiar to the English language, it is certain that the thing itself is far from being peculiar to the English nation. Perhaps Homer's *Batrychomachia* may be said to be the most ancient example of it upon record. Lucian's Dialogues have it in high perfection, though it must be owned that it seems particularly to have flourished in modern times. Fontenelle's Dialogues of the Dead, and Boileau's Satires, are famous examples of it; but none ever exceeded Cervantes, the celebrated author of *Don Quixotte*. That piece is highly entertaining to an English reader under two great disadvantages. One is, its being translated into another language. Now, wit is more difficult to translate than any other subject of composition. It is easier to translate undiminished the force of eloquence, than the poignancy of wit. The other disadvantage is, its being written in ridicule of a character that now no more exists; so that we have not the opportunity of comparing the copy with the original.

We must also observe that wit in general, and this species of it in particular, has often appeared in the highest perfection in Britain, both in prose and poetry; Shakspeare's dramatic pieces abound with it, and Dr. Donne's Satires. It is in high perfection in Marvel's Rehearsal transposed; Alsop's *Melius Inquirendum*; but above all, in Swift's writings, prose and verse.

It is observed sometimes, that the talent of humor is often possessed in a very high degree, by persons of the meanest rank, who are themselves ignorant of it; in them it appears chiefly in conversation, and in a manner that cannot be easily put upon paper. But as to those who think fit to try this manner from the press, they should be well assured before hand, that they really possess the talent. In many other particulars, a real taste for it, and a high admiration of any thing, is a considerable sign of some degree of the talent itself; but it is far from being so in wit and humour. Mr. Pope tells us that "Gentle dullness ever loves a joke;" and we see every day people aiming at wit, who produce the most miserable and shocking performances: sometimes they do not excite laughter, but loathing or indignation; sometimes they do excite laughter, but it is that of contempt. There is a distinction which every one should endeavour to understand and remember, between a wit and a droll; the first makes you laugh at what he says, and the object of his satire, and the second makes you laugh at his own expense, from his absurdity and meanness.



## LECTURE XIV.

**W**E come now to the fifth general division of eloquence, as its subject is different, under which we may consider the three great divisions of the pulpit, the bar, and promiscuous assemblies; all the general principles of composition are common to these three kinds, nor can any man make a truly distinguished figure in any one of them, without being well acquainted with literature and

taste. Some peculiarities in different ways of writing, have been already touched at, all which I suppose you gave attention to; but there are still some differences, as the scene in which a man is to move in life is different, which are highly worthy of observation. I will therefore consider each of these separately, and try to point out the qualities for which it ought to be distinguished; or delineate the character of an accomplished minister, lawyer and senator.

I begin with the pulpit. Preaching the gospel of Christ is a truly noble employment, and the care of souls a very important trust. The qualities of most importance, I think are as follow.

1. *Piety*—To have a firm belief of that gospel he is called to preach, and a lively sense of religion upon his own heart. Duty, interest and utility all conspire in requiring this qualification; it is of the utmost moment in itself, and what men will the least dispense with, in one of that profession. All men good and bad, agree in despising a loose or profane minister. It discovers a terrible degree of depravity of heart, and those that begin so, seldom alter for the better. The very familiar acquaintance which they acquire with serious thoughts and spiritual subjects, serves to harden them against the arrows of conviction, and it is little wonder that for such daring wickedness, God should leave them to themselves, or sentence them to perpetual barrenness; but whilst I think it my duty thus to warn you, I must beg leave to guard it against abuse, lest while we are aggravating the sin of profane ministers, others should think themselves at liberty, who have no view to that sacred office. We have even seen persons decline the sacred office because they did not think they had true religion, and then with seeming ease and quietness set themselves to some other business, as if in that there was no need of religion at all. Alas! after all that can be said of the guilt and danger of an irreligious minister, there is an infinite danger to every one who shall go out of this life, an irreligious man. Will it not be poor consolation think you, in the hour of sickness or death, that though you must perish everlastingly, you go to hell not as a mi-

nister, but a lawyer or a physician. I do truly think this has been a pillow of security to many poor thoughtless souls, and that they have actually rid themselves of conviction, by this mistaken comfort, as if there was much merit in it, that they would not be ministers, because they wanted religion. Remember this then, in a single word, that there is neither profession nor station, from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dunghill, to whom a concern for eternity, is not the *one thing needful*.

But let me just take notice of the great advantage of true religion to one destined for the work of the ministry. (1.) It gives a man the knowledge that is of most service to a minister. Experimental knowledge is superior to all other, and necessary to the perfection of every other kind. It is indeed the very possession or daily exercise of that which it is the business of his life, and the duty of his office, to explain and recommend. Experimental knowledge is the best sort in every branch, but it is necessary in divinity, because religion is what cannot be truly understood, unless it is felt.

(2) True piety will direct a man in the choice of his studies. The object of human knowledge is so extensive, that nobody can go through the whole, but religion will direct the student to what may be most profitable to him, and will also serve to turn into its proper channel all the knowledge he may otherwise acquire.

(3.) It will be a powerful motive to diligence in his studies. Nothing so forcible as that in which eternity has a part. The duty to a good man is so pressing, and the object so important, that he will spare no pains to obtain success.

(4.) True religion will give unspeakable force to what a minister says. There is a piercing and a penetrating heat in that which flows from the heart, which distinguishes it both from the coldness of indifference, and the false fire of enthusiasm and vain-glory. We see that a man truly pious, has often esteem, influence and success, though his parts may be much inferior to others, who are more capable, but less conscientious. If then, piety makes even the weakest, venerable, what must it do when added

to the finest natural talents, and the best acquired endowments?

(5.) It adds to a minister's instruction, the weight of his example. It is a trite remark, that example teaches better than precept. It is often a more effectual reprimand to vice, and a more inciting argument to the practice of virtue, than the best of reasoning. Example is more intelligible than precept—Precepts are often involved in obscurity, or warped by controversy; but a holy life immediately reaches, and takes possession of the heart.

If I have lengthened out this particular beyond the proportion of the rest, I hope you will forgive it for its importance, and observe as the conclusion of the whole, that one devoted to the service of the gospel, should be *really*, *visibly*, and *eminently* holy.

2. Another character which should distinguish pulpit eloquence, is simplicity. Simplicity is beautiful every where; it is of importance that young persons should be formed to a taste for it, and more disposed to exceed here than in the opposite extreme, but if I am not mistaken, it is more beautiful, and the transgressions of it more offensive, in the pulpit, than any where else. If I heard a lawyer pleading in such a style and manner, as was more adapted to display his own talents than to carry his client's cause, it would considerably lessen him in my esteem, but if I heard a minister acting the same part, I should not be satisfied with contempt, but hold him in detestation.

There are several obvious reasons why simplicity is more especially necessary to a minister than any other. (1) Many of his audience are poor ignorant creatures. If he mean to do them any service, he must keep to what they understand, and that requires more simplicity than persons without experience can easily imagine. It is remarkable that at the first publication it was a character of the gospel that it was preached to the poor. In this our blessed master was distinguished both from the heathen philosophers and Jewish teachers, who confined their instructions in a great manner to their schools, and imparted what they esteemed their most important dis-

courses to only a few chosen disciples. (2) Simplicity is necessary to preserve the speaker's character for sincerity. You heard before how necessary piety is, which is the proper parent of sincerity in the pulpit. Now it is not easy to preserve the opinion of piety and sincerity in the pulpit, when there is much ornament. Besides the danger of much affected pomp or foppery of style, a discourse very highly polished, even in the truest taste, is apt to suggest to the audience, that a man is preaching himself and not the cross of Christ. So nice a matter is this in all public speaking, that some critics say, that Demosthenes put on purpose some errors in grammar in his discourses, that the hearers might be induced to take them for the immediate effusions of the heart, without art, and with little premeditation. I doubt much the solidity of this remark, or the certainty of the fact, but however it be, there is no occasion for it in the case of a minister, because preparation and premeditation are expected from him, and in that case he may make his discourses abundantly plain and simple without any affected blunders. (3) Simplicity is also necessary, as suited to the gospel itself, the subject of a minister's discourses. Nothing more humbling to the pride of man, than the doctrine of the cross; nothing more unbecoming that doctrine, than too much finery of language. The apostle Paul chose to preach "not with the words which man's wisdom teacheth"—and again, "not with excellency of speech or wisdom," which though I admit that it does not condemn study and sound knowledge, yet it certainly shows that the style of the pulpit should be the most simple and self-denied of any other.

3. Another qualification for a minister, is accuracy, from the utmost diligence in his important work. I place this immediately after the other, to guard it against abuse by excess. To avoid vain affected ornaments is a very different thing from negligence in preparation. The very same apostle who speaks with so much contempt of human wisdom, yet greatly insists in writing to Timothy and Titus, on their giving themselves to study, to exhortation, to doctrine, "Meditate upon those things," says he, &c.

Study and accuracy indeed is necessary, that a minister may procure and keep up the attention of his hearers. That he may inform the judgment as well as convince the conscience. The ancient fathers have generally insisted upon this, as of much moment. And in our own times I observe that it is necessary to avoid offending persons of finer taste, who are too much attached to the outside of things, and are immediately disgusted with every error against propriety, and are apt to reproach religion itself, for the weakness or absurdity of those who speak in its behalf. Let no man seek to avoid that reproach, which may be his lot, for preaching the truths of the everlasting gospel, but let him always avoid the just reproach of handling them in a mean, slovenly and indecent manner.

4. Another quality of a minister's eloquence should be force and vehemence. I have in some former parts of the general subject, shown you how and when this is to be most exerted. The design of the present remark is to let you know, that there is no speaker who has a greater right to exert himself to the utmost, or who may properly interest his hearers more, than a minister of the gospel. No speaker has subjects or arguments more proper for producing this effect. To consider the subjects which a speaker from the pulpit has to handle, one would think that it must be the easiest thing imaginable to speak from them in a powerful and interesting manner. The eternal God—the greatness of his works—the universality of his Providence—his awful justice—his irresistible power—his infinite mercy—and the wisdom of God in the mystery of redeeming grace—the condition of saints and sinners while on earth—and the final decision of their eternal state in the day of judgment. The truth is, the subjects are so very great in themselves, that it is not possible to equal them by the manner of handling them. Probably for this very reason many fall short. Discouraged by the immensity of the theme, they fall below what they might have done on subjects less awful. This however shows, with what a holy ambition those who are employed in the service of Christ in the gospel,



should endeavor to exert themselves in the glorious cause. Provided they are themselves in earnest, and take truth and nature as their guide, they can scarcely exceed in zeal and ardor for the glory of God, and the good of precious souls.

5. Another excellent quality of pulpit eloquence is, to be under the restraint of judgment and propriety. I place this after the former, as its counterpart, and necessary to give it proper effect. And it may be observed, that as religious and moral subjects give the surest and the fullest scope to zeal and fervor, so they need as much as any, the strict government of prudence and experience. I do not mean only by this to guard ministers from the irregular fervors of enthusiasm, but to give, if possible, a degree of solidity and real truth to their instructions. They ought to avoid all turgid declamation, to keep to experience, and take things as they really are. Let some people, for example, speak of riches, and what shall you hear from them? Gold and silver, what are they but shining dross, sparkling metals, a thing of no real value? That in the eye of reason and philosophy they are of no extensive use and altogether contemptible. And indeed to take things in a certain philosophical abstraction, they are good for nothing.—Mere gold or silver you can neither eat nor wear—Their value, you will say, depends all upon opinion, the changeable fancy of men—But this manner of speaking, and all that is related to it, seeming to be philosophy and reason, is really absurdity and nonsense. For though it be true that gold, abstracted from the opinion of mankind, is not a whit more valuable than stones, and that if I was in the midst of a forest surrounded with wild beasts, a whole bag full of gold would do me no service; yet it is as certain that in our present situation it is of that real value as to procure all the conveniences of life. The way then to treat such subjects is not to use these rhetorical phrases in contempt of riches, but to show from experience that they are good or evil according to the temper of him that uses them, and that we see discontent and ungoverned passion find as easy access to the anti-chamber of the prince as the cottage of the poor. The same thing I

would say of fame, that it is easy to say fame is no more but idle breath, &c. but the great matter is to view those things in a sober and rational light, to give to every outward mercy its proper value, and only show how much they are counter-balanced by things of infinitely greater moment.

But what I have often observed with most regret upon this subject is, young persons carrying the things that are really true and excellent, to a certain excess or high pitch, that is beyond nature, and does not tend in the least to promote conviction, but rather hinders it. When men speak of virtue or true goodness, they are apt to raise the description beyond the life in any real instance, and when they speak of vice and its consequences they are apt to draw the character so as it will apply only to a few of the most desperate profligates, and the miserable state to which they reduce themselves. This rather seems to fortify the generality of persons, to whom these descriptions do not apply, in their careless and secure state.

Once more I have often observed young persons frequently choose as their subject afflictions, of which probably they have had very little experience, and speak in such a high style as if every good man were, as the heroes of old, above the reach of every accident. And it is true that an eminent saint is sometimes made superior to all his sufferings; but generally speaking, we ought to be very tender of sufferers, till we ourselves have been in the furnace of affliction; and after that we shall not need be told so. On the whole, a strict adherence to truth and nature, and taking the world just as it is, will be an excellent mean to direct us in every part of our public service.

6. Lastly, a minister ought to have extensive knowledge. Every thing whatever that is the object of human knowledge, may be made subservient to theology. And considering that a minister is in public life, and has to do with friends and enemies of all ranks, he ought to be well furnished with literature of every kind. At the same time I would have this well understood, it is not necessary, and I think it is not desirable, that a minister should be quite an adept in particular branches of know-

ledge, except those that are closely related to his proper work. The reason of this is, it takes more time to be a perfect master of some of the particular sciences, than he has to spare from his duty, and therefore with a taste of the several sciences, general knowledge is most suited to his circumstances, and most necessary to his usefulness.



## LECTURE XV.

**I** PROCEED now to the eloquence of the bar. The profession of the law is of great importance in the British dominions. There is, therefore, great room for this sort of eloquence. This, indeed, may be said to be the country of law, not only on account of its being a free state, the character of which is, that not man, but the laws, have dominion, which is our glory, but because by the great multiplicity of our statutes it becomes an important and difficult science. For both these reasons there are great hopes proposed to persons of ability in this department. They have not only the reasonable prospect, if of tolerable abilities with diligence, to provide an honorable subsistence to themselves, but it is, the direct road to promotion, and the way of obtaining the highest offices in the state.

Here as in the former particular, we must consider every thing as already said, that belongs to the subject in general; and indeed by far the greatest number of valuable books on the subject of eloquence having been drawn up by pleaders at the bar, they must be at least as much or perhaps more directly applicable to this species as any other. I cannot help however, taking notice of a preposterous practice in this country, of some who take their children from literature, before they have finished their course, because they intend to put them to the law. This must be voluntarily confining them to the very lowest sort of practice in that profession, for if any whatever stand in need of literature, it must be the lawyers. Supposing therefore all that has been said of composition, and speaking in

general, there are a few particular characters of most importance in men of that class.

1. Probity or real untainted integrity. There can be no doubt that integrity is the first and most important character of a man, be his profession what it will; but I have mentioned it here because there are many not so sensible of the importance of it in the profession of the law, and think it is necessary to make a good man, but not a good lawyer. On the contrary, I am persuaded not only that a man loses nothing in any capacity by his integrity, but that a lawyer should in general study by probity and real worth to obtain respect from the public, and to give weight to every thing he says. This integrity should show itself in undertaking causes. There are many that think there is no ground of scruple in this respect, and sometimes they are found to boast with what address they conducted, and with what success they carried through a very weak cause. I apprehend this is truly dishonorable, and as there are plenty of causes in which the equity is doubtful, every one who should make it a point of honor not to undertake a cause which they knew not to be just, it would give unspeakable influence to his management and pleadings. The same probity should appear in the manner of conducting causes. No sinister arts, no equivocation or concealment of the truth. Perhaps some may think that those who should be conscience bound in this manner, would give roguish persons an evident advantage over them, but it is a great mistake. Let them use but prudence and firmness joined with integrity, and they are an over match for all the villains upon earth. The common proverb is certainly just, "Honesty is the best policy." The arts of chicanery can only succeed once or twice. As soon as a man gets the reputation of cunning, its effect is over, for nobody will trust him, and every body counter-works him.

2. Another excellent quality for a lawyer is assiduity and method in business. This is of great advantage to the very best genius. I the rather insist upon it, that there prevails often a supposition that it is not the quality of a great man. Because there are some persons of very

middling abilities, who give great application, and are lovers of order, therefore some are pleased to call those dull plodding fellows, and think it is a mark of fire and vivacity to be irregular both in their business and in their lives. There are also some few men of real and great capacity, who are negligent and even loose in their practice, who rise by the mere force of singular parts. These are an unhappy example to those superficial creatures, who think by imitating them in their folly, that they will become as great geniuses as they. But suffer me to observe to you, that the greatest geniuses here have been remarkable for the most vigorous application, and the greatest men have been and are remarkable for order and method in every thing they do. There is a certain dignity which arises from a man's word being sacred, even in keeping an appointment, or the most trifling circumstance; and for people of business, order and punctuality gives so much ease to themselves, and pleasure to all who have to do with them, that it is a wonder there should be any body that does not study it. Is there any genius, think you, in throwing down a thing so unthinkingly, that you do not know how to take it up again? The great archbishop of Cambray looks upon it as one of the most important things to teach young persons, to put every thing in its proper place. As every thing that belongs to furniture, dress, books, and implements, must be in some place, they are always best disposed when each is in its own place. They will give least disturbance there when they are not used, and they will be most readily found, when they ought to be used.

But when we come to loose and vicious practices, it is truly entertaining to meet with riotous disorderly fellows, who are pleased to speak with contempt of those who love form and good order, as if they themselves were men of great acuteness. Now I almost never knew an example of your mischief-workers, but they were thick skulls. I have known some, who could neither write a jest nor speak a jest in all their life, but had tricks enough they could play, to disturb a sober neighbourhood. I have thus been led back to the irregularities of youth.

from speaking of method in business, as of importance to lawyers. I shall conclude the observation with saying, that there is no great prospect of a man's ever being lord chancellor, who spends his time in scouring the streets and beating the watch, when he is at the inns of court.

3. Another quality useful to a lawyer is address, and delicacy in his manners and deportment in general, and the conduct of his business in particular, and above all in pleading and public speaking. The address and delicacy I mean, are such as are acquired by the knowledge of human nature, and some acquaintance with human life. They are useful I admit, for every public speaker, but if I am not mistaken, much more needful to the lawyer than the clergyman. The clergyman proceeds upon things of acknowledged moment, a certain dignity of character is allowed him, and expected from him. A pretended delicacy is sometimes offensive in him. A certain firmness, not to call it boldness, and impartiality in administering instruction and reproof, are ornaments in him. But a lawyer must always consider the propriety of time and place—What belongs to him that speaks, or to him or them that are spoken to, or that are spoken of. There are some fine examples of address and delicacy in Cicero, particularly in his oration pro Roscio,—pro Milone—et de lege agraria.

4. A fourth quality necessary for a lawyer, is extensive knowledge in the arts and sciences, in history and in the laws. A person that means to rise, or attain to some of the highest degrees of this profession, must strive to accomplish himself by knowledge in the arts and sciences. His business is of a public kind, the causes he may have occasion to treat, are exceedingly various. What adversaries he may meet with he is altogether uncertain. I do not mean that a lawyer need to be an adept in particular branches of science, but the principles of knowledge in general are very necessary, otherwise he will frequently expose himself. Gross ignorance in the sciences will lay him open to blunders in language, which he could not otherwise avoid. History also is a branch of literature that a lawyer should make his favorite study, as his

business lies in canvassing the various relations of men in social life, he will be best able to reason on the meaning and propriety of laws and their application, if he be well acquainted with history, which points out the state of society, and human affairs in every age. As to knowledge of the laws, this is what lawyers cannot do without, and what therefore they do necessarily study, but it would be much to their advantage if they would add to the knowledge of the municipal laws of their own country, a knowledge of the great principles of equity, and of natural and political law, as applied in general.

5. The last quality I shall mention as of use to a lawyer, is quickness and vivacity. It is of use to him to have an acuteness and penetration to observe the turns of a cause. To detect the plots and fallacy of adversaries, as well as to answer upon the spot, whatever may be thrown up. I am sensible that this of quickness is entirely a natural quality, and cannot be learned; but I thought it best to observe it, because it is of more use to a lawyer than to most other men. A minister is only called to speak what he has deliberately prepared, and fully digested, but a lawyer quite incapable of extemporary productions, would not do so well. It is also certain, that wit, which is intolerable in the pulpit, is often not barely pardonable in a lawyer, but very useful. There is however, such a difference in the capacity of men, that one may be eminent in one branch, and defective in another. A man of coolness, penetration and application is often eminent in chamber councils, and one of vivacity, passion and elocution, eminent in pleading causes, especially in criminal courts.

The third and last division of this class, is the eloquence of promiscuous deliberative assemblies. I shall not be very long upon this subject, but as it is far from being improbable that some here present may in future life have occasion to act in that sphere, and to be members of the provincial assemblies, I shall make a few remarks upon it to that purpose. In large deliberative assemblies of the political kind, there is nearly as much opportunity



for fervor and passion, as there is to the divine, and more scope for wit and humor, than to the lawyer. For though no matters of a merely temporal kind, are of equal moment in themselves, with the things a minister has to treat of, yet men's passions are almost as much, and in many cases more excited and interested by them. The fate of nations, the welfare of our country, liberty or servitude, may often seem to want as violent an exertion of the passionate kind of eloquence, as any subject whatever.

It is worth while to observe, that several writers, in speaking of the ancient and modern eloquence, have taken it for granted, that the circumstances of things are changed; that the violent passionate eloquence that prevailed in Greece and Rome, would not do in modern times. They will tell you, that in a modern senate, or other deliberative assembly, people come all prepared by private interest, and will vote just as they are engaged, without regard to either eloquence or truth; but some very able writers have delivered a contrary opinion, particularly David Hume, who though an infidel in opinion, is of great reach and accuracy of judgment in matters of criticism. He has said that human nature is always the same, and that the eloquence which kindles and governs the passions, will always have great influence in large assemblies, let them be of what station or rank soever. I apprehend, that experience, since his writing the above, has fully justified it by two signal examples: one in the state, and the other in the church. Mr. Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, from being a colonel of dragoons, rose to the highest station in the British Empire, merely by the power of a warm and passionate eloquence; there was never any thing in his discourses, that are remarkable either for strength of reasoning, or purity and elegance of style; but a very great impetuosity and fire, that carried his point in the British house of commons. The other instance is the late Mr. Whitfield, who acquired and preserved a degree of popularity, to which, the present age never saw any thing that could be compared; the happy ends that were promoted by this in providence, I omit, as a subject of a different nature; but the immediate and second causes that produced

it were a power of elocution, and natural talents for public speaking, superior by far to any, that ever I saw possessed by any man on earth.

To succeed in speaking in public deliberative assemblies, the following are the most important qualities: (1) Dignity of character and disinterestedness. In public deliberations, it is not easy to procure attention, unless there is some degree of character preserved; and indeed, wherever there is a high opinion of the candor and sincerity of the speaker, it will give an inconceivable weight to his sentiments in debate.

(2) There is a necessity of knowledge of the most liberal kind, that is, the knowledge of men and manners, of history, and of human nature. The most successful speakers in senates, are generally those who know mankind best; and if a man would uniformly preserve his character and influence in this light, he must addict himself to the study of history, and the exercise of reflection.

(3) To this sort of eloquence is particularly necessary, a power over the passions. This is one of the most important characters of eloquence in general; yet it is more peculiarly necessary, and more eminently powerful in promiscuous deliberative assemblies than in any other. In religious discourses, the effect is expected to be cool, deep and permanent. Even preachers in single discourses, rather choose to speak as writers, than as pleaders; and lawyers, except in some few instances, may expect to have their assertions taken to pieces, canvassed and tried one after another; but in meetings of the political kind, the decision is to be by a vote, before the dissolution of the assembly, and cannot be altered afterwards though the majority should change their sentiments. In these assemblies therefore, to be sure, a power over the passions must be of the utmost moment.

I shall conclude this particular by two subordinate remarks on the same subject. (1) That to succeed in speaking in senates or large assemblies, there is much need of great discernment, both to proportionate men's attempts to their capacity, and to choose the proper time for exerting it. When information is demanded, any person

who can give it, will be heard with patience upon it: but on subjects of high political importance, where there are many eminent champions on each side, even persons of moderate abilities would run a risk of being affronted.

(2) The other direction is, that all who intend to be speakers in political assemblies, must begin early: if they delay beginning till years shall add maturity to their judgment, and weight to their authority, the consequence will be, that years will add so much to their caution and diffidence, that they will never begin at all.

We come now to consider the structure of a particular discourse—the order, proportion and mutual relation of the several parts. Orators, or critics on oratory very early learned to analyse a discourse, and to enumerate the parts of which it is composed. They are a little differently stated by different authors; some reckon four, introduction, proposition, confirmation and conclusion; others, five, adding narration; others, six, adding refutation; and there are some discourses in which you may easily have each of these different things; but considering that we must take this matter so generally, as to include all kinds of composition, it would be I think as well to adopt the division in poetical criticism, and say that every regular discourse or composition of every kind, must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Every performance, however short, must be capable of some such division, otherwise it is called abrupt and irregular. The reason why I would make the division in this manner is, that the beginning is properly the introduction; the middle includes every thing however various, that is taken into the body of a discourse; now these may be very many, proposition, narration, explication, confirmation, illustration and refutation; but these are not all requisite in every discourse, and are to be introduced in proportions variable and accidental, according to the nature of every particular subject.

Let us speak first of the introduction—This is the more necessary, that it is of very considerable importance, especially to an orator; it is also difficult, at least speakers have generally said so. We find it said in some of the

books of oratory, that the introduction though first pronounced, ought to be last composed—that it comes to be considered after the discourse is finished; but this does not appear to me to be either natural or necessary, except in a qualified sense; the introduction is commonly settled after the subject is pitched upon, the distribution planned and digested, and such reflection upon the whole as precedes writing.

The ends in an introduction, are said by Cicero to be these, *Reddere auditorem attentum, benevolum et docilem*; to make the reader attentive to the discourse, favorable to the speaker, and willing to receive instruction upon the subject. These different views may not only be altered in their order, at the judgment of the orator, but any of them may be left out when it is unnecessary; if, for example, I have no reason to suspect disaffection in any of my hearers, long apologies, especially if any way personal, are rather disgusting.

The ways of procuring either attention, a favor, or making the hearers teachable, are so various, that they can neither be enumerated nor classed. In this, the orator must exercise his invention, judgment and good taste. The most usual manner of introduction, is a commonplace upon the importance of the subject; the introductions drawn from the circumstances of time, place or person, are generally the most striking; sometimes a unusual stroke is happy in an introduction, as also weighty reflection or bold sentiment on the subject itself. A funeral sermon was happily begun by Mr. Baxter, in this manner; “Death is the occasion of our present meeting, and death shall be the subject of the following discourse; I am to speak of that which shall shortly silence me, and you are to hear of that which shall speedily stop your ears.” Dr. Evans begins a sermon on Eccles. xii. 10. “Rejoice O young man,” &c. by telling a story of a soldier whose life was saved by a bible in his pocket, and his conversion produced by the accident; the bible saved him from being shot through with a bullet, and when he examined, it had just pierced the leaves through, till it stopped at that passage, which no doubt he read

with particular emotions. A discourse of a lawyer in a law-suit, is generally best begun by a narrative of the occasion of the quarrel, and the introducing of any commonplace topics would be reckoned affectation. A clergyman may often have an introduction to his subject with advantage, and may also often begin, by a concise view of the context, or the occasion of the words he has chosen to discourse upon.

Perhaps what will be of most use here, will be to point out several ways by which an introduction may be faulty; of these I shall mention the following.

1. An introduction may be faulty, by being too pompous and extravagant. This is one of the most common faults in the prefaces or introductions to books. When an author is to write upon any subject, he thinks it necessary to show, not only that his subject is worth the handling, but that it is better than all other subjects. Weak and pedantic writers are often guilty of this to a degree that is ridiculous. A treatise on arithmetic, sometimes is introduced by a pompous proof that the knowledge of numbers is either superior to, or the basis of all other knowledge; the same thing is done with grammar; and there is often a general truth or plausibility from which the ridicule to which they expose themselves, takes its rise; for to be sure, number is every where; every thing that ever was or can be, must be either one or more. As to grammar, all good sense must certainly be grammar; yet there are sometimes persons who would be thought to understand both these subjects very well, who could not speak five sentences, or write a letter without being deservedly laughed at.

2. An introduction may be faulty, by being general. We see often reflections in the introduction to a discourse, that would be just as proper for one subject, as for another. Such sentiments may be said to go before, but they cannot be said to introduce their subject. Sometimes you will hear the introduction almost out, before you can conjecture what is to be the subject and some are so unhappy in the choice of introductory sentiments, that you would think they intend something that is very different from what really appears in the piece itself.

3. It is a fault in an introduction, to be filled with remarks quite beaten and hackneyed, if I may speak so. These may have been very good remarks or sentiments when first conceived and uttered; but by perpetual repetition have lost their force, and from the very commonness appear mean and despicable. They are many of them founded upon sayings in the classic authors, and in the past age were commonly produced as quotations, with their paraphrase, such as “*omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*” “*Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.*”

4. An introduction may be forced and unnatural; that is to say, such remarks may be made as it requires a great deal of pains to show any relation between them and the subject to be treated.

5. It may be fanciful or whimsical. There was an age when these sort of introductions were to the taste of the public. This fancy or whim, or as I may call it, a finical way of entering upon a subject publicly, may be best illustrated by an example. An author of the last age begins a discourse upon ch. viii, of the Epistle to the Romans, v. 28, to this purpose: The Scriptures may be considered as a large and rich garden.—The New Testament is the most valuable division of that garden—The Epistle to the Romans is the richest compartment of that division; the 8th chap. is the most delightful border of that compartment, and the 28th verse the finest flower of that border.

6. An introduction may be faulty by being tedious. An introduction is designed to whet the attention, and excite impatience for what is to follow. But when it is very long, it not only disgusts by the disappointment, but wastes that attention which should be preserved in full vigor, or raises a high expectation, which is probably for that reason disappointed.

As to the middle or body of a discourse, the chief thing to be attended to in this place is, to make you sensible of what it consists. The former discourses have all been intended to teach you the way of composition, both as to materials and structure; yet as to the method of conducting a particular discourse, I would make the three following remarks: (1.) Be careful of the order of the several parti-

culars mentioned. You may not see it proper to introduce all in the compass of a single discourse, but so far as they are introduced, they should be in the following order: Proposition, narration, illustration, confirmation, refutation. You will speedily perceive this to be the order of nature, to lay down the method, narrate the facts, illustrate them by whatever may have that effect, adduce the proofs, resolve objections. A person of a clear head will range his sentiments in this order—yet there are some exceptions to be admitted. Sometimes it is useful in a cause to reserve a part of the story itself, to apply or illustrate an argument—and in some few instances it is best to answer objections, or remove prejudices, before you adduce your proofs.

(2.) It is a most useful direction to the greatest part of writers and speakers, to guard against introducing every thing that they might say, or being so formal that they will say something in the way of form in every one of their divisions. This analysis of a discourse is good for making the judgment clear; but if it be applied merely to make the invention copious, it will probably produce an unnecessary load. Some people will needs answer objections on any subject, and frequently teach their hearers to make objections which they never would have thought of.

(3.) Learn to keep close to a subject, and bring in nothing but what is truly of force, to the point to be proved. I rather mention this as a rule for the middle or body of a discourse, because the most are there apt to transgress it. In the introduction and the conclusion, every one but those who are perfectly stupid, keep their subject directly in their eye; whereas in the body, when they are entered upon argument and amplification, they are apt to be led astray, and either to fall into what may be called absolute digressions, or at least to lengthen some parts more than true proportion requires.

As to the conclusion or peroration, to this may be applied particularly all that was said upon pathos, or raising the passions, to which I add the following short observations:

(1.) The conclusion should be by far the warmest and most animated part of the discourse. It is not, I think,



desireable to attempt to raise the passions of an audience high, till towards the close of a discourse, because, if it be begun sooner, there is an evident hazard of not being able to preserve them in the same pitch till the end.

(2.) The conclusion should collect into one point of view, by some well chosen expressions, the force of what has gone before, and the greatest skill in the speaker is shown by concentrating the whole in this manner. Before the illustration it could not be said so briefly ; but by the help of what went before, it may be recalled to memory in less room.

(3.) Towards the conclusion the sentences should be studied, the tone of voice higher, and the pronunciation more rapid than towards the beginning.

(4.) Lastly, great care should be taken in moral discourses to have no far-fetched inferences.

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## LECTURE XVI.

**I** AM now to conclude the discourses upon this subject by an inquiry into the general principles of taste and criticism. In the former discourses we have kept close to the arts of writing and speaking, and have attempted to describe the various kinds of composition, their characters, distinctions, beauties, blemishes, the means of attaining skill in them, and the uses to which they should be applied. But is it not proper to consider the alliance, if there be any such, between this and other arts ? This will serve greatly to improve and perfect our judgment and taste. It was very early observed, that there was a relation between the different arts, and some common principles that determine their excellence. Cicero mentions this in the introduction of his oration for Archias the poet. *Etenim omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur.*

These arts, which Cicero says, *Ad humanitatem pertinent*, are called by the moderns the fine arts. This is to distinguish them from those commonly called the mechanic arts, making the utensils and conveniences of com-

mon life. And yet even these may be included, as taste and elegance, or the want of it may plainly be discerned in every production of human skill. However, those called the fine arts are the following: Poetry, oratory, music, painting, sculpture, architecture. It must be allowed that, though these arts have some common principles of excellence, there are some persons who have a strong inclination after, and even a capacity of performing in some of them, and not in others. There are good orators who are no musicians, or perhaps who have very little taste for the beauties of architecture. Yet commonly complete critics, and those who have a well formed taste, are able to perceive the beauty of the whole, and the relation of one to another. It is remarkable that the expressions in composition are frequently borrowed from one art and applied to another. We say a smooth, polished style, as well as a polished surface; and we say a building is sweet or elegant, as well as an oration. We say the notes in music are bold and swelling, or warm and animated.

One of our modern authors on eloquence, has thought fit to take exception at the use of the word *taste*, as being of late invention, and as implying nothing but what is carried in judgment and genius. But I apprehend that the application of it, though it should be admitted to be modern, is perfectly just. It came to us from the French. The *bon gout* among them was applied first to classic elegance, and from thence to all the other arts. And as a sense of the beauty of the arts is certainly a thing often distinct from judgment, as well as from erudition; the term seems not only to be allowable, but well chosen. We find persons who can reason very strongly upon many subjects, who yet are incapable of elegance in composition, and indeed of receiving much delight from the other fine arts. Nay, we find persons of uncommon acuteness in mathematics and natural philosophy, who yet are incapable of attaining to a fine taste.

It has been sometimes said, that taste is arbitrary.—Some will have it, that there is no such thing as a standard of taste, or any method of improving it. It is a kind of common proverb with many, that there is no disputing

about taste. That it is of this intellectual as of natural taste, according as the palate or organs are differently formed, what gives an agreeable relish to one, gives a disagreeable one to another. They say that the modes of taste are temporary and variable—that different nations, climates, governments, and ages, have different ways of speaking and writing, and a different turn in all the arts—that chance or particular persons will be able to give a turn to the mode in all these. Even so great a man as Dr. Warburton has embraced this sentiment, and to those who attack the Scriptures as not being a complete model of eloquence he answers there is no fixed standard of eloquence. That eloquence is one thing in Arabia, another in Greece, and another in England, for this reason he condemns those who after the example of Mr. Blackwall in his sacred classics, vindicates the Scriptures from objections of this kind, or produce instances of their sublimity and beauty. But though I have shown you in some of the former discourses, that the style and manner in vogue will receive some tincture, and be liable to some variation, from all the particulars mentioned, yet there is certainly a real beauty or deformity in nature, independent of these partial changes, which, when properly explained and examples of it exhibited, will obtain more universal approbation, and retain it longer than the others. The poetry and oratory of the ancients and their painting and statuary, are instances and proofs of this. It may also appear from what I mentioned to you formerly, that those compositions which have most simplicity and such excellencies as are most solid, with fewest of the casual ornaments of fashion, and the peculiarities of their own age will please, when their contemporaries are lost in oblivion. The same thing holds with pieces of furniture that are elegant but plain. Such have the beauties of nature, which belong to every age. But to show this more fully, even the remarks upon natural taste are not true in such a sense as to weaken what has been said. For though it is certain that persons used to the coarsest kind of food which they have often eaten with relish, may show at first an aversion to the delicacies of cookery, yet after a person has been a little accustomed to that kind of preparation of victuals in

which regard is had to the mixtures that are most proper to gratify the palate, he will not easily return to his slovenly provision. But though there were less in this remark, it seems plain that there is a taste in the fine arts, and a real foundation for it in nature.

But supposing that there is a foundation in nature for taste and criticism, there is another question that arises, viz. Can we tell what it is? Can we reach the original principles which govern this matter? Can we say not only that such and such things please us, but why they do so? Can we go any further than we have already done, as to composition? Some have refused that we can with certainty reach the source of this subject. When the cause is asked, why one person, one thing, or one composition is more excellent than another, they say it is an immediate and simple perception, a *je ne sais quoi*, as the French say, which phrase seems to have taken its rise from the circumstance which often occurs, that in a house, a garden, a statue or painting, or even in a person's countenance and carriage, you perceive something agreeable upon the whole, and yet cannot suddenly tell wherein it lies, the parts are not better proportioned perhaps, nor the features better formed than in another, and yet there is something in the composition of the whole that gives the most exquisite delight.

Others however, and the far greatest number, have thought it proper to go a great deal further, and to inquire into human nature, its perceptions and powers, and endeavor to trace out the principles of taste, which apply in general to all the fine arts, or in greater or less proportion to each of them, for some apply more to one than to others. As for example, if the sense of harmony is an original perception, it applies chiefly to music, and remotely to the pronunciation of an orator, and still more remotely to the composition of an orator. These powers or perceptions in human nature have been generally called the powers of imagination. Mr. Hutchinson calls them reflex senses, finer internal sensations; and upon examination we shall find that besides the internal senses, there are certain finer perceptions, which we are capable of, which may be said to take their rise from out-

ward objects, and to suppose the external sensation, but yet to be additions to, and truly distinct from it. As for example, I see a beautiful person. My eye immediately perceives colour, and shape variously disposed; but I have further a sense of beauty in the whole. I hear the sound of musical instruments; my ear receives the noise: every body's ear who is not deaf does the same. If I have a sense of harmony I take a pleasure in the composition of the sounds. The way to examine the principles of taste is to consider which of these perceptions are simple, immediate, and original; which of them are dependant upon others, and how they may be combined and compounded, and afford delight by such composition.

This is an extensive subject, and it is difficult to treat it concisely, and yet plainly; and indeed after all the pains I can take, there will be reason to apprehend some obscurity will remain to persons not used to such kind of disquisitions. The way I shall take is to state to you critically or historically the way in which this matter hath been treated by some of the most celebrated writers. The Spectator, written by Mr. Addison, on the pleasures of the imagination, reduces the sources of delight or approbation to three great classes, novelty, greatness, and beauty. He says, that such is our desire after novelty, that all things that were before unknown, are from this circumstance recommended to us, and that we receive a delight in the discovery and contemplation of what we never saw before, except such objects as are painful to the organs of sight. That children run from one play thing to another, not because it is better, but new; that it is the same case with men, and that authors in particular are at great pains to have something new and striking in their manner, which is the more difficult to be attained that they must make use of known words, and that their ideas too must be such as are easily intelligible. There is something here that would require a good deal of explication. I do not think that any object is, properly speaking, painful to the organs of sight, except too much light; but we do not consider this as a fault in the object, but feel it as a weakness in ourselves. And further, if there be such a

thing as beauty, one would think that if beauty be agreeable it must have a contrary, which is ugliness, and that must be disagreeable. As to greatness, this has been always considered as a source of admiration. The most ancient critics observe, that we do not admire a small rivulet, but the Danube, the Nile, the ocean. This I will afterwards consider. As to beauty, it has been considered as of all other things most inconceivable, and therefore made a first and immediate perception.

Others have taken beauty and grace as the general terms, including every thing that pleases us. Thus we say a beautiful poem, statue, landscape. Thus also we say a sublime and beautiful sentiment. Thus they have taken in under it novelty and greatness, and every other agreeable quality. Many eminent critics have acted in this manner, particularly the ancients. Longinus, on the Sublime, introduces several things which do not belong to it, as distinguished from beauty. Taking beauty as the general object of approbation or source of delight, and as applicable to all the fine arts, it has been variously analysed.

A French writer, Croufaz, *Traité du Beau*, analyses beauty under the following principles: Variety, unity, regularity, order, proportion. Variety is the first. This seems to be related to, or perhaps in some respects the same with novelty, which was formerly mentioned. It is certain that a dead uniformity cannot produce beauty in any sort of performance, poem, oration, statue, picture, building. Unity is, as it were, the bound and restraint of variety. Things must be connected as well as various, and if they are not connected, the variety is nothing but confusion. Regularity is the similarity of the correspondent parts; order is the easy gradation from one to another, and proportion is the suitableness of each part to the whole, and to every other part. I think it cannot be denied, that all these have their influence in producing beauty.

One of the most celebrated pieces upon this subject is the famous painter Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*. He first produced his system in a sort of enigma, drawing one curved line, with the title of the line of beauty, and another with a double wave, which he called the line of grace.



He afterwards published his *Analysis of Beauty*, which he resolves into the following principles: Fitness, variety, uniformity, simplicity, intricacy and quantity. The first principle is fitness, under which he shows that we always conceive of a thing as intended for some use, and therefore there must be a correspondence or suitableness to the use, otherwise whatever be its appearance, we reject it as not beautiful. He instances in sailors, who whenever there is a ship that sails well, they call her a beauty. The same thing will apply perfectly to all kinds of writing: for whatever fine sentiments and noble expression be in any composition, if they are not suited to the season and subject, we say with Horace, *Sed nunc non erat his locus*. Variety and uniformity must be compounded together, and as he has made no mention of order and proportion, it is to be supposed that by variety he meant that which changes in a gradual and insensible manner; for variety without order is undistinguishable, and a heap of confusion. Simplicity means that which is easy, and which the eye travels over and examines without difficulty; and intricacy is that which requires some exercise and attention to follow it; these two must limit one another. In representing beauty as a visible figure, he observes, that a straight line has the least beauty; that which has a wave or easy declination one way begins to be beautiful; that which has a double wave has still greater grace. The truth is, if these two things do not destroy the one the other, simplicity and intricacy improve and beautify one another. Mr. Hogarth observes, that ringlets of hair waving in the wind have been an expression of grace and elegance in every age, nation and language; which is just a contrasted wave, first, that of the curls, and this again rendered a little more intricate by the motion of the breeze. If one would have a view of this principle as exhibited in a single kind, let him look at the flourishes with which the masters of the pen adorn their pieces, and he will see that if they are easy and gradual in their flexions, and just as intricate as the eye can follow without confusion, any thing less than that is less beautiful, and any thing more destroys the beauty by disorder. I might show you how this principle applies to all the arts, but shall only mention



composition, where the simplicity must be combined with refinement, and when the combination is just, there results the most perfect elegance. Mr. Hogarth adds quantity; that a thing having the other qualities, pleases in proportion as it is great; as we say, a magnificent building, where the proportions are truly observed, but every part is large.

I have only to observe, that Mr. Hogarth has very well illustrated the principles of beauty, but at the same time he seems to have introduced two, which belong to other sources of delight, viz. fitness and quantity, as will be shown afterwards.

It is to be observed, that in the enumeration of the principles of beauty, there are to be found in some authors things not only different but opposite. A French author, not many years ago, to the principles mentioned by others, adds strength, which he illustrates in this manner. He considers it as a principle of grace and beauty in motion, and says that every thing that we do with great difficulty, and that seems to require our utmost effort, is seen with uneasiness, and not with pleasure. For this reason he says the motions of young people in general are more graceful than those of old, and agreeably to this we join the word *ease* to gracefulness as explicatory—a graceful, easy carriage. With this explication it seems abundantly proper to admit the remark. On the other hand, there are some who have made comparative weakness a principle of beauty, and say that the more light and slender any thing is, unless it be remarkably weak, it is the more beautiful, and that things remarkably strong rather belong to another class. Thus we say, a fine, tender, delicate shape—and on the contrary we say, a strong, coarse, robust make—a strong, coarse, masculine woman. Perhaps we may reconcile these two, and say they are both principles, because there should be just as much of each as is suitable to the thing in question, that a person may have either too strong or too weak a frame, for being esteemed beautiful—that a pillar or dome may be too delicate to be durable, or too strong and bulky to be elegant.

Again: many writers as you have seen, make greatness a principle of beauty; yet there are others who make littleness one of the constituents of beauty. Those who do

so, tell us that *little* is a term of endearment, in every nation and language yet known; that it is the language of the vulgar, and therefore the undesigned expression of nature. They instance the diminutive appellations which are always used in fondling—*filiolus*, *filiola*, have more affection, than *filius* and *filia*—my dear little creature—it is a pretty little thing. To enumerate these different appearances, some, particularly Burke on the Sublime, affirms that the ideas of sublimity and beauty are ideas of a class radically different; that the first, sublimity, ultimately arises from the passion of terror, and the other from that of love and delight; he with a good deal of ingenuity resolves all the sources of the sublime, into what is either terrible, or allied to this passion, exciting it either immediately in some degree, or by association. It is however uncertain, whether we should reduce what we receive so much delight from, to a passion, which in itself, or in its purity, so to speak, is painful: this objection he endeavors to remove, by shewing that the exercise of all our passions in a moderate degree, is a source of pleasure; but perhaps, we may distinguish the ideas of sublime and beautiful, without having recourse to the passion of terror at all, by saying that there is an affection suited to the greatness of objects, without considering them as terrible, and that is, veneration: nay, perhaps we may go a little further, and say, that veneration is the affection truly correspondent to greatness, in innocent creatures, which becomes terror in the guilty. I cannot go through the particulars of Burke's theory. He seems rightly to divide the ideas of sublime and beautiful; by the union of which, some have made one thing, others directly its contrary to belong to beauty. One thing remarkable in Burke's Essay is, that he denies proportion to be any of the causes of beauty, which yet almost every other writer, has enumerated among them; and what he says of the infinitely various proportion in plants and animals, seems to be much in support of his opinion: yet in works of art, proportion seems of much moment, and it is difficult to say to what source to refer it. I view a building, and if the parts are not in a regular proportion, it offends my eye, even though I could suppose that the disproportion was voluntary, in order to obtain some great convenience.

I should be inclined to think, that there are a considerable number of simple principles or internal sensations, that contribute each its part, in forming our taste, and are capable of being variously combined, and by this combination are apt to be confounded one with another. One of the most distinct and complete enumerations, we have in Gerard's Essay on Taste, and is as follows; A sense of novelty, sublimity, beauty, imitation, harmony, ridicule and virtue. I cannot go through all these in order, but shall make a few remarks, and show where the division is just or defective. His distinguishing all these from one another, is certainly just; but there are some things that he introduces under wrong heads; fitness, for example, he introduces under the head of beauty; and this seems rather a source of approbation distinct in itself, as also proportion, if that is not included in fitness. Perhaps a more complete enumeration than any of them, may be given thus, novelty, sublimity, beauty, proportion, imitation, harmony, ridicule, utility and virtue.

We shall now proceed to those we have not spoken of before; imitation certainly gives great pleasure to the mind, and that of itself, even independent of the object imitated. An exceedingly well imitated resemblance of any object, of that which is indifferent or even disagreeable in itself, gives the highest pleasure, either from the act of comparison as some say, or from its suggesting the idea of skill and ingenuity in the imitator. The arts of painting and statuary, derive their excellence from the perfection of imitation, and it is even thought that poetry and oratory may be considered in the same light, only that the first imitates form, and passions by the means of form, and the other imitates actions and affections by language, as the instrument.

Harmony is the most distinct and separate of all the internal senses that have been mentioned; it is concerned only in sound, and therefore must be but remotely applicable to the writer and speaker. What is remarkable, that although harmony may be said to be of much importance in speaking, there are many examples of the most excellent speakers, that yet have no musical ear at all, and I think the instances of those who have a remarkably delicate musical ear, and at the same time are agreeable speakers, are not many.

The sense of ridicule is not very easily explained, but it is easily understood when spoken of, because it is universally felt. It differs in this from most other of our constitutional powers, that there is scarcely any man, who is not sensible of the ridiculous, or may be made easily sensible of it; and yet the number of good performers in the art of ridiculing others, or in wit and humor, is but very small. The multitude who cannot follow speculative reasoning, and are hard to be moved by eloquence, are all struck with works of humor. Most people are apt to think they can do something in the way of humor; and yet we have many who render themselves ridiculous by the attempt.

As to a sense of virtue, by mentioning it, is by no means from my joining with those who would place moral approbation entirely on the same footing with the internal senses, that are the foundation of taste. Hutchinson and Shaftsbury incline very much this way; on the contrary I think we are evidently sensible that the morality of actions is a thing of a different species, and arises from the sense of a law, and obligation of a superior nature: yet I have mentioned it here, because there is certainly a relation or connecting tie between the sentiments of the one kind, and of the other. The beauties of nature, we are sensible, are greatly heightened, by adding to their delightful appearance, a reflection on their utility, and the benevolent intention of their author. In persons capable of morality, as in human nature, we consider fine features and an elegant carriage, as indications of the moral disposition or the mental powers; and as the whole of the sources of delight mentioned above, may be combined in a greater or lesser degree, as novelty, sublimity, beauty, &c. so the governing principle which ought to direct the application of the whole, is what gives them their highest excellence, and indeed only is their true perfection. The gratification even of our internal senses, is highly improved, when united with taste and elegance. As the most delicious food when served up with neatness and order, accompanied with politeness of manners, and seasoned with sprightly conversation: in the same manner, the fine arts themselves acquire a double beauty and higher relish, when they are inseparably connected with, and made subservient to purity of manners. An admirable poem, or an eloquent

discourse, or a fine picture, would be still more excellent, if the subject of them were interesting and valuable, and when any of them are perverted to impious or wicked purposes, they are just objects of detestation.

After having thus attempted the analysis of the principles of taste and elegance, I would observe, that as nature seems to delight in producing many great and different effects from simple causes, perhaps we may find an ultimate principle that governs all these. A French author has written a treatise called the *Theory of agreeable Sensations*, in which he says that the great principle is, whatever exercises our faculties, without fatiguing them, gives pleasure; and that this principle may be applied to our bodily form, and to the constitution of our mind, to objects of external sensation, to objects of taste, and even to our moral conduct. It may no doubt be carried through the whole of criticism, and we may say this states the bounds between variety and uniformity, simplicity and intricacy, order, proportion and harmony.

Neither would it be difficult to show that this principle may be applied to morality, and that an infinitely wise and gracious God had so ordered matters, that the moderate exercise of all our powers, should produce at once, virtue and happiness, and that the least transgression of the one must prove of necessity an injury to the other.

You may see from the preceding remarks, that the foundation is laid for taste in our natures; yet is there great room for improvement and cultivation; by investigating the grounds of approbation; by comparing one thing with another; by studying the best examples; and by reflection and judgment, men may correct and refine their taste upon the whole, or upon particular confined subjects.

Carrying taste to a finical nicety in any one branch, is a thing not only undesirable, but contemptible; the reason of which may be easily seen: when a person applies his attention so much to a matter of no great moment, it occasions a necessary neglect of other things of much greater value. After you pass a certain point, attachment to a particular pursuit is useless, and then it proceeds to be hurtful, and at last contemptible.